

From: [Sean Parkinson](#)
To: [Kavita Goldsmith](#)
Subject: another email to attach
Date: August 10, 2021 1:33:48 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

From: FAFA <fafa-bounces@lists.uvic.ca> on behalf of FA President <presidentfa@uvic.ca>
Sent: August 7, 2021 12:10 AM
To: fafa@lists.uvic.ca
Subject: [Fafa] Report on Survey and FA Advocacy re Fall Term

<image004.jpg>

Dear Colleagues,

I want to thank the 480 of you who took time to fill out our survey about the fall. The quantitative results of the survey are attached. Of those responding to the survey, 85% agree that we should advocate that the university lobby the government to allow the university to mandate vaccinations for students, faculty and staff who will be on campus in the fall. 74% support the university lobbying to allow a mask mandate, and 89% support requiring students in residence to be vaccinated. It is of major concern that 125 also reported that they have children under 12 at home, who cannot yet be vaccinated, while 165 members who responded to the survey have those who are immunocompromised or otherwise at higher risk of COVID in their households.

I have sent a strong letter to President Hall and the Executive Council on behalf of the Association, reporting on the results of this survey, and asking whether the senior administration is lobbying the government for mask mandates and requirements for vaccination for all who will be on campus in the fall. The Association also asked "the University to advocate as much as possible for a shift in thinking within the PHO [Public Health Office], or for autonomy on these crucial issues of urgent importance to all members of the university community." I have not yet heard back from the President and the Executive Council, but I hope to hear soon, and will let you know when I do.

The lack of university autonomy on these issues is a major problem. Although Dr. Bonnie Henry has encouraged private businesses to require vaccinations, on July 29th the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education wrote to the universities, telling them that they were not permitted to mandate masks or vaccinations on their campuses without permission of the PHO. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA-BC), of which UVic FA is a member, has written to the Minister of Advanced Education (attached), strongly advocating for university autonomy in addressing the very real health concerns facing universities, particularly in light of the prevalence of the Delta variant, growing case counts in BC, and the many young people who remain unvaccinated. The Association also signed a letter to the Minister of Advanced Education, initiated by the TSSU at SFU (the sessional and TA union), which was also signed by CUPE 4163 at UVic and other CUPE unions at BC universities, strongly advocating that stronger health and safety measures, including mask

mandates, be put in place for the fall. See <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/mobile/university-students-faculty-and-staff-want-b-c-to-do-more-to-prevent-covid-19-transmission-in-classrooms-this-fall-1.5536443>

Mandating Vaccinations

The government, and many university administrations, remain concerned about potential legal issues involved in mandating vaccinations for those attending campus this fall. However, major Canadian publications (including the Globe and Mail) have recently published a number of powerful editorials and expert commentary in support of vaccine mandates within higher education.

In one article, constitutional scholars Carissima Mathen and Debra Parkes conclude:

“Simply put, we have yet to encounter a persuasive argument that universities do not have the authority to mandate vaccinations as a requirement of access, allowing for exceptions for those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. Prioritizing the unfettered rights of unvaccinated individuals to, potentially, infect others is neither the right solution, nor one compelled by the Charter. Canadian universities must act now to protect their communities.”

<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/debra-parkes-and-carissima-mathen-canadian-universities-must-act-now-to-protect-their-communities> Also see

<https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/canadas-universities-and-colleges-are-failing-science/>

Building Ventilation

In my last email I noted that the University has brought the ventilation systems of 98% of university buildings up to MERV-13 standards, which filter out most virus particles. This is positive news. However, the university reports that three university buildings, Fraser, the Phoenix and Cunningham, can only take MERV-11 filters, which exceed normal WorkSafe standards, but are not up to the task of filtering COVID viruses. 28 smaller rooms in various university buildings, most of which are used as classrooms, have no ventilation systems beyond windows and doors. The university is exploring options in the latter classrooms. We have asked that in all cases the highest health standards be mandated, which would require either closing classrooms that cannot be adequately ventilated, mandating masks or purchasing portable HEPA air filtration systems, both for these classrooms and for classrooms and other spaces in Cunningham, Fraser and the Phoenix.

See https://www.uvic.ca/ohse/assets/docs/rhc/hvac_update_july28.pdf for a report on current ventilation standards.

Other questions

The Association has been asked a number of other questions about the fall term, and we have received some answers from the administration. Members can certainly choose to wear masks themselves if they wish. Department and other meetings can be held on Zoom, if that is what is preferred. Office hours can also be held on Zoom.

Faculty members can ask students not to crowd around them at the end of classes, but to leave a reasonable space. I have asked whether faculty members can require students to wear masks if visiting faculty offices during office hours, and have not yet received a response.

Medical Accommodation

For those members who are increasingly concerned about the conditions of face-to-face teaching in the fall, and who can provide medical documentation of physical or mental health risks from face-to-face teaching, or who have family members who would be at risk, can apply for accommodations to allow them to teach online. The University has

developed a set of tools to help expedite the process of requesting COVID-related accommodations based on physical and/or mental health and family status. Further information about how the University will process accommodation requests is [available here](#).

If you have any questions about the accommodation process, or need support on an active accommodation request, please feel free to contact one of our Membership Services Advisors:

Reuben Kellen msofa@uvic.ca

Ben Johnson rcafa@uvic.ca

Nathan Todd uvicfa@uvic.ca

You also have the right under the Collective Agreement to grieve a decision to not approve an accommodation request to teach online. If you wished to file a grievance, you would need to contact one of our Membership Services staff.

Conclusion

I understand that there is growing concern among many of our members about these important health issues. The fact that most of us are vaccinated provides major protection and reassurance. However, we recognize that new studies show that the Delta variant can apparently be transmitted even by those who are vaccinated, and that a small minority of those who are vaccinated can become ill with COVID-19, including long COVID. We also need to protect the most vulnerable among us, including children who cannot yet be vaccinated.

Member concerns are therefore realistic, in the face of Delta's virulence, increasing case counts and the absence of mask or vaccination mandates. The Association is doing what we can, and will continue to lobby both the administration and the government to put more adequate safety measures in place that will keep our members, their families and the entire university community safe.

I appreciate all of the emails I have received from many of you, with suggestions and references to what is being done elsewhere. They are very helpful, as we continue to advocate as strongly as possible on your behalf.

I will update you as new information becomes available. I hope that you are all able to take some time to relax over the next few weeks.

All the very best,

Lynne

Lynne Marks
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Department of History
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I recognize with respect the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), Wyomilth (Esquimalt), and Lekwungen (Songhees) peoples on whose territories the University of Victoria stands, and whose relationships with this land remain profound today.

<UVIC FA Fall 2021 Health Safety Survey Final Report.pdf>

<2021.08.05 CUFA BC on Institutional Autonomy Over Safe Campus Decisions.pdf>

Fafa mailing list

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