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Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

NEWS RELEASE

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Staff union raises concern over Sask Polytech layoffs

With the announcement of a new wave of job cuts at Sask Polytech, SGEU is calling on the provincial government to stop the loss of the school's academic and support staff.

22 Sask Polytech staff were given layoff notices last week – including five members from SGEU's Professional Services Bargaining Unit (PSBU), which represent the school's non-academic staff. 20 more employees were lost to voluntary buyouts. This follows the layoff of 23 staff last April, and the loss of 43 more to buyouts earlier that year.

"Sask Polytech cannot continue to lose support staff and instructors. These are the workers who make student success possible," said Bonnie Bond, chair of the PSBU. "For years, we've seen in-scope staffing levels minimized or cut back, while out-of-scope managerial positions increased rapidly."

From 2010 to 2017, the number of Professional Services jobs fell by 9.5%. Over that same period, out-of-scope jobs increased by a staggering 41.7%.

"Students don't need a top-heavy institution overflowing with managers. They need an institution that prioritizes hiring the best professional service workers to provide support to our students," adds Bond.

SGEU also rejects the notion that this newest round of layoffs and buyouts is being driven by shifts in the labour market, as Sask Polytech management and the Minister of Advanced Education claim.

"The tough economic times Saskatchewan is facing mean our citizens need more opportunities to advance their skills and increase their employability – not less," says Bond. "After cutting Sask Polytech's funding by 5% in 2017,

and offering no real increase in this year's budget, our provincial government is just looking for an excuse to cover their unwillingness to invest properly in post-secondary education."

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