



ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYEES SUPPORTING EDUCATION SERVICES

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Proud Member of the Confederation of Canadian Unions

March 12, 2020

Ms. Darlene Smith
Associate Vice-President (Human Resources)
309 Administration Bldg.
University of Manitoba

Dear Ms. Smith:

Darlene,

As the coronavirus continues to spread globally and has been designated as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, and we now have our first presumptive positive case here in Winnipeg, I am aware that many educational facilities have started conversations surrounding steps that might be taken to ensure the safety of staff and students. To this end, I note that Dr. Barnard has very recently issued a statement to the University of Manitoba community on this subject.

While AESES appreciates that the University is taking steps to limit the possibility of exposure and transmission of COVID-19, it would have been helpful if unions were included in the planning conversations. AESES represents the largest group of employees at the University, and we have been receiving questions from our members regarding their safety and rights should there be a university closure and/or implementation of other preventative measures.

Many of our members are responsible for providing front-line services for the University and are in a position of public exposure on a regular basis. While it is prudent to request that academics restructure their courses in a manner that would promote social distancing, there has been no conversation, to our knowledge, on the steps that office and library staff, research technicians, computer services employees, and security services employees (to name a few) should be taking to protect themselves and contain the spread of COVID-19 for those areas that provide these front-line services.

Although employees are being told to remain at home if they are showing flu-like symptoms, there has been no information provided to indicate if they will still be paid or if departments will be requesting a medical certificate to support the illness. Additionally, there has been no discussion with AESES on what would happen should there be an extreme situation of the University closing operations, even for a limited timeframe. These are important conversations that should be held with the unions that represent the University's employees to mitigate the possibility of confusion and complaints.

I look forward to your response on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Laurie
Laurie R. Morris
AESES President

LRM/lm