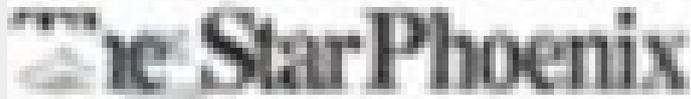


# FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY TO CLOSE

*Posted on March 20, 2010 by Keghart*



Category: [Opinions](#)



The Federal Government has announced it would stop funding the First Nations University of Canada in Regina, in effect, causing the closure of the unique educational institute. The university specializes in programs on Native culture and history and has the largest concentration of aboriginal programs anywhere in the world. Its student body of 1,000, includes non-Natives. Only 3% of Native Canadians hold university degree, compared to 18% for the total population. The Canadian government professes to promote an equal-opportunity society. It also believes that education is the key to social mobility. Ottawa's announcement that it would cut funds to the university is a slap in the face to the core beliefs it alleges to maintain. The university is expected to shut its doors on April 1. Mr. Harper, please tell us the funding cut is an April Fool's joke.

## SUPPORT FNUC

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## SUPPORT FNUC

### **Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations**

#### **Chief Guy Lonechild urges the Federal Government to Support FNUC**

Tuesday, 23 March 2010

(Saskatoon SK): Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Guy Lonechild has confirmed that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the First Nations University, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan government on the

## First Nations University

"Today's announcement is concrete evidence of our commitment to a partnership framework that creates accountability and stability," stated Chief Lonechild. "We are doing precisely what we indicated we would accomplish. That is, we are making continued, significant progress toward effective governance and a strong First Nations University."

The Memorandum of Understanding will see provincial dollars for First Nations University flow as conditions are met.

"This is an excellent step in the right direction," concluded Chief Lonechild. "The stated commitment on the part of Saskatchewan Advanced Education Employment and Labour Minister Norris to strongly urge the federal government to follow the provincial lead is yet another important step. It is now crucially important that the federal government show its commitment to the future of our students."

### **FNUC official fired, President among those officials accused of misspending**

By Jason Warick, [The StarPhoenix](#) March 20, 2010

First Nations University of Canada (FNUC) president Charles Pratt, one of several top officials embroiled in allegations of misspending earlier this year, has been fired with cause, says the university's board chair.

"We believe that action was warranted. We do believe that he failed to satisfactorily perform his duties," said Joely BigEagle, chair of the board of governors.

BigEagle declined to give the reasons behind the firing, which was decided at a Thursday night board meeting in Saskatoon. Pratt had been on leave since Feb. 8.

A source who spoke on condition of anonymity, however, said the allegations of inappropriate hirings, spending, travel and payouts detailed in a report by the university's former chief financial officer formed the basis for the firing.

BigEagle said the board is working hard to work out a new funding arrangement for the school.

Earlier this year, Advanced Education Minister Rob Norris announced the provincial government would cease its more than \$5 million in annual funding to the school due to stalled reforms. The announcement took many by surprise, as it came as the delegates of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) were debating, and later approved, the reforms.

Shortly after, the federal government followed suit and gave notice it would stop contributing more than \$7 million a year to FNUC.

University officials said the school will close its doors at the end of this month unless funding is restored.

Norris has been open to a new funding arrangement, which cedes most control to the University of

Regina. Federal Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl, however, has said repeatedly the federal decision is final.

Despite these pronouncements, BigEagle said the board remains hopeful.

"We're progressing forward. We're doing our best," she said.



FNUC funding hopes dashed

[CBC News](#), 16 March 2010

The federal government has not changed its mind about cutting funding to the First Nations University of Canada, the Saskatchewan government learned Tuesday.

Advanced Education Minister Rob Norris spoke with Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl Tuesday morning, but the discussion did not go well, Norris told reporters later.

Strahl would not reverse his decision to end Ottawa's \$7.2-million grant to the university.

When he announced the cut last month, Strahl said serious problems at the university have dragged on for years with no resolution in sight. He also referred to the \$5-million provincial funding cut already announced by Norris.

Since then, First Nations University has scrambled to stay alive.

Its owners, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, moved quickly, dissolving the board of governors, appointing a new board and agreeing to a shared-management arrangement with the University of Regina, whose main campus is next door.

Shared management would mean the U of R would handle First Nations University university's finances, but First Nations University would remain an independent academic institution.

However, the proposal hasn't been formally approved by the U of R, a situation Norris said left him in a weak position talking with Strahl. Without a signed deal between the U of R and the smaller university, Norris said there wasn't much he could say.

The minister's dismal report dashed the hopes of students and FNUC faculty who had gathered at the legislature for the latest news.

Restoration of federal funding was seen as a catalyst for getting the university on a stable financial footing and possibly winning back the provincial commitment as well.

Randy Lundy, a spokesman for the First Nations University faculty association, said Norris should have pushed Strahl harder to reinstate the money.

"He should be our biggest supporter at this point, as the minister of advanced education," Lundy said. "He should be going to Chuck Strahl and saying the \$7.2 million needs to be on the table and it

Norris said he's been working hard for the university and believes that even without the main federal grant, there may be some funding available from Ottawa for specific programs.

However, Lundy said it's impossible to run a university on such an uncertain source of cash.

