

Dear Member,

The UGFA remains very concerned about the Administration's incoherent approach to the Fall 2021 semester, particularly with respect to teaching and to the safety of our membership.

As you know, the UGFA recently conducted a survey of UGFA members who engage in teaching activities. The results of the survey reflect what the UGFA has long believed to be the case and what has informed our bargaining of a COVID-19 Letter of Understanding (LOU): that if the Administration respected the choice of UGFA members to deliver their classes face to face or to use a remote mode of delivery in the Fall 2021 semester, there would be a lot of face-to-face teaching on campus (about 50% of course offerings, as suggested by the survey). The survey also shows, however, that there is a significant subset of UGFA members who are concerned, even afraid, about returning to campus. (The survey response rate was 52%. Anyone wishing to review the full results can find them [here](#).)

The Association and the Administration resumed negotiations of a COVID-19 LOU for Fall 2021 on September 14. Since then, we have met four times. We have had discussions, which we hope will prove to be productive, on issues such as student feedback questionnaires, study/research leaves, and the tenure and promotion process. The most contentious issue remains that of instructors' choice in mode of course delivery during the period of the pandemic. The Administration continues to insist that it must compel UGFA members to deliver courses face to face, notwithstanding the real health and safety concerns of some members.

President Yates herself has admitted that "people who are vaccinated can still get infected and transmit the virus to others" (The full article can be found [here](#).) (<https://www.guelphmercury.com/news-story/10480634-vaccination-status-of-some-u-of-guelph-students-still-unknown/>). In the same article, she states that "[a]ll members of the U of G community need to do their part," by "not engaging in behaviour that compromises our community's health such as gathering in large groups." As reported in the University's September 17 COVID Update, "The University's early warning system of wastewater surveillance is detecting higher amounts of COVID-19-causing virus on campus. This follows other early indicators this week, including a Public Health advisory, of elevated risk at U of G and in the greater Guelph community. It is important that all members of the U of G community remain vigilant to prevent this from becoming a larger problem" (<https://maestro.uoguelph.ca/list/jc87gfpb/210917E/87yb64dlglsm.vib?id=0hv2ujc87gfpb7k>). The Administration's own messaging suggests that members who are concerned are not being unreasonable. The President's exhortation against large gatherings quoted above, not surprisingly ignored by students (as evidenced by widely-reported-upon street parties), is also contradicted by the Administration's actions, which include holding classes in rooms filled up to 75% capacity.

The Administration allowed those whose classes are to be delivered face to face to use a remote mode of delivery until September 29, on which date face-to-face delivery is to commence. Of the subset of survey respondents who delayed their return to teaching face to face until September 29, 94% expressed some or serious concerns (49% and 45%, respectively). Since we currently have no LOU in place, the only recourse open to these members is to make a request of their Dean. If you are in this position, please let the UGFA know, and we will try to assist you in whatever way we can.

Best,
May DeCoste, President
Herb Kunze, Vice-President