



March 17, 2020

To: University of Alberta President David Turpin
Board of Governors Chair Kate Chisholm

Dear President Turpin and Chair Chisholm,

The work done by NASA members is vital to the teaching, learning, and research mission of the University of Alberta. NASA members have stepped up in this time of crisis. It is time for the University to return that commitment to its workers.

NASA is calling for the University of Alberta to put a halt to layoffs for the duration of this public health emergency.

At a time when university workers are scrambling to shift to remote teaching and keep the other functions of the university running, while also needing to arrange care for their children and potentially support sick loved ones, the last thing they should be worried about is whether they will lose their job. Taking away people's sick leave and medical benefits in this time of crisis would demonstrate a callousness I feel confident neither of you possess.

In addition, in the aftermath of this crisis, all current employees will be needed to get our institution back on track in order to continue its vital role in building the future of our province. If Alberta wants to have a world-class institution of higher learning, then it must be properly staffed, and that means it must be properly funded.

We ask you to call on the provincial government to consider the current situation, to consider the needs of our province, and to revisit its most recent budget.

While circumstances beyond anyone's control are hitting our province and our world, the provincial budget cuts are a deliberate choice and within the government's control. It was announced on Friday, March 13 that managing the \$110.3 million in cuts will result in more than 1,000 lost jobs. No institution can absorb that kind of funding reduction without significant and long-term impacts to teaching, learning, and research.

It is worth considering how much worse the current COVID-19 situation would be if it had hit after the cuts in Budget 2020 had fully gone into effect. Consider trying to move all classes to remote learning with far fewer skilled IST workers to assist faculty. Consider fewer communications staff working all hours of the day and night to communicate important safety

information to the university community. Consider fewer cleaning staff and less frequent cleaning being done across campus in the middle of a health pandemic. Consider fewer resources and more time constraints for the researchers who are working to understand and combat this new virus.

Albertans need properly funded health and education services now more than ever. Our medical system must have the funding to get us through this pandemic. Our K-12 and post-secondary education systems must have the funding to help us rebuild our province in the aftermath.

We are relying on you, our leaders, to show compassion in the current crisis, and to show passion in your advocacy to the provincial government to properly fund our institution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Johannson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Johannson
President
Non-Academic Staff Association