

Ottawa, July 8 2020

M. Jacques Frémont, President and Vice-Chancellor:

The Interunion Coalition of the University of Ottawa (ICUO) regroups like-minded stakeholders. Together, we ensure the vital functioning of our campus. Today, we are launching a public interest campaign to express our serious concern about current plans for the Fall 2020 Session.

As the COVID-19 health crisis imposed a turn to distance education, disparities that continue to prevent access to sustainable high-quality education in the Fall term remain in place for students, faculty, and workers alike. ICUO allies report huge increases in the number of enrollments in current and future classes offered at our University.

Rather than opening up new sections to facilitate a responsible ratio of students per professor, the University allows class sizes to balloon, both in the Spring/Summer and in the Fall Sessions. The adoption of myriad software without adequate consultation, the reliance on non-unionized high-paying administrative roles, and non-unionized underpaid labour, are more recent examples of decisions undermining our collective well-being.

Workers who ensure the virtual and physical functioning of our campus are essential in the smooth launch of any academic year. Despite uOttawa's alleged commitment to social justice, not all of its unionized workers are presently able to obtain a fair collective agreement. The uncertainty and hardship created by the outlined circumstances cannot continue. Thankfully, there is a better way forward.

We urge the University to overturn the cost-cutting measures that compromise the quality of education that risks large numbers of students dropping out during the Fall 2020 Session and the burnout of its faculty and staff.

Reducing class sizes, reversing the merging of class sections, and putting in place adequate distance education resources and accommodations for all (including collective bargaining) is the solution.

To learn more about our campaign, visit, <https://uodissatisfaction.ca>

ICUO, united in solidarity.