

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: June 2, 2022

SUBJECT: **Removal of mask mandate**

MUNFA's Executive Committee was distressed to see the university's May 31 announcement that the mask mandate would be lifted on all campuses — and, worse, that this would take place with less than 24 hours' notice, even though COVID continues to circulate and despite the serious health complications infection can present. Everyone who works, studies, or otherwise spends time on MUN's campuses deserves to do so safely and without exposing themselves to undue risk. Our members have been clear that they do not feel safe working in an environment where masks are no longer required, and the Executive has communicated this to the best of our ability to the university's administration.

Worryingly, MUNFA was neither consulted in a substantive manner about this shift nor provided any forewarning. With this change made in the middle of a semester, MUNFA members, along with other MUNL community members, are now left scrambling to ensure their safety, with no lead time to seek accommodations if they find it necessary. For workers, lifting the mask mandate imperils their ability to perform their jobs without risking illness. For students, this rapid shift constitutes a barrier to achieving the education to which they are entitled.

If the university insists on removing protective measures, it must at the very least adopt an inclusive, flexible approach to approving accommodations requested by workers and students concerned for their or their loved ones' safety. This would entail a stark shift away from the university's approach thus far in the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left the Executive with little confidence that the administration's top concern is the safety of students and workers.

Members who are concerned about their safety are advised to contact their administrative head and point them to [Clause 27.08](#) of the Collective Agreement: *"In circumstances where there is evidence that an ASM's work space or immediate surroundings might reasonably pose a danger to their health, the University shall mitigate any danger or provide alternative work space. If the ASM is required to occupy an alternate workspace for more than five (5) days, the ASM may make a request to have office contents moved expeditiously to the new location. Such a request shall not be unreasonably denied."* You have a right to working conditions that do not put your health and safety at risk.

MUNFA's Executive Committee is deeply concerned about the university's rash decision and is discussing next steps. Members are encouraged to contact us at munfa@mun.ca with their concerns.

We are MUNFA.