

For immediate release

Program cuts at Laurentian University a death knell

TORONTO, April 14, 2021 — The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) is shocked to learn of the decision by Laurentian University to close some 70 programs, including almost 40 French-language programs. These program cuts, more than a third of the university's overall offerings, are a tremendous loss to students in northern Ontario for whom Laurentian University has been an important access point for post-secondary education.

Of particular concern to OTF is the proposed closure of the university's English-language Primary and Junior teacher preparation program and the removal of the Francophone program to prepare teachers in the Intermediate and Senior divisions. It is well known that the number of Francophone teachers currently being prepared in the province is less than half of the projected need.

"Essentially, the proposed cuts are a death knell to the ongoing viability of the remaining teacher preparation programs, not to mention to the university overall," states Parker Robinson, OTF President. "Additional to the impact of closing the above education programs, the cutting of programs across the university will also impact the number of students who would normally access these programs."

"Ontario needs to be preparing more teachers, not fewer," added Robinson. "Preserving both the English-language and Francophone teacher preparation programs at Laurentian should be a priority for the Ford Government."

"We urge the Premier, Minister of Education and Minister of Colleges and Universities to take immediate steps to reverse the decisions taken by the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) administrators appointed at Laurentian University and to safeguard the continuation of the university's teacher preparation programs," concluded Robinson.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the advocate for the teaching profession in Ontario and for its 160,000 teachers. OTF members are full-time, part-time and occasional teachers in all the publicly funded schools in the province—elementary, secondary, public, Catholic and francophone.

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