

Dear Member,

We understand that this is a particularly challenging time for Chairs and Directors, who are fielding innumerable questions from members while also, in many cases, working to finish up their own courses. We also know that information is coming at you in a fast and furious way, not all of it consistent.

We have heard from some Chairs and Directors that they have felt unsupported by the UGFA in this difficult time. This is regrettable, as we have been working very hard to ensure that the rights of all UGFA members, Chairs and Directors included, are honoured. This is our job.

Yesterday, we learned that the meeting that day was the first time that the Senior Administration had a clear discussion with Chairs and Directors about how the remaining three weeks of courses would be finished. The UGFA recognizes that there are (understandable) challenges with the flow of information from the Senior Administration to Chairs, Directors, and all UGFA members. These challenges may lead and may have led to well-meaning attempts to create local solutions that could, unfortunately, contradict agreements between the Senior Administration and the UGFA. In addition, the resulting patchwork landscape of local solutions generates different messaging, considerations, and worries, as have been conveyed to the UGFA by members, including Chairs and Directors.

All of this is another reason why the UGFA has had to communicate clearly with all of its members about the discussions with the Senior Administration and the rights enshrined in our Collective Agreement.

An example of our willingness to work with the Provost's Office to find ways to address this crisis while ensuring that the rights of our members are respected, is when the Provost's Office determined that it needed to begin preparation for the possible suspension of in-class meetings. We were presented with the draft of a document containing proposed directives that would have violated our Collective Agreement in multiple ways and downloaded a staggering amount of work, unnecessarily, onto members, including Chairs and Directors. Our pushing back against this approach ameliorated the issues our members would have otherwise faced. This should not be seen as a refusal of the UGFA to cooperate but rather as the UGFA fulfilling its mandate.

You can be assured that, despite our differences, we have been in regular contact with the Senior Administration. We have continued, and we will continue, to work with the Senior Administration while protecting the rights of all members as guaranteed by our Collective Agreement.

Today, we were informed that all veterinarians (clinical faculty included) who are on rounds are expected to complete those rounds as mandated by their CVO obligations. Nonetheless, we want to reiterate that if you are concerned about your own health, you should speak with your supervisor or Chair.

Please know that we are available to answer any questions Chairs, Directors, and all UGFA members may have in this difficult time. You can reach us at facassoc@uoguelph.ca and we'll do what we can to help.

Herb Kunze, UGFA President

Mary-Michelle DeCoste, UGFA Vice-President