

For immediate release

Canadian Association of University Teachers launches Canada's Past Matters campaign

(Ottawa: November 22, 2012) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has unveiled a national campaign exposing the threats to Canada's cultural institutions and historic sites and proposing what must be done to reverse the damage.

The "Canada's Past Matters" campaign will highlight how federal funding cuts and policy changes are putting the survival of libraries, archives, museums and historical sites across the country at risk.

"Our ability as Canadians to know, understand and appreciate our past is at stake because of the federal government's short-sighted cuts and ill-advised changes to historical programs and services," CAUT executive director James L. Turk said at a news conference in Ottawa today.

"We've launched this campaign because the changes we're seeing affect not just our members, but all Canadians in very damaging ways," added Turk. "We cannot chart our future properly unless we know and understand our past. Until government policy is changed, that will be less and less possible for our children and future generations."

Turk said the five aspects of the campaign are:

- **Save Library & Archives Canada:** The federal institution responsible for preserving Canada's history and cultural heritage is seriously threatened by major budget cuts, service reductions, and a narrowing of its mandate.
- **Preserve Canada's Historical Sites:** A \$29 million reduction in the budget for Parks Canada is threatening the future of Canada's 167 historic and archaeological sites.
- **Protect Canada's Public Libraries:** The inter-library loan program between Library & Archives Canada and regional public libraries is being eliminated along with public internet access in local libraries, making it more difficult for Canadians to access information and knowledge.
- **Restore Canada's Local Archives:** The elimination of the National Archival Development Program has put at risk regional archives and their projects across Canada.
- **Retain the Canadian Museum of Civilization:** The government plans to end Canada's largest and most popular museum – the only museum committed to promoting knowledge and critical understanding of, and appreciation and respect for, human cultural achievements and human behaviour.

For more information about the "Canada's Past Matters" campaign, visit www.canadaspastmatters.ca.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers is the national voice of more than 68,000 academic and general staff at 120 universities and colleges across the country.

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