

TO: All MUNFA Members
FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee
DATE: September 16, 2021
SUBJECT: Changes to Course Maximum Enrollments

MUNFA has heard from a number of Academic Staff Members (ASMs) who have expressed concern at administrative requests to consider increasing maximum enrollment for certain courses. Although caps on enrollment are not explicitly referenced in the MUN/MUNFA Collective Agreement (CA), [Clause 3.02](#) states that teaching responsibilities of ASMs shall be discharged in accordance with all relevant Senate resolutions and regulations. Therefore, courses with designated limited enrolment in University Calendar regulations (e.g., Critical Reading and Writing Courses) cannot have their maximum enrolment unilaterally changed by the administration without approval by Senate. ASMs being presented with such mandates from the administration have the right to say no if approval has not been sought from Senate. In addition, [Clause 3.13](#) of the CA requires that the number of students enrolled in each course be considered when teaching assignments are made in advance of the academic semester. Finally, class sizes are inseparable from a range of pedagogical issues and should not be changed arbitrarily.

While communication from Administrative Heads to ASMs indicate that, to date, requests to increase course enrollment are voluntary, MUNFA is concerned about ASMs - particularly those in contractual and tenure-track positions - being pressured to increase course enrollments and the resulting long-term impacts this could have on workload as well as the potential pedagogical implications. As noted in past communications, MUNFA is concerned that the administration will seek to make permanent those changes which ASMs have made in teaching methods to accommodate students during the pandemic, thus impacting workload beyond the pandemic.

Finally, requests to increase the caps on in-person classes in the pandemic context present an occupational health and safety concern, making safe physical distancing within classrooms harder to achieve. As MUNFA has stated before, while vaccinations are a critical component in our pandemic response, they cannot substitute for other prevention measures, such as masking and physical distancing.

If an ASM has concerns with proposed increased maximum enrollments for a course they are teaching and would like advice, please contact our office, munfa@mun.ca.

As the above issue is directly related to governance concerns within the University, we would remind members that MUNFA recently struck a new [Governance Working Group](#) to address the erosion of collegial governance and shared-decision making at Memorial University. ASMs interested in participating should contact MUNFA's Organizing, Membership Engagement, and Communications Coordinator, Travis Perry, at membership.munfa@mun.ca.