



UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN
THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT
IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 SITUATION

ISSUES

Teaching

Change brought about by COVID-19: Courses normally delivered as “in person teaching” have rapidly shifted to “emergency teaching measures.”

“**Emergency teaching measures**”, which can be either synchronous or asynchronous, occur when, as a result of extraordinary circumstances, the University directs an instructor to adapt their “in person teaching”, which is the standard, to a form of “remote teaching.” This requires important changes to established teaching methods and with a steep and sudden learning curve in the use of new technologies. It is not chosen by the instructor. Every effort must be made to meet the students’ expectations, even if the students do not opt for this kind of course.

“**Online teaching**” is when an instructor opts to teach their class in an asynchronous way, with maximum use of online resources. The preparation for this kind of class is time consuming and the course is normally worth 1.5 courseload in several Faculties. It meets the students’ expectations who opt for this kind of course.

“**Remote teaching**” is when an instructor opts to teach their class at a distance, in a synchronous way, with minor changes to the teaching method. This is normally worth one courseload. It meets the students’ expectations who opt for this kind of course.

“**In-person teaching**” is when an instructor opts to teach their class in the traditional classroom setting. This is normally worth one courseload. It meets the students’

expectations who opt for this kind of course.

Adjustment:

- It must be acknowledged that “emergency teaching measures” require additional hours in preparation and delivery. Some form of compensation must be provided.
- The financial compensation for Sessionals should be at least 1.25 stipend per course.
- Faculty members should be provided with at least one teaching release in a future semester for every four such courses.
- The effects of this kind of delivery on research and service should be recognized in the performance review for the next five years.
- Students should be made aware that the quality of teaching is going to be different and will require drastic adjustments that may not live up to the expected ‘academic excellence.’

Care Giving

Change brought by COVID-19: Some URFA members have to work at home and provide care for dependants, including schooling for children, elder care, and other children and dependants with special needs, while others do not. This is an important equity issue which can have long term implications on career progress.

Adjustment:

- The University of Regina has a duty to accommodate. The challenge of family care during the COVID-19 situation must be taken into account in the performance review.
- The “specific care giving burden imposed by COVID-19” must be considered on par with “teaching”, “research” and “service” during the next performance review.
- As a guideline for supervisors, care giving, including schooling children at home would represent 25% to 40% of the “workload”, depending on family circumstances, such as the number of dependants, their ages as well as the existence of special needs.
- The “specific care giving burden imposed by COVID-19” must, for some, be granted:
 - For academics: a course release in order to maintain a research

program and a workload balance between teaching/research/service

- For APT members: an equivalent time-in-lieu for APT members.
- For Sessionals: preference or priority shall not be lost if care giving prevent the member from maintaining a normal course load.

Research programs (Academic)

Change brought by COVID-19: Some URFA members cannot conduct their research because of interruptions to travel, to access to libraries, labs and specialized equipment, inability to conduct face-to-face research and for a variety of other reasons.

Adjustment:

- Supervisors should take into account the delays occurred on performance reviews for the foreseeable future, provide extensions of research grants deadlines where possible and request the research office to advocate for extensions with granting agencies.

Deadlines in the 2020-2021 Academic year

- Adjustments to dates of promotions, tenure, increments and sabbaticals have already been agreed upon. [See Appendix A- Timelines].

Performance Review

- Deadlines for tenure and promotions have been extended for Academics and APT members. [See Appendix A- Timelines].

Other changes brought by COVID-19: Issues of childcare, research and teaching.

Adjustment:

- Taking into account lack of childcare/caregiving supports, delays in research and adjustment in teaching. Making use of the students' evaluations shall be at the instructor's discretion for as long as learning is done under "emergency teaching measures" and shall not be used negatively against an instructor.
- During emergency teaching, given their inadequacy, students' evaluations shall not be used as evaluations tools.

Changes to programs

- There should be no changes nor suspension of programs without consultation as per the collective agreements with the Faculty members. Course and/or program development shall not be delayed or accelerated or changed in any other way without consultation as per the collective agreements.

Ergonomics at home / Health and safety on campus

Change brought by COVID-19: Some URFA members had to find work space at home. Such space should have good ergonomics, appropriate equipment and Internet access that are adequate for the member's needs.

Adjustment:

- The University shall provide all of the above. Home wifi should be an authorized allowance. This shall also be provided to sessionals.
- The University shall recognize that members have the right to refuse to work in an environment that could compromise their health.

Mental Health

Change brought by COVID-19: Some URFA members are stressed by the sudden and complete change in their working conditions.

Adjustment:

- The University supervisors shall enquire how their employees are feeling and provide mental health support on an individual basis. Adjustments to vacation time deadlines should allow for the flexibility required to manage the stress of the situation.

Job stability and benefits (Sessionals) Art. 23.5.2

- No sessional should be adversely affected with respect to continuity of benefits stemming from cancellation of courses due to COVID-19.
- Sessionals who cannot do remote teaching or whose classes are cancelled should not lose their preference or priority.

- The insecurity of sessional work and accompanying benefits must be acknowledged. Given the circumstances, the University has a moral duty to maintain benefits during the COVID-19 situation if, because of low enrollments, contracts are not offered when they are normally offered.

Adjustments for APT members

Change brought by COVID-19: In response to the Covid 19 crisis, APT workload has drastically increased, in particular for the following units: CCE/FLD; IS, TLC, and the Library. Along with this, supervisors of APT staff in these units have suspended vacation requests so that all staff be available to respond to the sudden move to emergency teaching methods. Since March 16, 2020, APT staff have been putting in long hours of overtime, including evening and weekends; they have been cooperating with the suspension of vacation plans; and they have been severely restricting their use of SDO's. This professional response by these ATP staff was motivated by solidarity with Instructors, Students, and the University as a whole.

In recognition of this increased workload, HR made the unilateral, non-negotiated decisions that:

- “Employees may carry over ten (10) vacation days into the 2020-2021 vacation year, and all vacation entitlements, including carry-over from 2019-2020, must be used within the 2020-2021 vacation year (July 1 – June 30).” (This is an increase from 5 days.)
- “SDOs cannot be carried forward to the next year and no time will be paid in lieu. The current provisions will apply.”
- “APT members may carry over up to 36.25 hours per the collective agreement. Balances of TIL in excess of 36.25 hours will be paid out with written notice to Human Resources by the Out-of-Scope Head/Designate.”

[See Appendix A- Timelines]

Adjustment: The University shall enter into good faith consultations and negotiations to arrange adapted provisions that will genuinely provide the flexibility required to truly meet the needs of such APT staff.

Other changes brought by COVID-19: Many APT members were reassigned to jobs that did not fall within the parameters of their JEQs quickly learning new tasks with minimal training under the duress of extreme pressure. Some of the new, beyond-JEQ work was suited to a higher pay scale, and some of the work, though essential, was menial and beneath their pay scale.

Adjustment: APT staff are willing to continue to cooperate with the JEQ violations on

two conditions:

- The desired flexibility provisions stated above be fairly negotiated to an arrangement that ensures APT staff that their work/life balance and mental health needs will be fully addressed. This can be resolved with minimal cost to the University. We are only asking that flexibility provisions be increased.
- Proper training be provided for APT staff who are required to do new work that goes beyond their current skill and knowledge bases.