



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

## **Faculty concerned with abrupt cancellation of French-language university**

The Ontario Government's recent fall economic statement revealed that the Progressive Conservatives would no longer be funding or moving forward with the French-language university set to be built in Toronto. In what has become a disturbing trend for this government, the announcement was made without any discussion with sector stakeholders, including faculty and students, and, more distressingly, without any consultation with Ontario's Francophone community.

Conceived as an autonomous institution that would be created by and for Francophones, the French-language University Planning Board and previous provincial government had spent several years consulting with Ontarians, and developing a vision for the new university. The "Université de l'Ontario français" was meant to serve central and southwestern Ontario, home to the fastest growing population of Francophones in the province.

The cancellation of the planned French-language university was a surprise, in part, because Doug Ford himself had promised during his election campaign that the project would go ahead. Following the cancellation of funding for three extension campuses and a directive threatening to cut funding from universities that fail to discipline dissenting campus voices, Ford's Progressive Conservative government has called into question its support for Ontario's vibrant public universities, free speech, and the province's Francophone population of more than 600,000.

It is deeply concerning that this government would cancel the promised French-language university without first consulting Francophone students, parents, and faculty. The decision marks a distinct lack of respect for Ontario's minority French-speaking population, and Francophones are justified in their frustration.

Faculty across Ontario are alarmed that the government continues to make decisions of this magnitude behind closed doors in secret. The cancelled French-language university is further evidence that the Doug Ford government is not interested in listening to Ontarians, but is instead committed to pursuing an uninformed and unaccountable ideological agenda.