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COVID/Omicron Variant: Questions for the Administration

December 14, 2021

Dear UTFA Colleagues,

Considering the rapidly rising COVID case numbers in Ontario—including Toronto and Peel—and the very serious threat posed by the Omicron variant, last week UTFA wrote to the University's senior Administration. We pressed, once again, for greater transparency and the sharing of key health and safety information with UTFA, the public health scientists with whom we are working closely, and the broader University community.

UTFA's letter raised several concerns and questions, including:

1. How waning vaccine immunity, the rising level of breakthrough infections and reinfections, and the changed definition of what it means to be 'fully vaccinated' (i.e., to include 3 or more doses) will now impact previously relaxed health and safety standards at U of T that were premised on universal compliance with an effective vaccine mandate.
2. Whether the Administration is now contemplating reduced density/occupancy levels and or increased amounts of remote teaching and other work for Winter 2022.
3. Whether the Administration will require all visitors to campus to show a unique QR code, rather than a UCheck screen, in keeping with the province's move to cut down on fraudulent vaccination records.
4. A request that the Administration provide N95 masks for all faculty, librarians, staff, and students.
5. A request that the Administration significantly expand the use of rapid testing (to be used in conjunction with vaccinations).
6. A renewed invitation to work with UTFA to install (and share the data from) C02/particle monitors in a broad and representative sample of classrooms and other occupied spaces.
7. How the Administration plans to address the unequal risks facing members of the U of T community, including UTFA members who must use public transit to travel to campus.

We hope to update you very soon.

Sincerely,

Terezia Zorić
UTFA President

Jun Nogami
UTFA Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions, and Workload

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