



November 21, 2022

Dr. Tim Rahilly, President and Vice Chancellor
Kirby Hall - Mount Royal University
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6

Dear Dr. Rahilly:

The MRFA has been monitoring the evolving situation with COVID-19, influenza and the respiratory virus with mounting concern. With the increased pressure on emergency rooms and other indicators of COVID-19 and influenza on the rise, the Association is writing to urge you to take stronger actions to ensure that the campus remains a safe and healthy place for in-person teaching and learning .

After reviewing the available data and based on evidence, the Association believes that a mandatory mask mandate remains the most effective way to reduce transmission of all viruses. We note that the Academic Staff Association of the University of Alberta has requested mandatory masking and that if such a mandate is not possible, that the University provide an evidenced-based rationale for its decision. The MRFA echoes this call asking that MRU also provide such an evidence-based rationale for its choices.

Meanwhile, the MRFA strongly urges that the University shift its approach to keeping the campus a safe and healthy place for students, staff and faculty to work and learn. Specifically, the Association urges the University to take the following steps immediately:

- Change signage and University messaging to masks are “Strongly Recommended” to be worn on campus
- Require students, staff and faculty to report on illness for more accurate data on the evolving campus situation
- Remind the MRU community to remain home when feeling sick
- Encourage vaccination as part of a layered approach to campus safety. The Association would be happy to co-sponsor vaccine clinics on campus to increase the uptake on the bivalent vaccine now available.

These steps are especially urgent given that we have students from the Foundations for the Future Academy Charter School (FFCA), who are in the age groups currently at risk of sickness. We believe these campus partners should also be asked to support mask wearing. These measures will work to mitigate the impact of these viruses on our campus.

As we approach the final exam period, the MRFA continues to advocate that Mount Royal University take these actions to maintain a safe and healthy campus and are happy to meet with you to discuss what more can be done.

Sincerely,

Lee Easton - MRFA President
Submitted on behalf of the Executive Board