



MRFA
MOUNT ROYAL
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

COVID Bulletin #1

September 7, 2022

Welcome to the first edition of the MRFA's COVID Bulletin. This document provides detailed information about what the Association is doing to create a safe and healthy workplace.

I. Advocate for the University to take all possible safety precautions to ensure a safe and healthy workplace

We will continue to press for the University to publicize all the steps it has taken to ensure instructional spaces are safe and healthy workspaces for students, staff, and faculty.

1. MRU has repeatedly stated that the University's heat and ventilation systems meet the highest standards. One way to assess the effectiveness of HVAC systems is measuring the CO2 levels in the University, specifically those in instructional spaces.

The Association continues to request that the University test air quality in instructional spaces to show the MRU community that HVAC systems are working effectively to remove the virus. This data should be easily available to the MRU community.

2. The Association believes that University meetings should be available to faculty in both in-person and on-line formats and that governance bodies (e.g., GFCs) should choose the modality of their meetings.

The Association has wording for such motions. Email labourrelations@mrfa.net.

NOTE: The Association has made its meetings available in mixed format wherever possible.

3. In November 2021, the Association filed a policy grievance that alleged the University had not done enough to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. This grievance can be resumed and progressed if actions are not taken.

II . Encourage members to take measures to ensure their safety and that of their students' safety

Our partners in the MRU Coalition are agreed that messaging to the community must emphasize the need to stay away from campus if an individual is feeling ill and/or testing positive. The Coalition also endorses measures to support students, staff, and faculty when they need to remain at home (see below). The Association asks members to **stay home** when not feeling well and/or when they have tested positive for the COVID virus.

- a. Full-time faculty have up to four days of general illness leave and can assess short-term disability should the illness persist.
- b. Contract faculty have access to illness leave of four (4) SICH for each sixteen (16) SICH they are contracted per semester.

NOTE: If you feel well enough to work, but cannot do so in-person, you can shift to remote teaching while you are isolating away from the in-person work environment. If you do this, please engage with your Chair to make the necessary arrangements.

The Association is pressing the University to provide sick leave to contract faculty whose illness extends longer than the contractually allotted sick time or who experience multiple illnesses (e.g., COVID and a general illness).

2. Mask Wearing In Class

According to the University's Hazard Reduction measures, instructors may request that all individuals within their classroom wear a mask.

Note: The Employer has not allowed an instructor **to require** masks to be worn. The Association continues to discuss this topic with the Employer.

3. Masks Provided by Employer

Students, staff, and faculty can pick up a box of rated-surgical masks at the checkout (via the *Online Order Desk*; located in I106, towards the back of the Campus Store) at the [Cougars Campus Store](#). Show your OneCard to receive a box, which should last approximately 45 working days.

4. Voluntary Rapid Testing

The University is providing voluntary rapid testing to support our collective efforts to create a safer environment for everyone. This additional layer of protection for our on-campus community is available to students, staff, and faculty. Show your OneCard to access rapid tests in the [Cougars Campus Store](#) during operating hours.

III. Provide support to members who feel unsafe in their workplace and wish to grieve under the collective agreement and/or under OHS legislation.

Faculty have rights under the Collective Agreement when they feel unsafe in the workplace.

1. Members who believe they have reasons for not teaching in-person can apply for accommodations under Article 22.2. Members are entitled to have an Association representative present when meeting about such accommodations. Please contact LabourRelations@mrfa.net to access this.
2. Individuals who feel that their instructional space is unsafe can file an [Injury / Incident Report Form](#) within *Step 2: Report the Safety Incident* on the Environment Health and Safety webpage. Such incidents must be investigated and the outcome reported to the individual and to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC).

When you file an incident report, please inform the Association (via LabourRelations@mrfa.net) and your JOHSC representatives ([Milena Radzikowska](#) and [Scharie Tavcer](#)), so they can ensure the incident is recorded and addressed.

5. If you remain dissatisfied with the result or if no action is taken, individuals can complain to the provincial OHS Office at 1-866-415-8690. This phone conversation can be anonymous or not – your choice – but they will ask you about your employer and their contact information.
6. Individuals can also file a grievance under Article 22.4 of the Collective Agreement.

What else is the Association Doing?

The return to campus situation continues to evolve. To help ensure a timely response to changing circumstances, the Executive Board

- Created COVID Advisory Committee to review best practices related to the pandemic and make recommendations to the Executive Board. The Committee will be chaired by Kirk Niergarth, VP Negotiations. We are especially looking for faculty with expertise in health and safety legislation, health regulations and science. If you are interested in joining this advisory group, contact Chantelle Anderson facultyrelations@mrfa.net

Operations in the Faculty Center

- Purchased HEPA air filters for the Faculty Center to ensure the air in meeting rooms, the MRFA Office and the Faculty Center is meeting standards. This equipment is currently enroute to the faculty centre.
- is maintaining reduced capacity limits within the areas the Association controls. To this end:
 - the Faculty Center has a maximum capacity of 60 unmasked people,
 - the Peggy Brydon Room has a maximum of 5 or fewer if unmasked, 6-8 if masked, and
 - the Room 2 has a maximum capacity of 2 or fewer if unmasked, 3-4 if masked.
- continues to follow cleaning protocols for meeting rooms, ensuring tabletops, chairs, and other commonly touched areas are sprayed/disinfected and cleaned frequently.
- is developing processes that will allow for regular air testing of the Faculty Centre's air.
- requested (on August 30) a JOHSC meeting prior to the start of Fall 2022 classes to review MRU's COVID and monkeypox responses (via MRFA representative, Milena Radzikowska).
- continues to make masks available to all in the Faculty Center and at meetings.

We will continue to communicate regularly with bulletins as needed. Meanwhile, if you have additional questions or remarks, please contact LabourRelations@mrfa.net