

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: November 25, 2021

SUBJECT: Update on MUNFA Association Grievances

Over the past few months, MUNFA has heard from Academic Staff Members (ASMs) who are concerned with the administration's handling of accommodation requests relating to COVID-19. As a result, the MUNFA Executive filed the following Association Grievances with the University administration.

Association Grievance A-21-15 (Unvaccinated Student Accommodations and Workload)

In September, MUNFA became aware that ASMs delivering in-person courses were being asked to provide accommodations for students who were unvaccinated, regardless of the reason for the student's vaccination status. These accommodations sometimes included the shifting of in-person course delivery to remote course delivery for certain students. MUNFA noted concerns that ASMs were expending significant time and resources to develop revised course materials as part of these accommodations and filed an Association Grievance regarding the administration's failure to recognize and compensate the subsequent increased workload.

Association Grievance A-21-16 (Failure to Provide Compassionate Accommodations)

With the resumption of on-campus activities, MUNFA heard from several ASMs with vulnerable family members or young children whose requests to teach remotely due were denied. Prior to filing a grievance, MUNFA met with the administration to discuss concerns that the University was improperly using its Workplace Accommodation Policy to deny these requests and was failing to support employees with caregiving responsibilities. MUNFA noted that the requests were short-term (i.e. one semester) and based on ASMs' concerns of spreading the COVID-19 virus to at risk family members. Unfortunately, the University's position did not change and ASM requests continued to be denied, resulting in MUNFA filing an Association Grievance.

Association Grievance A-21-17 (Workplace Accommodation Policy – Use of External Consultants)

In late August 2021, MUNFA heard from ASMs who were contacted by an "HR Disability Case Manager" after making a request through the [Workplace Accommodation Policy](#). The letters addressed to ASMs were written on letterhead from the University's Department of Human Resources. Upon inquiry, MUNFA learned that the letters were written by employees of Dallas Mercer Consulting (DMC). MUNFA further learned that DMC, an external disability management company, was hired by the University to assist with workplace accommodation requests. Section 2.4 of the Policy states: "From time to time, the University may seek the input and assistance of a third party in order to respond to a request for accommodation. ... The consent of the employee requesting the accommodation is needed prior to the University contacting any third parties". MUNFA is not aware of the administration seeking consent from ASMs prior to sharing workplace accommodation request information with DMC and as a result an Association Grievance was filed.

MUNFA will provide the membership with updates on these grievances as they arise. Any ASM with workplace questions or concerns should email munfa@mun.ca or call 864-8642.