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CONTACT: Dawn Munday
COUSA President
519-661-4160
dmmunday@uwo.ca

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS SHOULD FREEZE THEIR OWN PAY

Ontario university presidents and senior administrators should voluntarily agree to a personal wage freeze, says the Confederation of Ontario University Staff Associations (COUSA).

Senior university administrators have enjoyed pay increases of up to 20% a year in recent years. At the February 8 general meeting COUSA delegates unanimously approved a resolution calling on university administrators to demonstrate leadership in the current financial crisis. Recent significant losses to endowed funds with the market crisis have left many universities with serious budgetary shortfalls which may lead to cutbacks in staff levels.

Dawn Munday, President of COUSA (who works at the University of Western Ontario), noted that the senior leadership at the University of Toronto recently voluntarily accepted a pay freeze. "This is an important positive symbolic step, but it should be adopted by university presidents throughout Ontario."

Speaking at a meeting of the COUSA Council February 8 in Toronto, Munday said, "Educational institutions can help to fuel our economic recovery. University staff are not just 'workers', but are highly-skilled, highly-educated and committed people, integral not only to the physical function of universities, but also to the education and research functions."

"For many years, Ontario has had the lowest per capita investment in post-secondary education in Canada, and is among the lowest in North America when compared with American state funding. This pattern has to change. Ontario must develop its intellectual capital in order to move forward into a strong new economy. Our universities are the main instrument to make this transition possible."

Founded in 1974, COUSA's membership includes staff associations and unions at nine Ontario universities, representing almost 7,000 non-academic staff.