

Can You Tell Me?

HOW CAN I COPE WITH STRESS DUE TO UNCERTAINTY?

In the era of COVID-19 and all the changes that have happened in the workplace, people may feel stressed and anxious when dealing with ever-changing rules and extended periods of uncertainty.

How long will restrictions last? When will campuses re-open? What other changes might be coming down the road? These are all valid questions but, unfortunately, the answers are not readily available. It is important to acknowledge that, for some, uncertainty can lead to increased levels of stress and anxiety over time. But what can be done about it?

Both Universities have mental health supports available to all staff. At The University of Winnipeg, support is available to eligible employees through Manitoba Blue Cross' Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP). At the University of Manitoba, support is available through Shepell's Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

UW members may access their MB Blue Cross EFAP plan via:

Phone: 1-800-590-5553

Website: www.mygoodhealth.ca

Mobile app: mybluecross mobile

Similarly, UM members may access their Shepell plan via:

Phone: 1-800-387-4765

Website: www.workhealthlife.com

Mobile app: My EAP

If you feel that you don't need professional support at this time, the summer months provide an excellent opportunity to get outside for some stress-relieving exercise. There are plenty of trails throughout the city for walking and bike riding. Additionally, some swimming pools are open, as well as beaches. Depending on your comfort level and circumstances, you might also consider an outdoor group exercise class. With appropriate physical distancing, these activities can also be enjoyed with friends and family for extra social interaction too.

As always, if you have any questions at all during this time, please reach out to the AESES Business Office via phone at 204-949-5200 or by email at [aesess@aeses.ca](mailto:aeses@aeses.ca).

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From the President's Desk



President Laurie Morris

Here it is - August already - and we are entering month 5 of pandemic life and the continued “working from home” arrangement for many of us. Who would have thought that this would become the new normal for us. Not me!

Summer is normally a time when many are thinking of taking vacations, traveling to parks and campgrounds, or visiting their cottages. Hopefully many of you have

still had the opportunity to take some vacation time, if only to take time away from work responsibilities and de-stress.

There are many questions surrounding how and where we do our jobs; now and in the future. Some areas of campus have worked throughout as essential services. Some other areas (labs, for instance) have started to come back to their workspaces. But, the rest of us are still in limbo. Will we get back to our offices? What will that look like? Will we work every day at the office or some combination of home and office? What if we have child care issues or require other accommodations? Will our employers be willing to be flexible with our schedules? And, how will our health & wellness be maintained?

These are the questions we asked both Universities on June 23rd. The University of Manitoba sent us a response on July 9th to report that they created a COVID-19 Recovery Working Group, whose responsibility is to create and implement a detailed return-to-campus strategy and to maintain a working relationship with government health officials.

I encourage you to visit our website to review the letter we sent to the UM and their full response. (Go to Member Information found on the top menu. Click on COVID-19 INFORMATION & UPDATES and scroll down to AESES' Communication with the Universities).

As for the UW, while we have no written response from them, we were included in a Zoom meeting with our fellow union representatives and Human Resources there. While each union had its own questions to ask, the responses really were pertinent to us all. They are taking considerable caution through their Emergency Preparedness Group to ensure that staff are kept safe as they continue to explore if a gradual return of campus operations is possible. They are also working with government health officials in developing safe return procedures and promised to share more information with the unions as it becomes available.

On other matters, I encourage everyone to check out the new mural in Winnipeg representing Manitoba's labour movement. “The artwork, which is featured at the Union Centre on Broadway, was unveiled on Monday. It uses images of various workers, protesters and phrases such as ‘Unions Make Work Better’ and ‘United We Stand’” (Winnipeg Free Press, July 20, 2020 edition).

While you can see the mural online, seeing the mural in person is amazing! If you happen to be downtown, check it out.

Finally, I encourage everyone to stay safe! Cases of COVID-19 have recently risen in Manitoba. Although many appear to be in isolated regions provincially, the possibility for further spread remains if we don't continue to adhere to the health advice of regular handwashing, social distancing, and mask wearing. Please stay vigilant!

AESES Activity Cancellations

As a result of the continued recommendations from the Province of Manitoba and Health Canada with regard to social distancing and group size gatherings, AESES has made the decision to not hold our fall education seminars this year. As well, with a heavy heart, we will not be hosting our annual Children's Christmas Party celebration this December.

Though this will make for a quiet fall, it is with the best interest of our membership in mind that these events are being cancelled. With the thought that when our AESES educational and social events do return, we will be able to fully enjoy them, as they were intended.

As we look ahead to what the rest of summer and fall may bring our way, stay tuned to our website and social media accounts, as well as your email inbox, for future updates from the AESES Business Office. We'll work hard to keep you informed about any other changes the pandemic may have on the usual life cycle of union membership activities.

WE ARE HIRING!

Your Union Needs You

The AESES Business Office is currently accepting applications for the full-time, continuing position of Communications Officer. We're looking to add a wonderful individual to our close-knit team, someone who is passionate about union activities, while also looking to build our internal and external communications and presence.

If interested in applying, please review the job description, posted to our website (<https://aesess.ca/wp-content/uploads/Communications-Officer-Internal-Ad.pdf>). The position has a September start date and will require the successful candidate to be responsible for the strategic direction of the union's communications activities, social media and

website content, designing publications like this newsletter, researching labour issues, liaising with committees, etc.

Letters of application, along with a current resume can be submitted to the AESES Business Office by email to lmckendry@aesess.ca, prior to the August 7th application closing date. Alternately, applications can be sent by mail to the AESES Business Office c/o Lisa McKendry; 103-900 Harrow Street East; Winnipeg, MB R3M 3Y7.

Questions and queries about the position and application process can be directed to AESES' Executive Director, Lisa McKendry, at 204-949-5200 ext.102, or by email at lmckendry@aesess.ca.



Union and Member Grievances

Contract Admin

UM The Association grievance filed due to temporary layoffs not being done in a manner consistent with the Collective Agreement led to a meeting with the University. A thorough discussion of the issues followed and the grievance is still ongoing.

The grievance filed on behalf of a member who received an Oral Warning for alleged poor performance is currently on hold.

UW A grievance was filed for a member whose employment was terminated for alleged failure to adhere to health leave stipulations. This grievance is at the First Stage.

Report: AESES' COVID-19 Assistance Fund

Since it became available to our membership during the month of May, AESES' COVID-19 Assistance Fund has been able to assist 107 individual members a total of 202 times (at the time of writing). The fund provides members who are experiencing significant financial hardship due to the pandemic, with grocery store gift cards. Gift card amounts vary based on family size and status.

Members who are truly in need of this assistance and who meet the selection criteria have the opportunity to apply on a biweekly basis, as needed. The average amount awarded to applicants has been \$200 worth of gift cards, for a total distribution of \$44,175 thus far. A great example of a union holding up its membership, with direct action in a time of need.

Interestingly, of the 107 unique applicants:

- 55 are from UM's Fort Garry campus
- 34 are from UM's Bannatyne campus
- 8 are from UW's campus

Additionally, of the 37 applicants who noted their status as single, 11 were single parents. Similarly, of the 71 applicants who were part of a married/common-law couple, 46 noted dependents.

For more information about the AESES COVID-19 Assistance Fund and to access the application form, visit our website at <https://aesess.ca/aeses-covid-19-assistance-fund-form/>

Petitioning for Universal Long-Term Care

The Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) is asking AESES members, and the public in general, to educate themselves about the opportunity to push for a universal long-term care system in Canada. As such, they have posted a petition, which can be supported with signatures at <https://www.change.org/p/prime-minister-of-canada-public-universal-long-term-care-system-in-canada>. The petition will be shared with the Prime Minister of Canada, once CCU's signature count is reached.

As per CCU's website (<http://www.ccu-csc.ca/public-universal-long-term-care-now/>), "Long-term care refers to a wide range of supported living and nursing care arrangements for seniors, elderly persons and those with severe or prolonged disabilities in Canada. These facilities employ a spectrum of highly trained staff who provide medical and social supports to their clients.

Yet after decades of funding cuts, privatization and deregulation,

private, for-profit long-term care has become a national embarrassment...It is time that people are put before profit and long-term care be placed under the Canada Health Act and offered as a public service, paid for by progressive taxation based on ability to pay.

In addition, a national, coordinated long-term care strategy must be implemented in all provinces and territories that puts protections in place. Through increased funding and oversight, the new publicly-owned system must ensure there are enough long-term workers, supports and resources to provide world-leading, quality care that seniors and those with disabilities deserve."

Reason enough to support a universal, long-term care system for some of our most vulnerable.



New Faces and Hires

The most recent list of new AESES employees hired at both universities can be viewed online:

<http://aesess.ca/new-faces/>

Contact Us

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Website: www.aeses.ca

AESES Campus Mailing Addresses:

UM - Mail Room, Services Bldg.

UW - Mail Room

Social Media Accounts:

 www.facebook.com/aeses.aesse

 [@AESES_AESSE](https://twitter.com/AESES_AESSE)