

August 12, 2021

Dear President Denton and Senior Management Team,

In a meeting between the DCFA and Douglas College HR on 25th March 2021, we were informed that Douglas College would be returning to face-to-face instruction in the Fall 2021 semester, and would be following the directives of the BC Provincial Health Officer. In that meeting, and in subsequent meetings with HR, the DCFA did express concerns about a return to pre-COVID operations.

Recent events have served to heighten those concerns. It has been reported that British Columbia is moving into a fourth wave of the pandemic. And indeed, the numbers of new cases in BC have been rising, with the Delta variant comprising most of those new cases. As you are no doubt aware, the Delta variant poses an increased risk to the public, as it constitutes much higher viral loads and easier transmission.

Since Nancy Constable's email of 10 August in which she shared the *Communicable Disease Prevention and Response Plan*, the DCFA has received questions and concerns from faculty members about the risks. The risks identified include:

- Unlike K-12 schools, Douglas College campuses are uncontrolled public spaces. Students are not organised into cohorts. And the campuses are open to the public.
- Many faculty members and students have children or family members under 12 years old who have not been vaccinated. This places them at more risk.
- There is no procedure for informing Douglas community members when someone who comes to a DC campus is diagnosed with COVID 19.
- Our campuses have narrow hallways and some poorly ventilated classrooms and offices.

Given the risks of a return to pre-COVID 19 operations in a time of increasing cases, it is reasonable for faculty members to ask for stronger measures than those outlined in the *Communicable Disease Prevention and Response Plan*. We would like to begin a discussion on this, with the following requests.

We ask that

- Wearing non-medical masks should be mandatory in public spaces and whenever someone is moving around. They should only be removed when sitting down.
- Faculty members (and students) should be able to choose to conduct office hours on-line.
- Physical distancing should still be required where possible, and signs showing required spacing should be replaced.
- Because of the number of asymptomatic cases, if someone at DC tests positive, they should be asked to inform HR and then DC community members should be given the information so they can decide whether to take a test.
- Although ventilation was upgraded, the DC community should be assured that it will be running at maximum.

We know that it is of paramount importance to the Douglas College administration to protect the safety of faculty members and the larger Douglas College community. We hope that you will consider this request for stricter measures, as we believe they are in line with your intentions.

Sincerely,

The DCFA Table Officers and Executive Council