

August 2020
Volume 12, Issue 2

CUSSU Concordia University Support Staff Newsletter



Note from the President

Dear CUSSU members,

I would like to start by saying kudos to all our members for doing their best to accomplish their tasks and continuing to work in these difficult and stressful situations.

We have received several emails from our members with specific concerns, which we have answered to the best of our knowledge, since the closure on March 15, 2020.

The university has sent out a survey to everyone for feedback. Here is a summary of what CUSSU has been doing during this situation.

Friday March 13, 2020, all the Presidents from the various Unions and Association were asked to attend an extraordinary emergency meeting hosted by the University Administration. This meeting included Roger Cote, Carolina Willsher, Nadia Hardy, Sonia Coutu, and other employees from Labor Relations.

At this meeting, we were informed that the University would be closed as of Monday March 15th until further notice, and that employees would be expected to work remotely from home when feasible. This would continue until further notice, as the university was obligated to abide by governmental information and regulations. We were also informed at this meeting that a COVID-19 Working Committee would be created to plan out the different scenarios for return to work on campus as new directives from the government became clear. The Presidents from the Unions/ Association have continued to meet with the university on a regular basis to receive updates and we have brought up issues concerning our members' working situations to the COVID-19 Working Committee. The same information that was supplied to us, was then posted on the Concordia website, and disseminated through the regular information updates that are sent through Concordia University Now. An FAQ was created that can be found on CSpace, as well as, the Concordia website.

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Contributors to this issue

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The responses from the CUSSU survey sent to all our members regarding their personal concerns were compiled, and the results were sent to the COVID-19 Working Committee.

Members who had no computers, computer screens, or other equipment needed to perform their duties, or internet access, were told to discuss this with their supervisors. The supervisors were responsible to make the necessary arrangements on behalf of their staff to ensure they were able to work remotely.

Some essential employees returned to work on campus in April, and as of August 10th, more CUSSU members have returned, with several units opting for hybrid schedules that combine remote work with work on campus. The university has assured us that all health and safety precautions will be taken to ensure a safe work environment for all employees. Environmental Health & Safety is working closely with the Senior Administration and you can review their guideline documents on CSpace .

The COVID-19 Info Sessions Updates meeting, composed of Unions/Association heads and Senior Administration, has also continued to meet every month. The university, as you know, decided to have their courses online for the fall semester. They do not foresee the majority of staff returning on-site full-time until December, but again, this dependent on government directives.

July 13th, the Presidents were asked to a meeting to review lessons learned related to COVID-19 in which we gave our input. A report is expected shortly.

If you are asked to return to work, you cannot refuse. Once you return on campus, if appropriate health and safety procedures are not in place, please contact David Babcock, VP Health and safety.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to email us at CUSSU@concordia.ca. You can also refer to our website at CUSSU.net.

Rest assured that CUSSU is aware of our members concerns and that we will continue to ensure that members have a safe and healthy working environment, as we deserve.

In solidarity,

Donna Fasciano

CUSSU, President.

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Stressed about potentially returning to work on campus? Check out some of the COVID-19 resources below!

- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)
- [Post-Lockdown Anxiety: Returning To Work In The New Normal](#)
- [CNESST Toolkit](#)

Need help while working from home? We've got your back too!

- [Mental health tips for working from home](#)
- [Concordia Well-being](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Borrow Equipment](#)

CUSSU Negotiation Update

Thank you all for having responded to our call for concerns and suggestions for the upcoming 2021 Collective Agreement negotiation. We have collected your responses, and have highlighted a few of the most common suggestions in this Negotiation Survey, which we invite you now to respond to, so we can better understand what your priorities are.

[Click here to take the survey](#)



CSN Masks

If you have been called to return to work on campus, note that we have a free CSN reusable mask waiting for you, that we ordered from the CSN! The masks are black and bear the white CSN logo on the left side, and they are made of a light, breathable material which allows for a comfortable wearing experience for the duration of your work shift.

To receive yours, please contact David Babcock, VP Health and Safety. Please note that masks are limited to one per person.

Unsafe Working Conditions

If you have been called to return to work on campus, and the work environment is in any way unsafe, please contact David Babcock, VP Health and Safety. If Environmental Health and Safety do not take sufficient action, we invite you to contact the CNESST by submitting the following form: [CNESST Dangerous Conditions Form \(French\)](#)

One-time 500\$ COVID-19 Reimbursement

If you are an eligible staff member who will be working as of September 1, 2020, you have probably received a one-time payment from the University for the sum of 500\$. This is a non-taxable amount intended to be used towards alleviating the costs that you may have incurred since the beginning of the COVID-19 closure due to working from home. As such, we strongly encourage you to follow the directives sent to you by the university regarding the use of these funds, and to put the receipts for any expenses you may have made since the beginning of working-from-home towards this amount. For any questions, email [Hilary Keithlin](#), benefits specialist, or [read more about how Concordia can support your home workspace](#)

Shuffle 31 CUSSU Pledge



As you already know, the traditional Shuffle walk from Sir George William Campus to Loyola Campus looks a little different than usual this year, due to COVID-19. Despite the change of scenery however, (walking around your own neighbourhood instead of the usual route), CUSSU is still committed to supporting you in your fundraising efforts! To this end, we have pledged to donate

2\$ for every CUSSU member that participates in the virtual Shuffle 31. We hope to see you at the virtual opening and closing ceremonies!



Black Lives Matter

COVID-19 isn't the only challenge we've been facing over the last 6 months. Following the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police, and the most recent violent shooting of Jacob Blake by the Kenosha Police Department, we have seen a sharp global spike in protests and support for the Black Lives Matter movement. As a union, we condemn the continued disregard for Black Lives, and hope that you will join us in continuing to support those who need help the most.

Beyond the Black Lives Matter movement, if you would like to learn more about supporting another minority group, we invite you to read the [Inform-Elles Newsletter](#) (French Newsletter) about re-opening the world in a feminist way!

To learn more about how Feminism and Black Lives Matter overlap ideologically, and to learn about intersectionality, we invite you to read [Feminism, Black Lives Matter and Intersectionality](#) (short article). In activism as in the workplace, we are, as always, stronger together.



HOW TO REACH US

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Website:

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CUSSU Facebook

Join the [CUSSU Facebook page](#)!

Have suggestions or ideas for the newsletter? Send us an email at

cussu@concordia.ca



Meeting Updates

You've been hard at work, and so have we! Below is a round-up of all of the meetings CUSSU members have been having on your behalf!

Negotiation Team: June 17, July 14 and July 15**Labor Relations:** April 6, May 6, June 11, and August 13**JEP Committee:** April 24, May 20, June 9, June 25, July 16 and August 18**Executive Committee:** April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17 and August 21**Extraordinary Emergency Meeting :** March 13**COVID-19 Info Sessions Updates:** April 1, April 24, May 11, May 26, June 15, and August 12**Lessons Learned :** July 13

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.

If you have a problem and would like your fellow members to help, send your questions, suggestions or comments to 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. Newsletters are published four times per year.

The newsletter is sent to all members as a benefit of membership. It is also posted on the cussu.net web page. We encourage our members to visit the CUSSU website when each new issue of the newsletter is posted.

