

Dear Lorraine

I am writing you about an urgent matter, one that many of us in CUASA and you yourselves, are certainly faced with these days. This is mainly about the recent State of Emergency declared by the provincial government and its impact on members, and the real likelihood that this pandemic will continue for the whole of 2021 with classes being online until health authorities clear us to return to normal working conditions.

You are well aware that children cannot go back to class until at least Jan 25th and this declaration happened almost at the same time as the start of the winter term at Carleton. In addition, we are not expecting to be lecturing face-to-face in a physical classroom for many months to come, if not another year. The stress of the times is taking its toll on members, many of whom have already come to us with grave concerns about their ability to do their jobs effectively, the appropriateness of lecturing on material that is not appropriate for children (in the presence of children), their ability to apply for university research awards and the fate of grants (both internal and Tri-council) that are timing out while their ability to conduct research is essentially frozen or at least dramatically curtailed.

We are very concerned that our members with caregiving duties will experience even more severe setbacks in their careers as they lack the time and ability to research and publish, and that they will miss out on awards and grants because they do not have the time to complete the relevant applications. Then there are mental health issues associated with staying at home regulations for all members. Additionally, the unevenly distributed offers of accommodation place members in certain faculties at a serious disadvantage. We understand that in the Faculty of Science letters regarding accommodations and additional supports were sent in the fall whereas, to the best of our knowledge, our members in FASS and FPA as well as the professional schools have received no such guidelines, thereby leaving accommodation requests to an uneven application of subjective rules that are at the discretion of deans.

Our members were already in crisis before this most recent lockdown. These additional extraordinary measures in Ontario make the crisis all the more acute. We fear for the wellbeing of our members and you should as well. Substance abuse, depression, thoughts of suicide, and family stress (including its impact on children's mental health) are all very real and pressing issues that require IMMEDIATE action.

In light of this crisis, we ask the following at the very least and, in addition, that we meet at the JCAA table to discuss another workload MOA based in part, but not wholly, on these requests:

1. An urgent communication from Carleton to all our members outlining an easily accessible accommodation scheme that is equitable and transparent across ALL faculties and schools. Accommodations should include additional resources to support off campus teaching, research, and administrative work and / or some release from administrative duties.
2. Extend the deadlines for submitting applications for internally managed grants and awards until the summer of 2021 at the very least with the caveat that, if the current situation continues without relief, these dates will be reconsidered.
3. An automatic extension of internal research grants already awarded by one year.

4. A request that Carleton advocates to the Tri-council agencies that ALL THREE extend externally funded research grants that are about to time out or have just timed out, for another year.
5. A statement from the university similar to the ones issued regarding students, directing the entire community to accommodate our members through measures such as reasonable grace periods for responding to emails, submitting letters of reference and giving feedback on graduate student work.
6. A reconsideration of the previous MOAs and their contents to this new situation.

Sincerely,

Angelo

Angelo Mingarelli
CUASA President

