

August 18, 2022

On Tuesday, Memorial University of Newfoundland announced it would reimplement a partial mask mandate for classrooms, laboratories and the SWCC come September 1st.

MUNSU's main goal has always been and will always be to prioritize the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable and structurally excluded members. MUNFA, likewise, wants both members and the students we teach to be able to come to campus knowing that their safety is not at risk. Students, faculty, and staff who either live with immunocompromised folks or are immunocompromised themselves deserve to feel safe on campus. The impacts getting COVID-19 can have on one's education and ability to function are not to be taken lightly.

At the start of the pandemic, Newfoundland and Labrador was at the forefront of public health protections — but over the past couple of months, we have seen both the government and the university fall behind. Inadequate tracking of cases and rising death and ICU counts are major causes for concern.

MUNSU and MUNFA have continuously called on the administration to reinstate COVID-19 protections since they were first lifted on May 31st. Prior to the lifting of the mask mandate, administration allowed for consultation with both the faculty association and the students union. Following this consultation, they then blatantly went against the recommendations both groups brought forward. We are happy to see some measures put back in place before the beginning of the Fall semester.

We are continuing to advocate for increased air quality conditions, improved consultation practices and a firm and detailed commitment to student accommodations. We are also advocating for the on-campus testing clinic to be as accessible and as available as it can be. We strongly recommend when going back to campus that all students and faculty wear their masks as much as possible. It is anticipated that there will be considerable amounts of COVID-19 spread within the community. Following the guidelines set out is the best step to protecting yourself, your peers, your instructors and university staff.

If students require any assistance in acquiring accommodations for the Fall semester please contact your Director of Advocacy, Jawad Chowdhury, at advocacy@munsu.ca. MUNFA members can reach out to munfa@mun.ca with comments or concerns.

