

## ***Institutional Remediation Guidelines for Senate Executive***

***[Faculty-Specific Remediation Frameworks have been Developed in Alignment with this Document]***

***March 16 2015***

***Submitted on Behalf of the Deans***

***by Provost & Vice President Academic Rhonda Lenton***

The institutional remediation guidelines document has been informed by the following factors:

- the Senate legislation dealing with remediation (remediation plans that are consistent with Senate policies, including the Disruptions policy);
- the three principles of fairness to students, academic integrity and timely information;
- the implications that follow from the timing of the labour disruption for the completion of the 2014-15 academic year;
- Senate Executive decisions in previous periods labour disruption;
- the likelihood that similar decisions will be required at the conclusion of this labour disruption in order to complete the 2015 Winter term so as to adhere to the principles above and minimize the negative impact on our students and the Summer term;
- collegial input in regards to the Faculty-specific Remediation Frameworks;
- no replacement of work done by CUPE 3903 instructors by others; and
- assurances that students who choose not to participate in resumed classes will continue to receive the protections and accommodations set out in Senate legislation.

Please note that the Guidelines document reflects the input from all deans and their unanimous endorsement.

### ***Senate legislation in regards to Remediation***

“Remediation” and “Remedial Actions” refer to accommodations for students, modification of normal academic regulations, and adjustments in class and examination schedules. Once Senate Executive recommends the resumption of classes, Senate legislation emphasizes that course directors are in the best position to determine appropriate remediation for courses, and will do so in conjunction with their departments / Faculty and with their students. Remediation is to be governed by the principles of flexibility and discretion. Course directors are encouraged to be flexible in dealing with individual requests, and must not unreasonably deny them.

***Three principles of fairness to students, academic integrity and timely information***

A labour disruption necessarily results in limitations in regards to fairness to students, academic integrity and timely information. The goal is to take the actions needed to minimize those limitations.

### Fairness to students

#### *Guiding Principles:*

- *Flexibility for students*
- *Respect students' right not to resume classes until after the labour disruption is resolved as provided by Senate legislation*
- *Remedies shall not alter the academic standards associated with the missed activity*
- *The availability of a remedy under this policy does not guarantee students the same learning experience that they would have received in the absence of a Disruption.*

The University had hoped that the labour disruption would have been resolved before it became necessary to resume classes. There is general recognition that there will be challenges associated with the resumption of classes when our teaching assistants and graduate assistants remain on strike. Matters have been raised about students' rights not to cross the picket line, safety and the potential impact on the learning experience. The latter issue is covered in more detail under academic integrity. However we would point out that safety issues have been and will continue to be addressed. Students moreover have the right not to cross the picket line and to resume their studies with other like-minded students. We must also ask about what "rights" we are affording to students who want to resume their academic studies. In assessing the challenges that we will undoubtedly face, we must also consider the potential negative implications for the thousands of students who need to graduate. These students include:

- international students whose visas are expiring and who have non-refundable tickets to return home
- students who have applications for graduate school or professional programs pending final grades
- students who work part-time and who have made childcare or other arrangements
- students who have employment offers pending graduation
- students who have exchange or other community placements or practicum
- students who are risking losing an entire 6 months in terms of being able to write qualifying exams (the nature and timing of externally-mandated requirements for certification or other constraints and considerations imposed by bodies external to the University are a major limitation).

These types of considerations have informed the previous decisions made on the part of this and other Senate Executives in exempting programs from the suspension of classes. We are now facing similarly negative implications for students in the remaining programs if we do not

resume classes by March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Further to that, students are increasingly asking how it is fair to provide some students with the opportunity to resume their classes but not others.

Finally, while we might be able to identify a specific list of courses that might be delayed for another week, it would be challenging to do so given the highly interdisciplinary nature of our programs, and the inter-Faculty interdependence for degree completion on the part of so many students. [Note: Despite the challenges, a delay in the resumption of courses offered by FES and LA&PS was approved in recognition that more time might be needed to implement the resumption].

### Academic Integrity

*Principle: All students will have an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of the course with the understanding that it may be necessary to meet those outcomes in alternative ways.*

In this case, the deans have been guided by previous decisions that Senate Executive has had to make in order to complete the term without undue hardship for students, as well as the types of provisions that will be necessary for course completion on the part of those students who elect not to resume their classes until after the labour disruption is over.

The recommendation / necessity for resuming classes no later than March 17<sup>th</sup> (March 23<sup>rd</sup> for FES and LA&PS) has been informed by input from the Registrar as well as all deans. We will have lost between two – three full weeks of classes, and at a time of year (so close to the end of classes) that there is little room to make the necessary adjustments for a timely graduation.

As a consequence, the Institutional Remediation Guidelines document takes the position that it is reasonable to assume that similar provisions as those approved in the 2008 labour disruption will be required. The Faculty-specific Remediation Frameworks therefore incorporate elements provided for in the last labour disruption, including:

- a reduction in the number of teaching days in all terms (a start date of March 17<sup>th</sup> will require a reduction to an 11-week winter term to maintain a timely graduation and avoid compromising the summer term);
- changes to deadlines;
- alternative access to course material;
- potentially changes to the number, kind and weight of assignments (instructors may make changes to the number, kind and weight of assignments including changes that would impact on work already submitted and graded - however, students will have the choice of completing the assignments as set out in the originally published grading scheme);

- provisions for the alternative scheduling of tutorials, presentations, performances, practica or the equivalent (ie, outside of scheduled class meets) so that collaborative classroom or studio work can be adjusted as needed or meet at a time convenient for course directors and students (subject to the availability of appropriate space).

Please note that there is no request to change the Senate policy regarding the weight of tests in the final two weeks of classes. Senate policy requires that no examination or test worth more than 20% of the final grade will be given during the final two weeks of classes in a term, with the exception of classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on the weekend (Saturday and/or Sunday at any time).

As always and in accordance with existing Senate legislation, appropriate accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities and to those who cannot attend an examination on grounds of religious observance.

Further remedial actions not anticipated in the March 16<sup>th</sup> documents may be necessary for students who do not resume their classes until after the labour disruption – the full implications of which will only be evident once that date is known. Additional requests not covered by the submitted documents will be brought back to Senate Executive. As the potential date for the end of the labour disruption is not known, it may be necessary, for example, to implement other accommodations for students who must return to another country.

The University's normal mechanisms for petitions will continue to be available to students through their home Faculty.

### Timely Information

Students, staff and faculty have a right to be informed in a timely manner of changed requirements, rescheduled academic activities, and procedures to be in effect. The efforts made with the development of an institutional guidelines document for the Faculty-specific Remediation Frameworks are intended to provide Senate Executive with as much information as is possible and to provide clarity to faculty, staff and students.

A FAQ has also been set up in combination with a comprehensive communication strategy for our community.

### *Schedule*

The original recommendation from the RO outlined below will have to be adjusted by approximately one week to accommodate the March 23<sup>rd</sup> resumption date of courses offered by FES and LA&PS. The RO is in the process of working out the new schedule but exams will

likely go to approximately May 7<sup>th</sup>. This entails a delay in the start of the summer session (originally planned to commence May 4<sup>th</sup>). Final scheduling adjustments will be posted shortly.

*The original RO Recommendation (assuming that all courses had started March 17<sup>th</sup>) – TO BE ADJUSTED BY APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK to reflect the March 23<sup>rd</sup> resumption in FES and LA&PS:*

- Reduce the term to 11 sessions
- Last day of class April 13
- Study day April 14
- Exam dates - April 15 - May 1

Other implications beyond the adjustment of the summer term:

We will likely be looking at Financial Aid for students for the Summer Session. Further, it will be tight for instructors to get their grades in on-time to meet convocation. Implications for convocation ARE under review.

There is full appreciation for the fact that further remedial actions will be required for students who decide not to resume classes until after the labour disruption is over. However, a resumption of all classes now allows for greater flexibility in accommodating those students who do not resume classes.

### ***Specific Issues***

#### **1) Graduate classes**

There is appreciation for the difficulties associated with resuming graduate classes when many of our graduate students are striking. In the context of requests from students, however, the recommendation is being made that graduate courses should resume at the same time as the undergraduate classes offered by the respective faculties to give students the opportunity to resume their studies if they so choose. It will likely be the case that some graduate classes will have to wait for the labour disruption to be resolved. However, small numbers of returning students might still be able to be accommodated as outlined below under 4).

#### **2) Approach to dealing with CUPE Unit 1 work where members do not return to work**

*Principle: It is assumed that, unless exceptions are approved, both undergraduate and graduate programs will resume by March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. [Note the exception for FES and LA&PS until March 23<sup>rd</sup>]*

*Principle: Courses directed by CUPE 3903 Unit 1 will be suspended unless the Unit 1 instructor has declared that s/he is returning to work (situation to be monitored and revisited in about a week).*

The Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis is developing a form and data base for CUPE 1 declarations of intentions regarding return to work, to be monitored by an Associate Dean in each Faculty (to be specified by Faculty).

While it may be legally possible on a voluntary basis, there is a strong presumption that others will not undertake CUPE work (tutorials, labs, etc.); remediation is to be offered following return to work.

Adjustments may need to be made to the structure, delivery, etc. of the course in order to maintain academic integrity.

### **3) Some examples for course or assignment redesign to maintain academic integrity:**

- In the case of tutorials/labs that have not already been completed prior to the labour disruption, an assessment might be made regarding the impact of not holding the remaining tutorials - given that it is almost the end of the term, the impact of not holding tutorials or labs may be minimal or a decision might be made to defer the tutorials.
- Creating student-led discussion groups - peer tutoring or student-led discussion or study sessions, in person or online (Teaching Commons and/or Learning Commons may be able to provide some guidance on structure, etc.) is another option.
- Consistent with not introducing inequity for students (i.e., avoiding a situation where some students have access to tutorials/labs and some do not).
- Students in tutorials that are not meeting should not be redirected to non-CUPE 1 tutorials (with possible exception of a course director voluntarily providing access to all students), and/or being provided with the relevant materials (typically students already have materials).
- At the graduate level, comprehensives and thesis defenses should be held on York property or rescheduled (students have the option to defer post-disruption)
- Academic processes, e.g., petitions, academic honesty, affecting students' records should continue

### **4) Plans for proceeding with courses in which there is minimal student attendance.**

There are three likely scenarios that emerge:

- 1) students can choose not to engage in the course at all
- 2) students can choose to fully engage
- 3) students may approach instructors to participate in an alternative format

It is assumed that in most cases courses will proceed even if a number of students choose not to attend understanding that adjustments may be necessary to accommodate SLOs in different

ways. Faculty members are in the best position to develop remedial actions. We would note that similar types of circumstances arise for other reasons including courses where a substantial number of students voluntarily withdraw from a course before the deadline for VW that change the nature of the student interaction in the course and/or that require changes in student-group composition or projects.

If a relatively small number of students do not attend a course, a variety of approaches can be taken in order to provide non-attending students with alternative access to material they miss, e.g., providing students with lecture notes, posting lectures and/or notes and materials on the website, asking other students to share lecture notes.

Faculty members may engage in interactions, Q&A, etc. with students via Moodle or in other ways.

If a large number of students do not attend, students who do attend can be offered an adjusted course format, e.g., discussion or reading course format, for the duration of the strike. Note: it is expected that courses will meet in the scheduled location; it is not expected that courses would be moved to an off-campus location, unless off-campus activity is normally a part of the course; however, it may be appropriate in a limited number of very specific circumstances to move a small class to an off-campus location with the agreement of all of the students in the class and with the approval of the Dean.

## **5) Remediation plan for students who do not participate until after the disruption is over.**

*Guiding Principle: Students cannot be required to cross picket lines or submit assignments, take tests or exams during the strike, and must be provided with the same remediation opportunities post-strike.*

Given that there is variation across units in the amount and nature of CUPE 1 teaching, individual unit approaches will need to be developed.

In addition to alternative forms of access to materials (as above) for students not attending, post-strike, the instructor might offer additional lectures or work through the material with students who did not attend.

Note: in cases where full-time faculty members or CUPE Unit 2 do not resume their teaching activities for any reason, normal processes under the collective agreement will be followed; in this circumstance, students should be kept informed of the status of their courses.

## **6) Marking/grading**

This issue has been deferred until it becomes necessary to discuss with Senate Executive.

## **7) Academic Freedom**

We are very much mindful of concerns regarding faculty members' academic freedom in the context of a resumption of classes during the current labour disruption. We are confident that in the context of a Senate Executive Committee approved remediation guidelines document, there will be no requirements of individual faculty members around the format and delivery of their courses that will be inconsistent with their academic freedom. In this context, we are also confident that our faculty colleagues will proceed with the best interests of students in mind.

As an example, Senate Executive has approved in the past that "students must have reasonable alternative access to course material" but it need not necessarily be through online posting of those materials should individual faculty members not want to use online.

As specified in the Senate policy on disruptions, Senate Executive has responsibility for suspending and resuming classes in the event of a labour disruption, and for approving the range of remedial actions that might be employed in responding to a disruption. Individual faculty members are in the best position for determining how to best implement the available remedial actions to maintain the academic standards of their courses. Any faculty members who have concerns about the ability to continue their course(s) within the remediation framework based on considerations of academic integrity are asked to raise the concerns with the Dean or Principal for resolution. Please note that the availability of a remedy under the Senate policy on disruptions does not guarantee students the same learning experience or instructional / supervisory support that they would have received in the absence of a disruption.

Finally, it is the Senate Executive Committee who shall after consultation recommend to Senate that credit not be given for the course(s) should a Disruption continue to a point where no feasible remedy consistent with the principle of academic integrity is available.

Remedial actions approved by Senate Executive in the past have supported students having alternative access to course materials but it need not be through online posting of those materials.

## **8) Health and Safety**

Health and Safety considerations must be paramount in any work-related circumstance. However, we are not aware of any reports of health and safety concerns from professional librarians and staff who have continued to work during the labour disruption or from faculty whose programs have not been suspended that would appear to preclude faculty from coming on to the Keele or Glendon campuses during the labour disruption. The University appreciates that specific accommodations may be required for employees with accessibility issues.