



ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYEES SUPPORTING EDUCATION SERVICES

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Proud Member of the Confederation of Canadian Unions

March 20, 2020

Dr. Annette Trimbee
President
The University of Winnipeg
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 2E9

Dear Dr. Trimbee:

AESES writes to you today in a desire to communicate the effects that the decisions and actions undertaken by the University with regard to the COVID-19 outbreak has had on our members and to appeal to you on a number of fronts.

Support staff employees are the backbone of the University's operations and often perform their daily tasks without apparent recognition from the senior administration group. Over time, members feel they are not viewed as important contributors to the University's success. In times of crisis, as we are currently facing, they feel they are a forgotten group as they are overshadowed by the understandable requirement to address the needs of the student population and, by extension, those of faculty members and instructors.

As it stands currently, there are no specific details being provided to the majority of our members by the University in relation to their continuing wages and benefits. This is leading to significant anxiety for our members and prevents them from planning for potential future financial disruption. Additionally, some employees have received notifications that they will not be scheduled for further hours where there have been closures. Although eventual financial support from the federal government for displaced workers is looking positive, the government is not going to be able to process these new initiatives before May. Once they do become available, the sheer size of the unemployed group is most likely going to delay processing of claims for weeks if not months.

We are requesting that the University maintain the wages of our members, and all other support staff, for as long as is financially reasonable. Now is not the time for the University to abandon their dedicated and loyal staff at such a critical juncture. The Province of Manitoba has not withdrawn or altered the funding of the University and it is important that staff are given assurances that their wages will not be impacted at least for the next few months. Similarly, the continuation of benefits is vitally important at a time where employees need to ensure they are getting the medical care they require, including the ability to continue with necessary medications.

Leadership requires courage, not calculation, and a balanced financial account is the least of our community's concerns as this pending crisis unfolds. What was thought to represent normal is no longer something we can rely upon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie R. Morris".

Laurie R. Morris
President
AESES

Cc: Ms. Roberta Marsh
Ms. Marni Yasumatsu
Ms. Lisa McKendry
Mr. Lorne Hilton