

June 2022  
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## CUSSU Concordia University Support Staff Newsletter



### Note from the President

Dear Members;

I hope and encourage you to take time off this summer to relax, decompress, and enjoy your time off.

As you know **summer hours** began **June 10, 2022** and will go through until **August 12, 2022 inclusively**.

CUSSU has received questions from our members regarding “how to enter the banking of summer hours”. Attached is the link to the instruction on banking summer hours, which is found on the Module:

[Manual banking summer hours Documentation.pdf](#)

Please note that you should check your banked summer hours after your request is approved, to manually readjust the hours if it is not accurate in Unity under My Time.

You can also find the **link for the FAQ’s** on Vacation, Summer hours, and Time off: <https://hub.concordia.ca/carrefour/services/hr/faq/vacation-summer-hours.html>.

### More News on My Time in Unity

Also, as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, you should verify in your Time Off Balance to ensure that your Family Obligation, Personal Time, Time in Lieu (overtime that you carried over), vacation (what you are entitled to as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, remember to convert the days into hours), Vacation Carryover (what you carried over from 2021-2022) is accurate. If you find any discrepancy, please inform your supervisor.

Also new, the university will launch as of June 27<sup>th</sup>, a specific service centre to assist you and respond to your questions regarding Unity. Information to the community regarding this new service should be received soon.

Have an enjoyable summer and hope to see you soon!

In solidarity,  
Donna Fasciano  
CUSSU, President

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### Contributors to this issue

- Donna Fasciano
- Sarah Loubiri
- Sandra Woywod-Page
- Daniela Ferrer

## **Masks no Longer Required as of June 23, 2022**

A communication was sent out to all staff and faculty on **June 15<sup>th</sup> from Environmental Health & Safety announcing** that **Concordia** is removing its mask- and physical-distancing requirements on its campuses. Starting June 23, **masks are no longer required** when entering university buildings or using shared spaces, including classrooms, the shuttle bus, libraries, hallways and elevators.

The only exception is at [Health Services](#), where procedure masks are mandatory as per the Government of Quebec's public health directives.

Members of the community who wish to continue to wear a mask, even when not required, are free to do so. Concordia will continue to provide masks at most university building entrances until further notice. For more information refer to the communication sent by Environmental Health & Safety.

## **Proposal to Change the Benefits Plans at Concordia**

The university was planning on changing the Benefits Plans on January 1, 2023, but due to our Collective Agreement that ends on May 31, 2023, this will not be possible. This project is going to be postponed to January 2024.

## **The Code of Rights and Responsibilities**

Picture it; you're in a meeting on Zoom. Your camera is off because you're still in pajamas. One of your colleagues makes a comment that you do not agree with, and an argument ensues. It's important to remember that we've been communicating digitally almost exclusively for the past 2 years, and sometimes we forget that there's a person behind that e-mail, phone message or black, faceless square with a name written across it.

The university's Code of Rights and Responsibilities is to ensure we can all interact and discuss things safely and with civility. If you're not familiar with it, it can be found [here](#). It promotes and protects core values including safety, respect, equity, inclusion and diversity and addresses:

*discrimination*  
*harassment*  
*sexual violence and misconduct*  
*threatening or violent conduct*  
*and other offences*



Tensions can get high, conversations can get heated, and disagreements happen, whether you're in a class with other students and a professor, or a meeting with colleagues. It can be in person in a conference room, over Zoom, Teams, or a combination of both. The point is, we don't always agree on things, and the Code of Rights and Responsibilities is to make sure we all (students, faculty, staff and the university community as a whole) can express those differences of opinions respectfully.

Things are slowly starting to go back to normal, and we're seeing coworkers, students and faculty in person again and that's great! Just remember, you may be seeing that black square with a named scrawled across it in person soon.

More information can be found at: <https://www.concordia.ca/conduct/behavioural-integrity/rights-responsibilities.html>.

**By Sarah Loubiri**

## How to Look at Your Old Paystubs and Income Tax Forms



With the decommission of MyConcordia Portal, you can still look at your previous paystubs and your Income Tax Forms before the go live of Unity November 2021.

Here are the procedures on how to get access to your pay stubs on empath.

Step 1— Go to Carrefour, scroll down left hand side to “View all account details”

Step 2— Click on View all account details—opens another window

Step 3—Click on left hand side menu—Personal—opens another window

Step 4— Choose **Pay Stubs** or if you want income tax forms you click on Tax slips

Step 5—Click on Pay stubs— then click on Access Empath (this brings you to empath earnings.

\*Note if you would like a full procedure with graphic pictures, please send an email to [CUSSU@concordia.ca](mailto:CUSSU@concordia.ca) to request it.

### **Salary Increase June 1, 2022**

As of June 1st, CUSSU received a 2.4% increase. The increase was visible on your June 17th pay. You might have noticed that you were only paid 3 days in your new hourly rate. As of June 30th pay, you will see your regular hours paid at the new rate.

Please remember that we get paid 2 weeks in arrears.

Check your paystubs and make sure that you were paid with the new hourly rate. If you see an error, contact Employee Services.

### **What's New:**

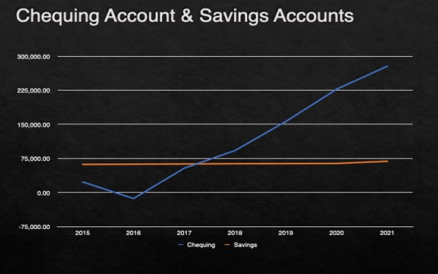


CUSSU has **2 new cell phones!** One for our **VP Grievance (438) 869-5709** and one for the **President (438) 865-0756**.

The cell phones will only be **answered during working hours, Monday to Friday**. If the person you are contacting is not responding, that is because **they are not liberated** and are **working at their day job**. Please leave **your name, telephone number and a brief message** and we will get back to you. We ask that these **numbers be used** when you are in **distress or it is an emergency** and need to speak to **someone immediately**. If it's something that can wait, we recommend you send an email to [cussu@concordia.ca](mailto:cussu@concordia.ca) and someone will get back to you within a couple of days.

## Certain Funds in an Uncertain Time

Over the last several years, CUSSU's available funds (mainly in our chequing account) have continuously increased. While revenue-expense-ratios in previous years, for example in 2014-15 and 2015-16, ended in negative income, this trend has been reversed and changes have attributed to healthy gains. There are different reasons for these increases, ranging from updated policies to careful management and, of course, due to Covid19 restrictions. Recently revised expense guidelines stipulate lower *per diem* compensations for food and travel expenses and while arguments could be made that the CUSSU executive neglected its own welfare, the lack of investments into equipment upgrades, office supplies/appliances as well as the non-hire of an office assistant also positively contributed to an increase of available cash funds.



None of these measures are Covid19-related. However, as we all know, CUSSU saved a lot of money due to pandemic restrictions. Over the last two years, our annual Christmas parties and Summer BBQs along with regular social gatherings, such as Women's Issues events, were cancelled. Almost all of us worked mainly from home over an extended period of time leading to the partial or even full elimination of costs for office supplies. Moreover, during the pandemic, CUSSU and Concordia's administration tried to resolve conflicts through negotiation procedures rather than arbitration though this form of resolution was also necessitated since courts were closed and legal representation was unavailable. Considering that legal expenses are quite high and can run up quickly to the hundreds if not thousands of dollars per day (e.g. a single cancellation can cost as much as \$1,200 per occurrence), this form of dispute resolution contributed to decreased expenses. While we may want to continue to push for in-house negotiation for certain cases, depending on the nature of the dispute and, even more relevant, the positions taken by CUSSU and Concordia's administration, it may not always be as effective as involving outside legal council and settlement.

During the 2020 General Assembly, several CUSSU members expressed ideas of what to do with the funds in CUSSU's chequing account. Suggestions were made to invest an amount into a high-interest savings account, combining different savings accounts into one larger one with a potential higher interest rate, or decreasing union dues for CUSSU members. For the current financial year, CUSSU decided to maintain the current structures in order to be prepared for the persisting climate of uncertainty and volatility. The treasury sub-committee contemplated to merge CUSSU's two savings accounts (current combined total: \$68,799,13) but ultimately decided to invest the amount into two separate funds, which focus on environmentally responsible transportation and female leadership respectively. Both portfolios equally reflect values supported by CUSSU and are low-risk. Considering that CUSSU members already pay low union dues compared to other bargaining groups in similar sectors in Quebec, decreasing them now may only provide a brief reprieve in the likely event to have them increased again (maybe even beyond the current rate) in the near future.

CUSSU also wants to maintain the current available funds for higher-than-budgeted or unexpected expenses. A small portion of the funds may be spent on hiring a part-time office assistant as well as on office repairs and expenses, such as cell-phones for the CUSSU president and grievance executive member. While concerns were raised as to why these investments need to be made, and your voices have been heard, CUSSU executive members should not be required to use their own private equipment to conduct official union business.

At the same time, the vast amount of available funds are reserved for the needs of all CUSSU members. The accumulation of legal fees is one item that carries a level of risk since it is difficult to predict how many grievances will be filed, processed and concluded with a negative outcome. In 2014, for example, CUSSU budgeted \$10,000 but was charged \$17,440.06. These imbalances can occur quickly and could present a large cut to CUSSU's revenues without any error or miscalculation made by the treasurer. If any such additional charges occur, it is important to have fast and easy access to funds.

**(Continuation on Page 5)**

## Certain Funds in an Uncertain Time (Continued)



Given that our current collective agreement expires on May 31, 2023 and paired with the current economic climate, many of us are likely motivated to request salary increases in order to offset rising living expenses and increased financial burdens. While some of us hold on to the hope of an economic and socio-political return to a pre-pandemic time, at least the near future looks less optimistic. According to a recent CTV news article, as “prices climb, Canadians' average hourly wages were up by 3.4 per cent, still far behind inflation and eating into consumers' purchasing power across income levels, according to BMO chief economist Douglas Porter, who said the difference between inflation and wages is ‘not sustainable.’” 3.4% would have sounded quite nice last year but what about now? How do we want to achieve reasonable increases? It may require much more efforts and active engagement than we were asked to do over the last few years. Graham Carr and Denis Cossette recently announced that Concordia University finished the 2021-2022 financial year with a \$20.5 million deficit and projects another one of \$15 million for 2022-2023. Along with hearing about inflation, shrinkflation, rising interest rates and climbing energy costs, we have become increasingly aware of strike and mobilization efforts announced by various employee groups across different professional sectors in Quebec. If the negotiations for our next collective agreement do not go as planned and we decide to go on strike, CUSSU may set up a strike fund for all members with the funds available in our accounts. With being 400+ members strong, even a small amount of compensation will add up to a large bill - still the extra funds are available for these events and situations.

A number of reasons contributed to a steady growth of our available cash funds over the last few years but union dues paid by each CUSSU member are meant to be spent in a meaningful way to support our membership. While we are currently progressing on a specific financial path, it does not mean that your input is not welcome or that changes can or will not be made. Though not all ideas communicated by CUSSU members have been pursued, the CUSSU executive encourages all of its members to submit suggestions and feedback.

On a last note, you can see that this article contains a high number of “if-s” and “maybe-s” and while we enter a negotiation period clouded in uncertainty, CUSSU is prepared and ready to fight.

Based on a PowerPoint presentation given during the last General Assembly on April 27, 2022.

**By Sandra Woywod-Page**

### Invitation to Participate in a survey on Remote Work

On June 22nd the university sent out an invitation to all their staff and faculty inviting them to participate in a survey on remote work carried out by the Centre Interuniversitaire de Recherche en Analyse des Organisations (CIRANO). Concordia University, along with several other Quebec universities has decided to take part in this longitudinal study.

[Have your say — participate in a survey on remote work .](#)

**By Daniela Ferrer**

## HOW TO REACH US

Address: 2130 Bishop St., Rm MI-303

Tel: 514-848-2424 ext. 8644

E-mail: [CUSSU@concordia.ca](mailto:CUSSU@concordia.ca)

### Executive Committee Members

Donna Fasciano - President  
Jennifer Muir - VP General  
Daniela Ferrer- VP Grievance  
Bo Kim - Secretary  
Vidya Khan - Treasurer  
David Babcock—VP Health & Safety  
Jennifer Srey- VP Information  
Christabell Moyo—VP Women's Issues

## Calendar

June 23, 2022— Thursday, Summer Hours

June 24, 2022— St. Jean - University closed

June 30, 2022— Thursday, Summer Hours

July 1, 2022—Canada Day - University closed



## Have suggestions or Ideas for the newsletter?



Email us at [cussu@concordia.ca](mailto:cussu@concordia.ca)

**CUSSU Website: Please check out our CUSSU website at [www.CUSSU.net](http://www.CUSSU.net).**

**Did you know CUSSU has a Facebook Page? We have 95 CUSSU members as of June 1, 2022. Please sign up as there are interesting and informative items added concerning our union.**

## News From Members

The CUSSU newsletter is packed with practical advice on various issues of interest to the support staff. We want to give you the opportunity to stay in touch with us, and to tell us what useful information you would like to see on the CUSSU website and CUSSU newsletter. **Newsletters are usually published four times per year**, and is sent to all members as a benefit of our membership.

If you have a problem and would like your fellow members to help, send your questions, suggestions or comments to [cussu@concordia.ca](mailto:cussu@concordia.ca). This email address is protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

The Executive seeks to support and assist you, our members, by keeping you informed of any new developments in the University. **Your union delegates:**

### EV Building contacts

Arlene Zimmerman ext. 3125  
Sarah Loubiri ext. 2031

### FG Building contact

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### FB Building contact

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### Annexes contacts

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### GM Building contact

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