

Media Release from St. Jerome's University Academic Staff Association

For Immediate Release

Former Dean and VP Kieran Bonner Becomes Acting President of St. Jerome's Faculty Union

(June 29, 2009 – Waterloo, Ontario) Dr. Kieran Bonner, former Academic Dean and Vice-President at St. Jerome's University and Professor of Sociology, has become Acting President of the St. Jerome's University Academic Staff Association, a union certified by the Ontario Labour Relations Board on April 24, 2009.

Bonner, who served successfully as Academic Dean and Vice-President from 1999 to 2005 and is now Director of Human Sciences and Associate Chair, Graduate Studies in Sociology, replaces union president Dr. David Seljak while Seljak is on a research sabbatical from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Seljak will resume his duties as President when he returns.

"It is unusual for a former administrator to head a faculty union," says Seljak, "but faculty members decided that they needed a senior member with experience as the union begins to negotiate its first collective agreement with the administration next fall."

"Ken Snowdon, the external consultant hired by St. Jerome's Board of Governors to look into a crisis that has seen the departure of nearly 50% of staff (10) and 2 faculty members, recommended that faculty ensure that sensitive positions be filled only by experienced, tenured professors," says Seljak. "Bonner has that experience."

Bonner says that the faculty union at St. Jerome's is essentially conservative. "The university has been harmed by the Senior Administration's introduction of what the Board-appointed consultant has called a top-down and authoritarian style of leadership, violating Board approved policies and procedures," Bonner says. "I see myself as a problem solver and I hope to help in restoring a damaged university."

St. Jerome's University is a public Roman Catholic university federated with the University of Waterloo in the province of Ontario. It currently has about 1,000 full-time and part-time students. The St. Jerome's University Academic Staff Association represents the 30 full-time academic staff, that is, teaching faculty and the librarian.

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