

TO: All MUNFA Bargaining Unit Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: April 20, 2020

SUBJECT: MUNFA's position on Bargaining in 2020

As many MUNFA members will know, the current Collective Agreement between MUN and MUNFA extends to August 31, 2020, with the provision that it remains in effect until a new Collective Agreement is signed or there is a strike or lockout.

Under the terms of the Agreement, either side may trigger collective bargaining by notifying the other of its desire to do so not more than 90 working days and not less than 30 working days before August 31. Should neither side give notice that it wants to begin bargaining in 2020, the current Collective Agreement will remain in effect, with both sides retaining the right to initiate bargaining at the same time next year (see clause 1.39).

The MUNFA Executive does not believe that entering negotiations this year will best serve our members or the university community as a whole, and has approached Memorial's administration with a proposal that neither side will give notice that it wants to open the Collective Agreement in 2020.

First and foremost, Academic Staff Members are working very hard under challenging and complex circumstances to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Other MUN employees face parallel difficulties. Meanwhile, our undergraduate and graduate students have had to adapt rapidly to new modes of course delivery and supervision and have had research programs put on hold. Many of them have lost income as a result of public health directives. They may also be living far from their homes and families in this enormously uncertain context.

Under these circumstances, we believe that both MUNFA and the university administration should focus on supporting academic staff and the rest of the university community in more immediate ways. Additionally, we are concerned that the current situation is not conducive to the consultation and communication with our members that good collective bargaining demands. Nor do we think that the logistics of bargaining remotely are conducive to effective negotiations. Finally, this is a critical time for all of us to work to ensure that, in the post-pandemic situation, Memorial has the support it needs to deliver on the core values of public education and scholarship.

In sum, collective bargaining is a vital tool for solidifying the university's ability to meet its public responsibilities. However, we believe that both MUNFA and the university administration should focus on the immediate needs of our members and on fighting to ensure that our university emerges from the

public health emergency in the strongest position possible and poised to meet its special obligation to the people of this province.

We remain committed to supporting you during this challenging time. Please contact us with any concerns, questions or suggestions by emailing munfa@mun.ca.