

Dear Colleagues

President Rahilly's announcement yesterday about proof of vaccination being mandatory effective January 1, 2022 is a necessary step to ensure that students, staff and faculty have a safe and healthy workplace. The Association has advocated for this approach for some time both to the University and to the Minister of Advanced Education.

That said, I understand that there are some members who, for a variety of reasons, have not yet been vaccinated or who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or on human rights grounds. The Association has advocated that exemptions related to human rights and medical reasons be an important aspect of this policy and we will seek to have those articulated in the policy. Following CAUT's guidelines about vaccine mandates, the Association has also advocated that the University adopt a non-disciplinary approach for those who may be unable or unwilling to comply where they are allowed to work remotely or submit appropriate negative test results. We will continue to advocate for this approach and will certainly ensure that all articles of the Collective Agreement are closely followed. We will also endeavour to work with University administration to ensure that privacy issues are addressed, including but not limited to how proof of vaccine status is recorded and stored, who has access to these records, and how long they are retained by the employer.

Meanwhile, we continue to have significant concerns about the approach the University has taken with respect to vaccine declarations and rapid testing. To that end, we have written to the Administration strongly urging that the following steps be taken:

- Begin immediately auditing the vaccine declarations that have been made. There is no time to waste given that students who attended classes last week are now reporting being sick. A robust audit with tight times to show proof of vaccination or a negative rapid test is necessary to give any credence to the current figure that 89.5 percent of respondents claim to be fully vaccinated.
- Improve the real-time information about vaccine declarations, including data related to compliance, outbreaks and outcomes.
- Move to enforce the rapid testing program with an app-based compliance approach similar to that being used at the University of Lethbridge

The MRFA knows that many see the announcement today as a positive development. However, we have more to do to ensure our campus remains healthy and safe for all employees and staff this semester. We believe these measures will help us achieve this goal.