

From: [FAFA](#) on behalf of [FA President](#)
To: [Faculty Association](#)
Subject: [Fafa] Update re mask mandate
Date: March 18, 2022 4:31:40 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Letter regarding mask mandate\[1\].docx](#)
[ATT00001.txt](#)



Dear Colleagues:

I hope that all is well with you. I am writing to provide an update regarding the FA's advocacy that the University re-consider its decision to make mask wearing optional on campus, and that they instead require mask wearing until the end of exams, as UBC and a number of Ontario universities have decided to do.

On Monday I wrote the attached letter to the University administration, making this request, and also noting our concern that we had not been consulted on this matter, as well as on a number of other COVID related decisions the University has made that impact the workload and or health and safety of FA members. I received a response from Michele Parkin, AVP Faculty Relations, yesterday, in which the University reaffirms their plan to continue to make mask-wearing optional on campus. They state that they are following the PHO in this regard, although as we have noted, the PHO did allow individual institutions to make their own decisions about masks. Although we also sent the Administration 25 eloquent and anonymized emails from members that reference the serious health concerns many of our members have regarding the dropping of the mask mandate (concerns for their own health and that of vulnerable family members) the University characterizes these concerns as some members being "uncomfortable" with the dropping of the mask mandate. We do not see it this way, and regret that the Administration does.

As you can see in the attached letter, we requested a meeting with the senior Administration to discuss this issue. In their response they refused to have a meeting with us on this matter. At the same time, they denied the Association's claims of lack of consultation, stating that when we send the FA's position to them, it is considered when they make their decisions. We do not see this as meaningful consultation. We are troubled that this approach seems to be part of an increasing tendency of the Administration to avoid upholding the value of collegiality, which has been fundamental to UVic culture for decades.

In another effort to have this decision re-considered, some members of Senate (primarily faculty members) have sent a petition to the President, requesting an emergency meeting of

Senate to discuss a motion to reinstate the mask mandate until the end of the exam period. At this point, we have not heard whether the President will agree to an emergency Senate meeting on this important matter.

I'm aware that not all of our members see the need to retain the mask mandate at this time. But given that this is an important health issue for many of our members and their families, we regret the University's decision and their refusal to reconsider.

All the very best,

Lynne

Lynne Marks

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University of Victoria

Victoria, B.C.

We recognize with respect the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), Wyomilth (Esquimalt), and Lkwungen (Songhees) peoples on whose territories the University of Victoria stands, and whose relationships with this land remain profound today.

We acknowledge the devastation that government-created residential schools and Indian hospitals has inflicted on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and the ongoing effects of concentric trauma that continue to this day.