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FAST FACTS

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Where Does the Money Go? University of Manitoba Senior Administrators Get Big Pay Hikes But Faculty and Staff Morale Remains Low

Faculty and staff at the University of Manitoba may have been a little perplexed to learn last week that UM president, Dr. Eموke J. E. Szathmáry, had been awarded the 2007 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Excellence in Public Administration. During Dr. Szathmáry's two terms as President, labour relations on campus have deteriorated markedly. In the wake of one strike recently resolved and another probably averted, morale has reached a new low.

Senior administrators' adversarial style is expressed in what the Manitoba Labour

Board, in a recent decision, called a "take it or leave it" approach to employee relations. On October 4th, the Board found the University in violation of four sections of the Manitoba Labour Relations Act. The University had forced certain Instructors out of the faculty union, the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA), by threatening to terminate their employment. In rendering its decision, the Board observed that the Administration's management style does not encourage "healthy or stable bargaining relationships." The Board was also clear that it did

not regard this breach as accidental, ruling that "blatant" "unfair" and "unlawful" labour practices were "clearly deliberate and strategic." Manitoba Federation of Labour President Darlene Dziewit observes that in over thirty years as a labour relations practitioner, she has "never before

seen a Labour Board decision that so clearly and graphically describes an employer's bad behaviour."

This approach has fuelled tense negotiations with unionised workers. Contract negotiations typically drag on

for months and are only settled with the help of a mediator – paid for by both the University and the workers. Agreements have been reached with difficulty and the campus has endured three strikes in seven years. During the recent CAW strike, the University hired replacement workers – a rare practice among Canadian employers, since it typically exacerbates tensions and often leads to longer, more adversarial strikes. Even after the strike is over, poor labour relations tend to continue when employers have used this tactic. It's hard for faculty, staff or students, who have suffered the

What do Senior Administrators earn?

Emoke Szathmáry (President)	– \$341k - 3-year increase: 30.6%
Joanne Keselman (VP Research)	– \$223k - 3-year increase: 23.9%
Robert Kerr (VP Academic & Provost)	– \$220k - 3-year increase: 21.9%
Debbie McCallum (VP Administration)	– \$203k - 3-year increase: 37.5%
Elaine Goldie (VP External)	– \$201k - 3-year increase: 34.7%
Digvir Jayas (Assoc VP Research)	– \$195k - 3-year increase: 16.2%
Leanne Burkowski (Assoc VP Finance)	– \$174k - 3-year increase: 42.8%
Dave Morphy (Vice Provost Student Affairs)	– \$171k - 3-year increase: 22%
Richard Lobdell (Vice-Provost Programs)	– \$160k - 3-year increase: 17.5%



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brunt of these disruptions, to understand how any of this demonstrates administrative excellence.

It's also difficult for many to comprehend why such tense labour relations are necessary. Academic and non-academic workers alike have had to strike or threaten strike for wage increases of less than 3 percent a year –barely keeping pace with the cost of living. One consequence of this is that University of Manitoba faculty have the dubious honour of being among the worst-paid in Canada. The University's 2007 operating grant from the Province increased by 7.2 percent from the previous year, but the University claims it can't afford higher pay for staff. Yet senior administrators, who vote on their own salary increases, have enjoyed huge pay hikes. Between 2003 and 2006, the salaries of nine top UM administrators increased a total of 27.2 percent, from \$1.487 million to \$1.892 million.

During that three year period, Dr. Szathmáry's pay increased by 30.6 percent. She now takes home an impressive \$341,304 per year- almost \$46,000 *more* than Prime Minister Stephen Harper. That salary alone puts her among the elite 0.26 percent of Manitobans who earn more than \$250,000 a year. And, like the Prime Minister, Szathmáry also enjoys free housing – in a 5,000-sq-ft home worth nearly half a million dollars – along with a variety of other perks.

Senior University Administrators justify their generous raises by claiming that well-paid administrators raise the value of education to Manitoba students. The evidence is far from compelling. Student enrolment declined by almost 3 percent from last year, while low pay and a demoralized workplace have made it increasingly difficult for the University to retain faculty. A report prepared for the University last year documents drastic under-staffing in physical plant operations of from fifty to 100 percent in some areas. The results on CAW members, who do this work, are reflected in injuries and illness, exacerbated by policies that require those still on the job to add the work

of their injured co-workers to their already heavy workloads. Students now pay 59 percent more for their education than they did a decade ago – despite a tuition fee freeze, much of which has been undermined by fee increases - leaving many to wonder what the extra money is paying for.

A more cooperative and collegial campus, many feel, would not only improve morale but help the University retain its faculty, encourage better staff relations, and support a better quality of education. As the city's fourth-largest employer, the University of Manitoba should lead the way in improving community standards for fair treatment of workers as well as decent pay, benefits and working conditions. Students, faculty and staff have all tried to improve learning and working conditions. The University of Manitoba Students Union (UMSU) advocates for increased government funding and runs a variety of programs designed to increase accessibility, reduce barriers, and encourage a more diverse student body. In addition to more competitive pay scales that would help us retain faculty, both CAW and UMFA have asked the University for less stingy benefits, more family-friendly policies, and a safer, healthier workplace. But students and staff can't do it alone. Real improvements depend on a genuine commitment by senior administrators to participate in creating a less hostile environment that is more productive for working and learning.

- Julie Guard, Rachel Gotthilf, Rachel Heinrichs,
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