

To: President Rigg, Provost Vainio-Mattilia, the Board of Trustees and the Brock and Niagara community

From: The President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization

February 5, 2026

We are writing to express our extraordinary alarm with upper administration's decision to begin a major restructuring process across all departments and programs, beginning with Administrative Assistants, Academic Coordinators and some Academic Advisors.

The university objective is to reduce the staff workforce by 1/3 of current positions. We believe this process will have devastating effects on students, faculty and the remaining staff complement, and will also have economic impacts on the Niagara region. This comes in a period where senior administration positions have gone from 10 to 19 since 2012, with the cost per student of senior administrative salaries rising from just over \$130 to just under \$199 in that time frame.

The method for this restructuring raises serious concerns, including:

The consultation for this restructuring came from highly paid outside consultants, KPMG. While the Provost said in September 2025 that an implementation plan for their very general recommendations would be released "in the coming weeks" *repeated requests by Senate to view the KPMG report and implementation plan have been refused by upper administration. Hence there has been no discussion of these changes through the governing body of the university.*

Given this history, it is not surprising that the process now unfolding is *not transparent* and is creating confusion, uncertainty and alarm amongst the whole community.

The university appears to be engaged in union busting. The first round of layoffs is disproportionately targeting OSSTF staff. Many staff have been laid off, and some are being offered 'new' positions, many of which are NOT unionized, hence undermining the capacity of staff to negotiate the conditions of their employment and the ability of OSSTF to protect its members.

These *layoffs violate the terms of the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA) collective agreement.* The loss of 1/3 of support staff will dramatically affect the workload for chairs, directors, and all faculty. Article 32 of the BUFA collective agreement requires advance notice to BUFA members and consultation about any potential elimination of positions. Consequently, BUFA has submitted a grievance. However, the administration is attempting to create a *fait accompli* as these layoffs and restructuring will be complete by mid-March, well before any grievance would be resolved. Hence any stated commitment to negotiating the terms of employment has been completely undermined.

Staff who are offered 'new' positions must sign a *non-disclosure agreement*, where they agree to not talk about the process. This is an outrageous demand and one which seems intended to intimidate people into submission and to prevent any challenge to the non-transparent process now underway.

Staff who are offered 'new' positions are being told they must decide whether to accept these jobs on a very *short timeline* (2-3 days) and **some are told they can't have an OSSTF representative present in their lay-off meeting as "there isn't time"**. Indeed, there seems to be no consistency and transparency in staff decision-making across faculties, departments, and centres. All of this is a clear violation of Brock's own policies.

Overall, it should have been clear – but apparently not to KPMG – that Administrative Assistants and Academic Coordinators are the glue that holds departments and centres together. Centralizing staff into one pool will undermine their role as valued colleagues who hold institutional memory and provide critical support for faculty, students, and Chairs. Similarly, Academic Advisors do crucial work for students navigating their programs and are an essential service for any university committed to student recruitment, retention and flourishing. In short, the positions eliminated are not peripheral; they are vital to the functioning of the university's academic units and to the success of students.

This restructuring is also deeply gendered. **The staff targeted in this round of layoffs are disproportionately women**, and hence the loss of these positions directly erodes gender equity which the university, in their strategic plan, says is a priority. Instead, these cuts dismantle the feminized labour infrastructure that sustains the university's daily operations and relational life. Given that Brock has a high proportion of 'first generation' students who rely on support staff for access, navigation, and care, this downsizing will particularly affect those who already face significant challenges. The devastating loss of female support staff, therefore, is not a staffing challenge but a gender justice failure that actively reproduces inequality within the academy and in our communities in the Region.

Further, our dedicated support staff play a critical role in identifying students in distress, facilitating access to emergency funding, food programs, housing referrals, and mental health services, and providing relational continuity amid increasingly bureaucratic universities and a worsening economic and emotional landscape. When these positions are eliminated or left unfilled, students will encounter delays, administrative barriers, and a lack of support systems, which intensify anxiety, feelings of abandonment, and mental health emergencies. **These effects will be particularly acute for marginalized students**—including low-income, gender diverse, racialized, Indigenous, disabled, international and first-generation students—who rely most on navigational, relational and material support.

Finally, these cuts will affect not only students and academic staff, but the broader Niagara community. This impact is especially troubling as median incomes in Niagara are already significantly lower than in Ontario overall, and colleges and universities are key economic and

social anchors for the region. People who have been laid off are also residents who frequent local businesses, use health services, participate in tourism and engage with schools and community centres – all of which are in jeopardy because of these job losses. Indeed, for many, this loss of employment will result in housing and food insecurity.

PACHRED is aware that Brock faces intense financial challenges that are being exacerbated by years of insufficient public funding. While those challenges are real, the non-transparent process underway only creates fear and distrust. And sadly, it is consistent with upper administrations history of creating crises and then making changes outside of their powers to evade existing agreements on collegial governance.

PACHRED's mandate is to advocate for the university to honour its commitments to human rights, equity, and decolonization. We want to be clear: the process unfolding is not equitable, it is not one that respects the dignity and rights of those affected, and it is not consistent with our stated commitment to justice and decolonization. Neither is it consistent with Brock's institutional strategic plan which commits us to: "Build sustainable futures, Realize you matter".

As a result, PACHRED joins with others in the university community who have raised concerns to demand (a) an immediate pause on restructuring process, (b) the release of the full KPMG report, and (c) the start of a meaningful consultation process with unions and Senate to determine next steps in response to that report.

With respect,

The President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization

<https://brocku.ca/president/pachred/>