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## **Letters | Province ignores universities' independence**

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On March 17, the Graham government announced that it would force university administrations to freeze the salaries of their employees. It threatened that, if they did not execute such a freeze, it would cut university grants or impose a freeze legislatively.

Whatever one might say about wage restraint under present conditions, the province has demonstrated once again its indifference to one of the essential features of a modern university - independence from government.

In last summer's so-called Action Plan on post-secondary education the province threatened to interfere with academic decisions in half a dozen important ways. Now it is attacking free collective bargaining. This is unacceptable - not because universities are immune from financial reality but because the public interest is served only when universities and their employees can teach, research, speak out and make decisions, including decisions about collective agreements, without being second-guessed or dictated to by politicians and bureaucrats.

We protest and denounce this government interference with free collective bargaining. If the province proceeds with this (probably illegal) wage freeze through legislation, we will fight it in the courts. Our fight will be not for money but for university independence.

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