

Hello everyone,

As we indicated in our last update, impact bargaining around issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic continued today. The MCCC team started at 10:00 a.m., with management forwarding to us a written proposal regarding use of sick leave during the COVID-19 crisis at 11:00 a.m. The joint teleconference with management started at 11:30 a.m. and ended at 1:00. We did not schedule a meeting for tomorrow as of this writing, but there remain issues we need to deal with, so impact bargaining will probably resume tomorrow, time uncertain.

While management's sick leave proposal improves upon some of the contract language, it contained interpretation of some parameters of contractual sick leave use that the team could not agree to. We were pleased to see the limits waived on the use of sick leave for the care of family members quarantined and/or ill with COVID-19 as well as the waiving of the 5-day waiting period before a unit member had access to the sick leave bank. What we were dismayed to see was the expectation that a unit member would be compelled to use sick leave if they are placed in quarantine as a result of possible exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

We also asked that the college community be notified when an employee of the college has been told not to come onto campus as a result of COVID-19 exposure. Management said they would look into this as they do understand our concerns regarding this issue.

The issue of evaluation was revisited. We were told that the presidents were considering suspending student evaluations of DCE classes this semester. (Day classes are not evaluated in the spring semester). As of this writing, it appears that faculty have been notified that student evaluation has been suspended at NECC. No word from other colleges yet.

We also revisited the notion of compensation for adapting a course to an online format. Having consulted with the presidents, management said this was not something they (the presidents) were interested in. The colleges do not have the funds for it this semester, but the presidents might revisit the issue for the summer or fall if the COVID-19 crisis continues.

We continued to press our concerns for the safety of our professional staff, many of whom are able to do their work remotely, but are being asked go in anyway. Exacerbating the problem is the lack of uniformity from college to college and even supervisor to supervisor at the same college. Management assured us that the presidents are committed to maximizing remote working. While they will intervene on some of the overall issues, such as a college's technological capacity, VPN capability, availability of lap tops and cell phones, etc. they reiterated their reluctance to interfere with the colleges at the "granular" level, preferring to leave it up the college presidents to work with chapter leadership on the details of telecommuting plans. Unfortunately, this leaves professional staff members at some colleges less safe than others. This is an untenable situation and resolving these safety concerns remains our highest priority.

I will close with my personal gratitude for the work you all are doing to help your fellow colleagues. The sharing of strategies with one another and your willingness to hold your administration accountable for decision they make regarding unit members' safety will ultimately benefit everyone.

Please continue to be safe and stay healthy.

Best,

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