

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 28, 2021

## **A Tumultuous Fall Semester at the University of Ottawa**

OTTAWA – The Inter-Union Coalition of the University of Ottawa expresses its discontent about the bimodal teaching format unilaterally decided upon by the Central Administration.

After a tumultuous September, the Coalition, which includes the University of Ottawa's unions representing students, full-time and part-time professors, teaching and research assistants, and support staff, condemns a poor student experience, the absence of adequate technological tools and infrastructures to support and sustain first rate pedagogical practices, and the breach of collective agreements.

The professors teaching bimodal courses must teach simultaneously to in-person and virtual groups of students. "Bimodal teaching is not conducive to an enriching exchange, both between students and with professors," explains Armaan Singh Kheppar of the University of

Ottawa Students' Union (UOSU). "Students are paying the same tuition fees as usual for what seems to be a semester sacrificed for an experimental mode of learning."

In addition to technological challenges and a lack of punctual support to remedy problems, the Central Administration has failed to put in place the technological infrastructure needed to ensure a positive learning experience for all. Several full and part-time professors also condemn the lack of adequate training which would have allowed them to develop pedagogical approaches better adapted to this mode of teaching.

"It seems that the University did not anticipate the complications brought on by bimodal teaching, and it has not been proactive at all in responding to challenges experienced by staff and students," says Luc Angers of the Association of Part-Time Professors of the University of Ottawa (APTPUO). "The Central Administration's approach did not take into account the sacrifices made by all members of our community since the start of the pandemic, which shows a blatant lack of respect."

In the light of the University's most recent financial statements, which show a surplus of \$41.7 million, the Coalition reiterates its demand to create smaller course sections to offer students two main options in the winter semester: either courses offered completely in-person, or entirely online. Bimodal teaching should be limited to a maximum of 10% of courses, for experimentation and with better support than that which has been provided during the fall semester. The Coalition hopes to see the Central Administration adopt a collegial approach with the group of unions, from which will follow solutions that are better thought-out than those which, to date, have been imposed in a top-down manner.

*The Inter-Union Coalition is comprised of the University of Ottawa Students' Union (UOSU), the Graduate Students' Association (GSAÉD), the Canadian Union of Public Employees CUPE Local 2626, the Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa, (APUO), the Association of Part-Time Professors of the University of Ottawa (APTPUO), the Support Staff of the University of Ottawa (SSUO), and the University of Ottawa IT Professionals.*