

## MRU students oppose Board of Governors decision to raise tuition by seven per cent

Calgary, AB February 24, 2020 — Today, the Mount Royal University Board of Governors approved a seven per cent tuition increase for the 2020-2021 school year, which translates to approximately \$400 more in tuition per full-time student. In response, the Representation Executive Council of the Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) organized a silent protest that saw approximately 25 students fill the meeting room. A further 320 students signed a letter of support detailing their concerns. Students wanted board members to understand that these increases will adversely impact students' well-being and their ability to contribute to Alberta's economy once they graduate.

While the silent protest targeted MRU's decision to raise tuition, students presumed the decision to be a foregone conclusion given the drastic funding cuts introduced by the Alberta Government. While students are thankful for MRU's decision to invest 25 per cent of the tuition increases into bursaries for low-income students, students do not agree with dramatic and unexpected tuition increases now and in future years to come.

Students say that balancing the university's budget on the backs of students could lead to further deterioration in student mental health and will impose an even larger and unplanned-for debt burden upon graduation. In 2018 one in two MRU graduates left university with significant debt, with the average amount owed being an astounding \$29,941.

During the Board meeting, student representatives on the Board spoke on these concerns and voted against the tuition increase.

"The reason why tuition is drastically rising for students is due to the choices of the Alberta Government to allow tuition to increase while simultaneously cutting MRU's budget" said SAMRU President Shayla Breen. "More than ever we need to investment in students, which in turn is an investment in our economy. Students will not be silent while they are forced to balance the budget for institutions in Alberta."

– 30 –

**For more information, contact:** Shayla Breen, President • Students' Association of Mount Royal University Representation Executive Council • (403) 440-6993 • Email: [president@samru.ca](mailto:president@samru.ca) • Web: [www.samru.ca](http://www.samru.ca)

/ Backgrounder attached

*The Students' Association is a non-profit organization, independent from Mount Royal University, which exists to enhance the academic experience provided by MRU. We represent and serve students to help them succeed!*

## **Backgrounder: Letter from MRU students to the Board of Governors**

Board of Governors  
Mount Royal University  
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW  
Calgary, Alberta T3E 6K6

The Students' Association of MRU Royal University (SAMRU)  
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW  
Calgary, Alberta T3E 6K6

February 24, 2020

To the MRU Board of Governors,

The students of Mount Royal University are feeling anxious about how we are going to cope financially over the next few years. This sense of unease is coming from the fact that the Alberta Government has raised the cap for annual tuition increases from inflation (CPI) to seven per cent for the next three years. In addition, the government has made moves to drastically cut MRU's government-provided revenue. Faced with such a difficult financial outlook, we expect that on February 24, 2020, the MRU Board of Governors is likely approving a tuition increase for domestic MRU students of seven per cent (or approximately \$400) for the 2020-2021 school year.

Balancing the university's budget on the backs of students, many of whom have very limited financial capacity, can lead to further deteriorations in student mental health and will impose an even larger debt burden upon graduation. In 2018 one in two MRU graduates left with debt, with the average amount owed being an astounding \$29,941. If the Board approves these tuition increases, our hope is that individual Board members understand the impact of these increases on student well-being and their ability to contribute to Alberta's economy. We further hope that the Board can find a way to relieve the additional financial pressure placed on students.

Students are demonstrating at the MRU Board of Governors meeting because we would like it to be known that we understand the financial position Mount Royal University is faced with because of decisions made by this government. However, we do not agree with the dramatic and unexpected tuition increases now facing students.

Thank you for your consideration.

---

*Name and Program*

cc: Hon. Demetrios Nicolaidis - Minister of Advanced Education, Hon. Travis Toews - President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, David Eggen - Critic for Advanced Education