



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 17:28

Date: October 12, 2017

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Copibec Lawsuit against Laval University**

CAUT has a long history of engagement with copyright issues, advocating for laws that support academic authors, teachers and researchers. CAUT is now mobilizing to defend fair copyright against Copibec, the Quebec-based publishers' cartel which is suing Laval University in your name.

Copibec is incorrectly claiming that Laval University is refusing to spend money on copyright material. In fact, in 2014-15, the institution spent \$12.6 million on documents for its library. In that same period Quebec universities expended more than \$63 million on such acquisitions; the grand total for universities across Canada was \$311 million.

The reality is that the hard-copy proportion of library acquisitions – for which Copibec charges a license fee to reproduce – is dwindling to the point of insignificance. In contrast, direct purchases of digital materials from publishers are booming, meaning the Copibec license duplicates existing expenditures, rendering its value minimal. The lawsuit is simply an attempt by Copibec to unjustly preserve its existing revenue stream.

Academic staff across Canada are implicated in this matter because Copibec has organized the lawsuit on a class-action basis. The class of people named in the action are all authors in Quebec, Canada, and the rest of the world. This captures most, if not all, academic staff in Canada.

CAUT is encouraging academic staff to formally remove their names from the claim. This can be done by filling out the attached form and sending it by October 16, 2017 to:

- a) the Clerk of the Superior Court for the district of Québec, as evidenced by the postmark, to the following address:

Superior Court Registry, Class action File 200-06-000179-146
Palais de justice de Québec,
300, boulevard Jean-Lesage,
Québec, Quebec,
Canada, G1K 8K6

b) with copy, by e-mail to actioncollective@copibec.ca or by mail to:

Copibec
Class Action
606, Cathcart Street, office 810
Montreal, Quebec H3B 1K9

We hope that academic staff take the symbolic but important action of removing themselves from this dubious lawsuit.