

## **Students anxious about mental health funding**

Calgary, AB – March 23, 2016 - Mount Royal student leaders are concerned that student mental health may no longer be a provincial government priority.

Provincial government funding directed at supporting student mental health on post-secondary campuses is due to expire in 2016. Student leaders have also noticed that post-secondary mental health was not recognized as a priority in a recent mental health review conducted by the province.

“These two things combined are worrying,” says Students’ Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) President, Erik Queenan. “Post-secondary students are at a pivotal time in their lives, and dealing with the pressures of balancing academic life with work and with extra-curricular commitments can adversely affect their ability to be successful while in university and even after graduation.”

“The Students’ Association offers a lot to support students and to try to help alleviate stress,” says SAMRU Vice-President Student Life Zoe Slusar. “We provide peer support and referrals, emergency loans, a campus food bank, a free breakfast program, social opportunities through clubs, events, and awareness programs, free lunches during exams, and a number of stress-less activities at various times of the year.”

“We do a lot of outreach with students, and we will continue to raise awareness about mental and physical wellness while working toward reducing stigma around mental illness — but there is still lot of work to be done and resources are needed to support this.”

While there are a lot of soft support systems in place on campus, students recognize that funding earmarked for mental health helps to maintain and expand professional programming, as well as facilitating the hiring of mental health service delivery experts such as counsellors and psychologists.

Queenan believes it’s better to deal with mental health issues sooner rather than later. “Both professional and peer-led mental health programming are key to addressing student mental health issues on campus. It’s better to support students during their time in the PSE system so they can succeed academically, graduate, and become contributing members of society.”

- 30 -

**The Students’ Association** is a non-profit organization, independent from Mount Royal University, which exists to enhance the academic experience provided by MRU. We serve students to help them succeed!

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