

TO: All MUNFA Members
FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee
DATE: November 14, 2024
SUBJECT: MUNFA Meeting with CIO Regarding ITS/Computer Issues

Over the past several months, the MUNFA Executive has received feedback from members on a broad range of issues and concerns pertaining to IT Services and various computer-related issues.

Recently, representatives from MUNFA's Executive and Academic Freedom and Grievance Committees (AF&G - St. John's and AF&G - Grenfell Campus) met with Memorial's Chief Information Officer (CIO), Alison Randell, and a number of ITS Managers to bring these issues forward. The goal was to gather information and, potentially, suggest/find solutions to the myriad of issues being brought forward by members on this front.

Based on feedback from the member survey on this issue, and input from the MUNFA Executive and AF&G Committees, MUNFA representatives focused on the following items at the meeting:

- various administrative privilege issues
- problems caused by software updates
- authentication issues (authentication loops, problems getting dongles, etc.)
- lack of access to software
- lack of wifi on campuses/wifi 'dead zones'
- issues with support for MACs/Apple
- inability to get IT/computer issues resolved in a timely manner

Overall, the meeting was positive and constructive. The CIO and her team were appreciative that these issues were brought forward in a way that would allow for dialogue and action. Both parties agreed to keep the conversation/information-sharing process going, with another meeting tentatively scheduled for early December.

The CIO and her team acknowledged that a significant part of the problems is the lack of proactive communications to ASMs regarding ITS process, rationale for policies, options to address concerns, and options/resources available to ASMs, etc. For example, administrative privileges can be requested using an online Service Request Form which can be found - [HERE](#) (see: request elevated account privileges form) but this has not been adequately communicated to ASMs.

MUNFA Reps also raised the need to balance security concerns with infringement on the needs of ASMs, particularly as it relates to access to software/programs/etc.

Issues regarding the inability to get IT/computer issues resolved in a timely, transparent, and consistent manner was also a key point of discussion during the meeting. MUNFA Reps made it clear that the front line workers dealing with these issues are often under-resourced and are not to blame for the issues with timeliness. MUNFA Reps suggested that adequate front-line ITS staffing resources would help alleviate issues with inquiries/troubleshooting/problem solving. The CIO agreed.

There were a number of suggestion/action items that came out of this initial meeting as well (see below). MUNFA has followed up with a status update request on these items and will report back when more information becomes available.

1. A survey from the CIO to ASMs to gather information, feedback, and data about ITS/computer issues;
2. An online form for members of the University community to report locations of wifi issues/non-coverage (with the goal of identifying problem areas/creating a heatmap so they can be prioritized and addressed). The CIO agreed that no department/unit should have to purchase/supplement their own wifi in classrooms and public areas.
3. Request for information regarding the Mac/Apple Lab that is currently being set up on the St. John's Campus (and how they can work with/communicate with the Grenfell lab to improve the situation for Apple users at both campuses).
4. A requested timeline of restoration of functionality for Grenfell student cohort email lists

This is a matter that the MUNFA Executive/AF&G Committees will continue to monitor and work on with the goal of improving the situation for ASMs on the ITS front.

We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available. If there are other issues that you would like raised on this front, please email munfa@mun.ca