

URFA Member Town Hall Meeting

7 October 2020

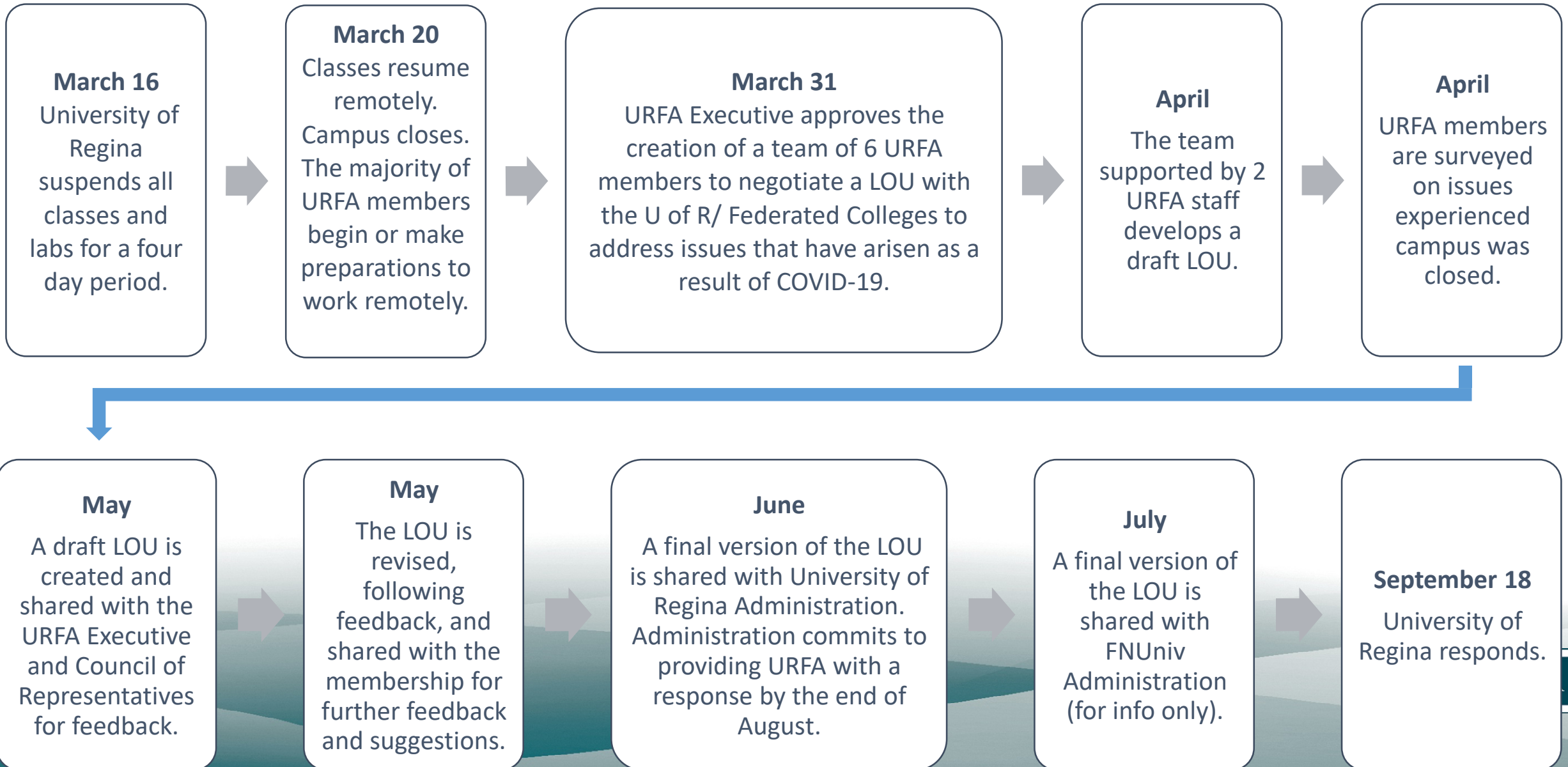


UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Why a Letter of Understanding (LOU)?

- The LOU provides URFA's understanding on the differences in the types of teaching prior to and due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The LOU seeks to address the issues that members have identified to URFA most frequently since the start of COVID
- The LOU seeks to address issues faced by members from across bargaining units
- OUR GOAL: To clearly identify problems and propose solutions

Developing the LOU- Timeline



UofR states:

- That more work has been put into teaching, and that support has been provided in the form of additional instructional designers and assistants
- That website support is an “additional financial support to academic staff”
- That the typical 40/40/20 split in duties has shifted
- “certainly” that service have been reduced (we disagree)
- That there will be no additional compensation (including teaching releases)

URFA Definitions:

“In person teaching”

- Offered in the traditional classroom setting
- An instructor **opts** to teach their class using this method
- Normally worth one course load
- It meets the students' expectations who opt for this kind of course

“Online teaching”

- Is an **asynchronous** course delivery that makes maximum use of online resources
- An instructor **opts** to teach their class using this method
- More time consuming, time consuming, and normally worth 1.5 course load in several Faculties
- It meets the students' expectations who opt for this kind of course

“Remote teaching”

- Is a **synchronous** course with minor changes to teaching methods
- An instructor **opts** to teach their class using this method
- Normally worth one course load
- It meets the students' expectations who opt for this kind of course

“Emergency teaching measures”

- Can be either synchronous or asynchronous and occurs as a result of **extraordinary circumstances**
- The instructor is **directed** by the University to adapt their “in person teaching” to a form of “remote teaching”
- **Not** chosen by the instructor
- Does not meet student expectations of remote learning

UofR Definitions:

“WEB Delivered Course ”

- Asynchronous
- Have been developed with Instructional design teams
- Regularity offered
- Analogous to our “Online” courses

“ LIVE-Streamed Courses”

- Synchronous course at a set date and time streamed over the internet
- Created prior to COVID

“Remote Learning delivery – special circumstances - ”

- Synchronous course with set date and time likely via Zoom
- May have asynchronous components

“Remote Learning Web – special circumstance”

- Asynchronous and without set day and time
- Limited synchronous classes possible
- URCourses will be platform; Zoom may be used as well

None recognize the lack of choice in making the decision to teach remotely
None recognize the changes to the student experience

UofR Definitions:

Strategy going forward:

- Apparent that UofR not interested in changing their definitions
- Gains to URFA in fighting for this not obvious
- We will continue to refer to “emergency teaching measures” in our workings but choose not to fight for this.
- We will assemble data that show that changes in our work load and productivity are not insignificant

Caregiving

URFA's Proposal:

- The challenge of care-giving must be taken into account in the performance review.
- For academic members: 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 sessional members: preference or priority shall not be lost if care giving prevent the member from maintaining a normal course load.
- 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.

UofR's Response:

- Encourages staff to explore and discuss work-life challenges with deans and /or managers
- Deans have been asked to accommodate on case-by-case basis
- There are options for unpaid, job-protected leaves

Caregiving:

Strategy going forward:

- Still working on our plan to address this

Research Delays

URFA's Proposal:

- Performance reviews should take delays into account for the foreseeable future
- Extensions of research grants deadlines where possible
- Request that research office advocate for extensions with granting agencies.

UofR's Response:

- Recognizes that “research, scholarship, or creative work in some cases” has been reduced
- “COVID-19 related impacts on research and scholarship productivity will be taken into account in the performance review process. “
- Lots of digital and virtual resources, conferences, are available
- Deans will continue to be supportive of members doing research
- External funding not under purview of admin

Performance Review

URFA's Proposal

- Taking into account lack of childcare/caregiving supports, delays in research and adjustment in teaching in performance review.
- During emergency teaching, given their inadequacy, students' evaluations shall not be used as evaluations tools, unless directed by Instructor.

UofR's Response:

- Leaving it up to individual units to use or not use evaluations
- Trust faculties will apply criteria to career progress as usual
- Recognizes the need to be flexible
- Academic staff encourage to include impacts of COVID-19 on performance when complete AIF
- Have committee to creating guidelines to assist those in performance review process

Research delays, Performance Review:

Strategy going forward:

- We have put forward an additional ask to give all members an additional year in their review cycle if they so choose
- We will continue to insist that student evaluations not be used in a negative way until after emergency teaching is finished

Changes to programs

URFA's Proposal

- 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.

UofR's Response:

- Will follow collective agreements

Mental Health

URFA's Proposal:

- 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.

UofR's Response:

- They have numerous programs (one to be announced end of September)

Health and Safety on Campus

URFA's Proposal

- The University shall provide good ergonomics and appropriate equipment
- Home wi-fi 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.

UofR's Response:

- Recognize that members may expense a portion of their internet cost as per EMP-060-005.
- They feel they have addressed at-home work ergonomics.
- They feel that for all sessional contracts after initial lockdown, if a contract is accepted that implies consent that the member has what they need (we do not support this view).
- Will continue to address case-by-case support of people who cannot come to campus.

Providing a environment to work at:

Strategy going forward:

- Will continue to remind University to provide documentation in support of claiming a T2200 tax rebate.
- If you have push back on expensing your home office needs, PLEASE let us know!
- Very quick survey to come out this week
- Sessionals... hold on, I am getting there...

Sessionals:

Strategy going forward:

- Exploring if course funds to sessionals can be used similarly to APEA
- The University is required to provide the environment that allow staff to “effectively carry out their duties”.
- Article 11 includes an list of examples, which is not exclusive.
- Includes ergonomically suitable office furniture.
- Exploring policy vs. individual vs. group actions surrounding work environments
- Look for a VERY brief survey send out by URFA next week to inform us of issues here.

Job stability and benefits for sessionals

URFA's Proposal:

- 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.

UofR's Response:

- Not aware of specific impacts on sessional appointments
- Not prepared to negotiate ongoing benefits for sessionals who are not currently teaching

We need to know if there are
issues!!!

Adjustments for APT members

URFA's Proposal:

- 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.

UofR's Response:

- No response

Adjustments for APT members

URFA's Proposal:

- APT staff be 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.

UofR's Response:

- No response

APT issues:

Strategy going forward:

- The venue in which we have been discussing this (UofR Joint Relations) is traditionally academic-focused
- We have requested we take this out of the UofR Joint Relations committee and strike a new committee with APT representation. Waiting to hear back on that.
 - If no, then we intend to split up the Academic and APT letters and address them in two separate Joint Relations meetings.

A word about our other employers:

- Our discussions are solely with the University of Regina at the moment

What's next?

URFA is here to be your voice!
HOWEVER our voices are stronger
together!

- Please voice support for our plan re: academic performance review to your deans/directors and to the VP-Admin
- Please give us data! Reply to our survey!