

Dear Dr. Chapman,

As you are aware, on December 16, 2021, Dr. Nicola Mercer, the Medical Officer of Health and CEO of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH), announced that, effective Monday December 20, 2021, “all owners, operators and persons responsible for a business or organization ... shall ensure that any person who performs work for the business or organization conducts their work remotely, unless the nature of their work requires them to be on-site at the workplace.”

Given this, we are confused by the fact that the Administration’s COVID-19 information page for the Winter 2022 semester says (emphasis added), “[W]e are *asking* instructors to hold classes virtually for the first two weeks, with limited exceptions such as clinical teaching.” This statement implies that instructors have the choice to offer their classes remotely or not, which is not consistent with the mandate issued by Dr. Mercer. Are you, in fact, offering this choice?

We are further confused by the Administration’s announcement that “[f]ollowing the remote two-week start, we will return to in-person delivery in those courses scheduled to be delivered in that format beginning Jan. 24.” Given that Dr. Mercer’s communication specifies that work shall be performed remotely “until further notice,” we wonder how the Administration arrived at a return date of January 24, and how it is that you feel confident enough in this to write “we will return.” While we understand that a return date must be contemplated, we would have appreciated that the Administration engage with the UGFA about when that might be, given that a return to in-person course delivery depends upon the work of UGFA members.

As we are sure you appreciate, your announcement also implies that UGFA members should perform work that falls outside of our collective agreement, from the start of the Winter 2022 semester to the return date and possibly beyond. The terms and conditions of any work outside of the collective agreement must be negotiated by the Administration and the UGFA. In the spirit of collegial governance, we therefore expect to begin negotiations on a COVID-19 Letter of Understanding for Winter 2022 before December 24 or on January 4.

Best wishes,

Mary DeCoste, UGFA President
Herb Kunze, UGFA Vice-President