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The shameful spectacle of decaying residences on the nightly news is a direct result of managerial choices dictated by the Board of Governors' insistence on a balanced budget. Even as the ranks of management continue to swell, Draconian cuts have been made in recent years to the frontline workers who do everything but teach classes at Trent, an institution with ambitious growth plans.

The frontline workers at Trent take great pride in their work and in this institution. It is immensely frustrating to have had their ranks cut in order to balance the budget as the institution grows. This is especially tragic because Trent University's financial constraints are, ultimately, self-imposed.

In order to maintain its student numbers, let alone increase its market share, the Board of Governors should take a tip from institutions with long-range plans that absorb losses over a period of time in order to build capacity. It is a disaster to try and increase enrolment while cutting back crucial support at the same time. The cuts have been to people pushing brooms, not to managers pushing pencils. The chickens have come home to roost.

Trent needs to reverse the cuts to frontline workers and reinvest in these crucial services. This can be done if the Board of Governors implements a long-range sustainability plan that runs a temporary deficit in order to invest in what the university so obviously needs. Other universities in Ontario are doing this. The abstraction of a balanced budget looks good to bean counters in the board room. It looks different to students in a filthy bathroom. The news report entitled "Squalid Conditions at Trent University" is what a balanced budget looks like to the rest of the world.

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