

Delegates to CAUT's national Council vote unanimously to lift censure of First Nations University of Canada

For immediate release

(Ottawa – April 23, 2010) Delegates to the national Council of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) meeting in Ottawa have voted unanimously to immediately lift the censure imposed on First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv) 17 months ago.

CAUT decided to impose censure – a step that hadn't been used in almost 30 years – because of an ongoing refusal to implement changes to address governance issues that had brought about attacks on academic freedom and financial mismanagement.

"Back in 2008 we took that very serious step hoping that it would help encourage change, and that change has come," said CAUT Executive Director James Turk.

In the past two months, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), under the leadership of a new Chief, Guy Lonechild, has made enormous changes that have addressed concerns about the university's governance structure, and has worked with FNUUniv, the University of Regina and the Government of Saskatchewan to build a partnership agreement to ensure financial and administrative accountability.

"Now that these steps have been taken, the biggest threat to the First Nations University's survival is the federal government, which, despite the changes, refuses to restore full funding," said Turk.

"We were once one of the loudest voices in the country when it came to demanding changes at the institution – those changes have been made, so we've lifted censure, and it is time for the federal government to do its part," he added.

Today's vote means that academic staff in Canada and internationally will no longer be discouraged from accepting appointments or invitations to participate in academic conferences at the institution.

CAUT is the national voice of more than 65,000 academic staff at 122 universities and colleges across Canada.

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