



Department Representatives Bulletin

Following is a recap of the Department Representatives meeting of October 6, 2021.

The meeting was chaired by Faculty Association President, David Stewart.

For further information on any item, please contact the Faculty Association office:

Email: faculty.association@ucfa.com, phone: (403) 220-5722

Welcome and Call to Order

President David Stewart acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2021/22 academic year.

Pandemic Issues

The Faculty Association welcomes comments and questions from its members on issues related to COVID and encourages academic staff to raise individual or general issues with the Association office as soon as they are of concern.

Stewart reported that the Faculty Association has been in constant meetings with the Administration since early August. He said the situation has been constantly evolving and has preoccupied most of the work of the Association office over the last three months.

The Association has received a steady stream of emails from members with concerns and advice on how the

Association should proceed. In August, the Association came to an agreement with the Provost, Teri Balsler: that anyone with COVID concerns could elect to change the modality of their teaching for the Fall. This was not universally supported by the Deans nor by academic staff members, but it solved a lot of problems by removing the need to deal with each accommodation concern separately.

Despite the change in modality, many Association members were still concerned with the problem of the lack of a masking requirement and were pressing for a vaccine requirement. The Association pressed the Administration on this. The Alberta research university administrations worked together and jointly declared a vaccine or testing requirement in late August, along with masking rules. Again, this solved a lot of problems, but many questions remained on how all of this would work.

The Association signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Provost for the fall. The main feature was providing sick time for any sessionals with COVID. Stewart noted there is no longer a commitment that USRIs won't be used this fall. The Administration would not agree to continuing that provision.

On September 13th, the Administration announced that vaccines would be required as of January 1st for all employees and students. For visitors to campus, they were required as of October 1st. The University President's message reads in part "We understand not everybody can be vaccinated. Legal accommodations exist for physical disability, religious status, and other protected grounds. Details on how to claim one of these accommodations, and other specifics of this policy, will be communicated after discussions with representatives of unions and stakeholder groups."

The Association is just beginning such discussions with the Provost now – especially related to compliance and enforcement -- and are simultaneously in communication with the Association's lawyer regarding the legal landscape and what the obligations are as a union.

The Provost met with the Faculty Association's Board of Directors on October 5th, and they pressed her on a number of issues related to the pandemic and the Administration's response.

There are many outstanding issues and questions from academic staff members related to the current situation as well as how things will work in January. This includes concerns about the modality of course offerings for the Winter.

When it comes to masking requirements, the Association has heard of some students arguing that they don't have to mask if there is physical distancing, and some of the Deans have allowed meetings to happen without masks. The Faculty Association Executive has flagged that there is confusion about when unmasking is

allowed, and the Association have raised this with the Administration for further clarity.

Some of the Deans have encouraged academic staff members to offer on-line versions of a course for students who cannot or do not want to come to an in-person class. In other words, they are pressing members who are teaching in person to also offer an online version. Academic staff members are not required to offer a course in multiple formats and Deans should not be pressing for this.

Also, outside of limited duties where in-person work is required (e.g. in-person teaching), people should be able to work from home.

The Association continues to get questions and comments from members daily. Stewart said he will be continuing his meetings with the Provost as the fall unfolds.

Bargaining

Faculty Association Principal Negotiator, Hamid Habibi reported on this item IN-CAMERA.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Thursday November 18, 2021

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

By ZOOM

Details of the ZOOM meeting to be distributed prior to meeting.