

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: January 24, 2022

SUBJECT: **MUNFA Request to Postpone the Return to In-Person Teaching**

Since Wednesday, January 19th, when the university administration announced that all classes with an enrollment of 99 or fewer would return to in-person teaching on January 31st, an overwhelming number of Academic Staff Members (ASMs) have contacted the MUNFA Office with concerns. The clear message received is that ASMs do not support the blanket mandate for students and ASMs to return to campus on January 31st, especially given the lack of clear information from the administration on necessary health and safety measures, plans for communicating on-campus COVID exposures, and the inevitable disruptions caused to learning when students/instructors are required to self-isolate.

Today, January 24th, the MUNFA Executive contacted senior administration to request that the return to in-person teaching be delayed until February 28th, the date for which classes are scheduled to resume following Winter Break, or alternatively, that instructors be given the flexibility to decide whether they will continue to deliver their courses remotely. Such a delay would:

- permit more students, faculty, and staff to receive their vaccination and/or booster shots and to obtain the increased immunity that provides;
- to enable ASMs to obtain medical advice that pertains to their specific situations;
- to allow students to return to their place of study and abide by self-isolation requirements, of particular concern for students living outside of province or country; and
- for clear pandemic guidelines to be developed with meaningful input from students, faculty, and staff.

We encourage ASMs to communicate their support for this request to President Vianne Timmons (president@mun.ca), Provost Florentine Strzelczyk (vpacad@mun.ca), Chief Risk Officer Greg McDougall (cro@mun.ca), and their administrative head, and to copy munfa@mun.ca.

In the meantime, ASMs should discuss any health-related concerns with their doctor and seek medical advice/documentation as required. We also remind ASMs of the [University's workplace accommodation policy](#). If you encounter challenges with this process, please contact our office, munfa@mun.ca.

Additional questions/concerns can be directed to munfa@mun.ca and we will provide further updates as information becomes available.