

May 16, 2024

Dr. N. Bose
President & Vice Chancellor *pro tempore*
Memorial University

Dear President Bose,

I am writing on behalf of the MUNFA Executive Committee to convey significant concerns about the ongoing fallout from the cyber-attack on Grenfell campus. On April 5, 2024 the MUNFA Executive sent a letter to Faculty Relations regarding concerns about the cyber-attack and its implications for the Collective Agreement. As part of that correspondence we enclosed a Memorandum of Understanding for the employer's consideration. As yet we have received no response. The lack of timely response is leading to enhanced anxiety and agitation for Grenfell based ASMs who are now confronted with the prospect of an upcoming two week long IT outage at their place of work.

Our members continue to convey to us that the effects of the cyber-attack are far from over and do not amount to a mere short-term 'incident'; nor does the euphemism of a 'cyber challenge' do justice to the significant consequences being experienced by MUNFA members at the Grenfell campus. The upcoming outage scheduled, as we understand it, for June 15th–30th further compounds our concerns. It is our understanding that MUNFA members at Grenfell are being told that they should perform their regular work duties, yet do so without access to any of the IT infrastructure they need to perform those duties. From what we can discern, there is little meaningful consideration being given to the highly differential impacts that the cyber-attack and the planned outage is and will have on different ASMs in different fields. Some ASMs may be able to perform some of their regular work duties related to teaching, research, and service by way of an improvised IT infrastructure. For others performing those duties, especially those requiring specialized IT enabled research equipment and/or software, it will be impossible to perform all of their regular duties.

Further, Grenfell-based ASMs are seeking clarity on what exactly the IT outage scheduled for June will entail, what services/equipment will be impacted and for how long, and what options will be in place to support work during this time. The MUNFA Executive is concerned that it is only in the last 24-48 hours that OCIO has fielded a survey to Grenfell ASMs to assess their IT needs and how they may be accommodated during the scheduled outage. For many ASMs, the upcoming outage will severely disrupt plans that may have been in the works for months.

Acute concerns that have been brought to MUNFA Executive's attention include:

- The outage planned for June will have equity impacts – particularly for ASMs that may need to work from home while children are home and out of school.
- Equity impacts across disciplines, as some researchers need access to hardware and computers (as do their hired students) to do meaningful work during this time frame.
- If ASMs are expected to work from home, there are ergonomic considerations that may need to be accommodated. Yet, our understanding from Grenfell ASMs is that there has not been sufficient information about if and how the employer will address this issue.

- Significant impacts on students who have been hired to work on research related projects during this time. How will the MUNL support students and the ASMs who have hired them to work during this time? There are financial considerations that are linked to hiring students and then not having the right equipment for them to do the work. In some cases, ASMs will be spending considerable sums of grant money to pay students who are unable to perform the work they were hired for due to lack of IT resources. Will MUNL compensate researchers for such expenditures?
- There are implications for the career of ASMs, both tenured-track and tenure, given that they need to secure research funds against the whole Canadian pool of researchers, most of whom have not have to deal with a cyber-attack.

The lack of resources (time, money, personnel) is a key hindrance in making sure that ASMs at Grenfell are able to do their research in a timely manner.

As such, we request a timely response to address the acute concerns noted above. We also request that the University provide a response to our outstanding MOU of April 5th. Our members at Grenfell Campus have worked tirelessly since the cyber-attack and they deserve more information and clarity than what has been provided to date.

Sincerely,



Dr. Josh Lepawsky
President, MUNFA

- c. Dr. K. Jacobsen, Interim Vice-President Grenfell Campus
Dr. P. Ride, Dean, School of Fine Arts/Interim Dean, School of Arts and Social Science
Dr. R. Bailey, Interim Dean, School of Science and the Environment
Dr. M. Cheema Interim Associate Vice-President (Grenfell Campus) Research and Graduate Studies
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