

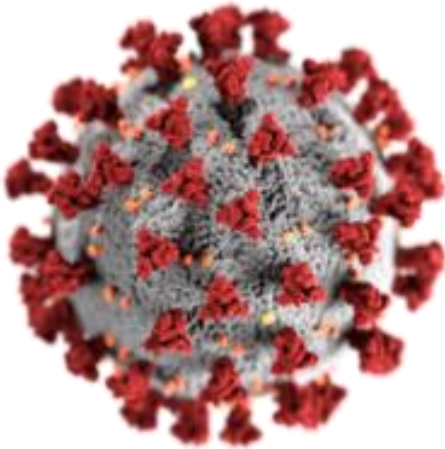
## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear StFXAUT Members,

We are experiencing challenging and unprecedented times. Much of our lives and well-being have been affected by the significant implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the context of the pandemic, the tragedy of the mass shootings in Portapique and the disaster at sea, which took the lives of six Nova Scotia based military personnel, add extra layers of uncertainty, disbelief, and sadness.

This issue of the *Beacon* is dedicated to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Communications Committee has gathered several articles and stories collated into this edition. This newsletter is a collection of articles either written by Members or sourced by Members on topics of relevance to our new reality.

We have heard from Members whose workloads have increased as a result of the transition to on-line delivery and the increased need for student support and management. This is occurring in the context of working from home, attending to childcare and caregiver responsibilities, delivering homeschooling lessons, transitioning to research programs, coping with intermittent internet connectivity, and managing the impact of uncertainty on our physical and mental well-being. This *Beacon* features articles which reflect this context.



The implications of the pandemic have thrust us into a reality of isolation at home, social distancing, and virtual meetings, coffee breaks and events. The *Beacon* offers practical advice on maintaining some level of physical activity, lowering the anxiety we feel as a result of uncertainty, and preparing ourselves for on-line delivery of curriculum. Articles address the stress of being a teacher and researcher while managing to homeschool children, address the impact of homeschooling and parenting on the academic productivity of women, and address the need for collegial governance and funding of post-secondary institutions.

If there is a lighter side to the implications of the pandemic, this new reality provides an opportunity to engage in the study of the human condition. Peeking into other's home décor choices, questioning the color of sweatshirt choices, observing kids, pets, and spouses in a video conferencing frame, trying to figure out why the closet is full of clothes you haven't worn for months, wondering why you stocked up on ginger snaps and canned tomatoes instead of toilet paper, and visualizing the impact of working from a makeshift home "office".

I hope this issue of the *Beacon* provides some insight, information, and reflection about issues that affect us all.

Stay home, be safe and keep well.

Mary O.

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## ANXIETY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Margo C. Watt, PhD, R.Psych. (NS),  
Kim MacLean, PhD, R.Psych (NS), & Juliana Khoury, BHum

*April is the cruelest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain*

T.S. Eliot wrote his famous poem, "The Wasteland", in December of 1918 while recovering from the 1918 flu - the last global pandemic. The poem suggests that April is the cruelest month because the promise of spring dares us to hope but, in the throes of a pandemic, hope comes with some apprehension ... lest hopes be dashed.

Anxiety is normal and serves valuable functions. Normal anxiety keeps us safe (reminds us to look both ways before crossing the street); contributes to good health (reminds us that we need to eat well and exercise regularly); motivates us to be productive (work, study). In many situations, we need anxiety in order to perform at our best (sport, music, socializing). Anxiety can be a problem, however, when it becomes disproportionate to objective threat, causes distress, and interferes with daily functioning. Too much

anxiety can jeopardize our well-being. Each of us has our own anxiety profile - some of us are more inclined to be anxious than others; some of us get anxious about health concerns, while others worry about losing control or facing social interactions. Regardless of our profile, however, anxiety increases with stress, and a pandemic is a great source of stress. Pandemics, like COVID-19, severely disrupt our routine of daily living - the things we do on a regular basis that mitigate stress and help us maintain balance. Our work life is disrupted, our home life is disrupted, our social life is disrupted, our leisure and recreation are disrupted, our sense of safety and security is disrupted.

Under normal (non-pandemic) circumstances, any one of these disruptions could threaten our mental health and sense of well-being; collectively, they pose a formidable challenge. So, if you are feeling more anxious, agitated, irritable, sad, lethargic, helpless than usual - be assured that this is a normal response to very abnormal times and you are not alone. Unfortunately, the collective nature of experiencing a pandemic can add to our stress given that each of us may not have as much good will to extend to others as we normally would. The good news is that there are things you can do to feel better.

1. As much as is possible, try to establish and/or maintain a regular routine - do the things that normally make you feel good – communicating with friends and family; engaging in productive activities (work, study); but also in leisure and recreational pursuits; health and wellness activities (physical activity). Regular physical activity is essential for both our physical and mental health, especially anxiety.
2. Limit your exposure to media or excessive information about COVID-19 as this can increase your anxiety. There are self-assessment tools that you can use to evaluate your level of risk (see below) and such tools

can help curb ways of thinking (cognitive distortions) that can fuel anxiety, such as catastrophizing (expecting worst case scenario) and overestimation of probability (thinking likelihood of worst case scenario happening is high). To learn more about cognitive distortions, see link below.

3. Finally, be easy with yourself! These are unusual times, so you shouldn't expect to feel entirely normal. Do the best you can, but if you feel like your anxiety, sadness, irritability, etc. is becoming too hard to manage alone, reach out - there are a lot of resources at your avail, including provincial associations, such as Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia (APNS: <https://apns.ca/>).

## RESOURCES:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): *Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic*  
<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19>

Government of Canada: *COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool*: <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>

PositivePsychology.com: <https://positivepsychology.com/cognitive-distortions/>

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## THANK YOU TO ALL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The public health authorities' directions to stay at home, to increase handwashing and to practice social distancing are our best approach to "flattening the curve". Flattening the curve should ease the pressure on the healthcare system and the healthcare professionals within it. Hopefully, Nova Scotians have consistently followed those directions in their response to supporting the healthcare system and healthcare professionals on whom we rely. We acknowledge and thank all healthcare professionals for their commitment and contribution to the continued well being of Nova Scotians. Thank you.



(Pictured on the right: Banksy art piece celebrating healthcare professionals as the real heroes - retrieved from Instagram May 8, 2020)

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## STRUGGLING TO PARENT AND HOME SCHOOL IN A PANDEMIC: A CAREGIVER'S VIEW

By Anonymous Member

One of the impacts of COVID-19 is that the workload has been crushing for parents. Not only have we been asked to continue doing our full-time jobs, with the additional workloads of managing all of it online, but we've also been asked to do it while our children are at home. They need to be fed, kept occupied, their emotional needs must be attended to, and we are also expected to homeschool them. I haven't heard any acknowledgements from any

university about this, but I have heard from several colleagues who are struggling, experiencing guilt because they aren't parenting, teaching, or researching at anything they would consider to be an adequate level. Women are disproportionately affected because women do the majority of the care work. I have even seen articles that suggest that the number of journal submissions from women have tanked in the past six weeks.

## The Parents Are Not All Right

By Chloe I. Cooney April 6, 2020 (Retrieved from: <https://gen.medium.com/parents-are-not-ok-66ab2a3e42d9>)

Even in the most privileged households, the pandemic is exposing the farce of how society treats families.

“I just want to cry,” I told my wife on Friday morning.

I had just gotten off a work call and my brain was ticking through follow-up items, adding to a long list of untouched to-dos. My wife, meanwhile, was multitasking an onslaught of work questions while also trying to manage “homeschool” time with our son — but he refused to participate. Instead, he huddled in an increasingly secure couch fort, refusing to do anything — color, read, go outside, talk to his teacher — besides sit in silence in the dark or watch his iPad. (Today, he opted for sitting in silence in the dark).

“Are we permanently ruining and psychologically damaging him?” my wife pleaded with me.

We both felt guilty for the work we were not doing — and aching for the way our son was struggling and needed us to be present and calm. But that’s exactly what our current schedule prohibits, as we run back and forth between work calls, requests, and parenting. (Later, as I took over the homeschool shift and he stormed upstairs to cry, he told me it was because I had stopped smiling at him. Knife, meet heart.)

This is really hard.

What’s amazing to me is how consistent this struggle is among every parent I talk to. The texts and social media posts bouncing around my circle all echo each other. We feel like we’re failing at both. Our kids don’t just need us — they need *more* of us. Our kids are acting out, abandoning the routines they already had, dropping naps, sleeping less, doing less — except for jumping on top of their parents, which is happening much more. We’re letting them watch far greater amounts of screen time than we ever thought we’d tolerate. Forget homeschooling success — most of us are struggling to get our kids to do the basics that would have accounted for a Saturday-morning routine before this pandemic.

The particular struggle reflects the most privileged perspective — that of two fully employed adults, sharing the burden, without fear of losing our jobs. Put another way, I’m not worried about how I’m going to feed my family — I’m just worried about getting my son to eat something besides a donut for two days straight.

But it’s precisely the privilege of this vantage point that in a way makes it so stark. *This* is the best-case scenario?

Viruses, or in this case, global pandemics, expose and exacerbate the existing dynamics of a society — good and bad. They are like a fun-house mirror, grossly reflecting ourselves back to us. One of those dynamics is the burden we put on individual parents and families. We ask individuals to solve problems that are systemically created.

**This current situation is almost prophetically designed to showcase the farce of our societal approach to separating work and family lives.**

There’s a subtle expectation that parents must find creative ways to handle this on their own. My in-box, social media feeds, and countertops are filled with creative ideas for educating and caring for your kids. Workbooks, games, creative projects and experiments, virtual yoga, virtual doodling, virtual zoo visits, virtual everything.

I honestly am too tired and stretched thin to read the suggestions, let alone try them. The few I have tried have been met with astounding and fierce rejection by my son.

I see these “helpful suggestions” alongside reminders to be gentle on ourselves. “Embrace imperfection!” “Lower your standards!” To be clear — my family’s standards at this point are simply to get through the day, ideally with my son doing *something* besides watching TV, and us not utterly sabotaging our work.

But what’s missing in all these cloistered parent texts and Facebook groups, all these helpful tips, is acknowledgement that this situation is fundamentally farcical. And individual solutions don’t — and won’t — work.

I thought by the fourth week of social distancing we would have all settled into the new norm a bit. But for my family (and others I’ve spoken to) that is not the case — things are harder than they were at the beginning. Harder because we’ve all accrued anxiety, stress, and sadness over this period. My to-do list is longer and further untouched; my guilt and anxiety for the ways my son is not being engaged enough is greater; his apparent sadness for his whole world shifting is intensified as he regularly acts out; and our collective exhaustion grows deeper.

This cannot be solved by tweaks to the schedule, helpful routines, and virtual activities. We have to collectively recognize that parents — and any caregivers right now — have less to give at work. A lot less. The assumptions seem to be that parents have “settled into a routine” and “are doing okay now.”

To be clear, parents are not doing okay.

*Everyone* is grieving and struggling right now. When I’m not pulling my hair out, I’m trying to be grateful that I am with my family, they are healthy and safe, and I am not enduring this period in total isolation. But this pandemic is highlighting all that is wrong with our systems set up to support families.

**“Making it work” is only true for those with the most privilege among us.**

It exposes everything from the lack of paid sick leave and parental leave to the fact that the school day ends at 3 p.m. when the typical workday goes several hours longer — yet aftercare is not universally available. And that says nothing of our need for universal health care, irrespective of employment. Parents pour endless energy into solving for systems that don’t make sense and don’t work.

It’s always been a farce to think about caretaking and family responsibilities as “personal life decisions” that get handled outside of work hours. From getting kids to pediatrician appointments to the onslaught of sick days when cold season hits to school closures and parent-teacher conferences. In my son’s first year of day care, I didn’t work a full week for months. Yet we just hide it better and make it work. And again, “making it work” is only true for those with the most privilege among us.

This current situation is almost prophetically designed to showcase the farce of our societal approach to separating work and family lives. We are expected to work from home full time. And care for our children full time. And we cannot have anyone outside our immediate household help. It can’t work and we all are suffering at the illusion that it does.

Our kids are losing out — on peace of mind, education, engagement, the socialization for which they are built.

Our employers are losing out, too. Whether the office policy is to expect full-time work or whether, like in my experience, we are offered a lot of flexibility — work is less good, there is less of it, and returns will be diminishing the longer this juggle goes on.

To be honest, I'm not sure what the solution is. But unless we step back and redefine where the burden of responsibility lies in providing care for our most vulnerable and reprioritize what work matters, we are going to emerge from this pandemic with some of our most powerful forces — parents and young people — not up for the task of rebuilding a better future.

And in the meantime, remember this: Parents are not okay.

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## **The Task Force on Remote Teaching and Learning (Online) Preparedness**

By Joanne Tompkins (Co-chair with Janice Landry, Continuing and Distance Education)

Dear fellow AUT Members... By now you've heard about the Task Force on Online Teaching Preparedness. Our mandate is *To explore the challenges of moving to an online teaching and learning format, for Fall 2020, if required, and to advise the Academic Vice-President with respect to the necessary steps required to be able to do so.*

There are 25 members on the Task Force Committee representing a variety of faculty, teaching staff, students, and support services staff. The Task Force will use a working group model to focus on different aspects of the mandate. The Task Force recognizes that there are other units and groups working on this mandate and will seek to engage in discussion with these various groups.

The past few weeks have been busy setting up the Task Force, working on examining the terms of reference, guiding principles, clarifying the mandates, and planning the first sessions of the large group. On May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> the Task Force officially met and we are currently working on a needs assessment.

The Online Learning Task Force commits itself to being guided by the following principles as we do our work:

1. **Maintaining academic quality.** StFX students are used to quality teaching which uses best practices to combine academic rigor with student engagement in learning.
2. **Managing expectations.** We are committed to doing the best job we can with the resources we have available at StFX to support the campus-wide transition to online learning for Fall 2020. We recognize that moving face-to-face courses to online platforms in a four-month period is a challenge.
3. **Starting now.** Moving a course designed for face-to-face instruction to an online platform is considerable work. Faculty and teaching staff will need to begin to engage in this process beginning in early May and be prepared to devote **significant** time for this transition.
4. **Supporting.** Moving to online teaching requires a shift in thinking and design. There will be pedagogical and technological professional development to support this transition. StFX has considerable experience and capacity with online teaching and learning.
5. **Caring.** This process is occurring during an unprecedented and stressful time. We need to ensure we care for our faculty, teaching staff, and students in this transition.
6. **Acknowledging differences.** Faculty and teaching staff, like our students, have different levels of entry, learning preferences, and needs. There are also content and context differences that require different approaches. We acknowledge the diversity among faculty and teaching staff, and aim to meet them

where they are. At the same time, we must keep in mind that students will also have differences that must be addressed as best as possible through the delivery of course content.

7. **Collective efficacy.** Several areas of the University are working towards the same goal of maintaining a high-quality educational experience for our students. Working collaboratively and collegially fosters a sense of oneness in purpose and mission. By working collectively, we are independently better.
8. **Equity and accessibility.** It is important to ensure all students have access to the educational opportunities provided for them in online learning. We acknowledge that online education poses risks of exacerbating existing inequities and will consider approaches to online delivery that minimize such risks.

But... what I'd really like to do in this article is to help you, as an AUT Member, think about how you can prepare yourself for the work that may well be ahead of you (and all of us) in the Fall. I've thought of 8 things that each of us can do to get started.

1. **Go listen to Ian Milligan and get started on doing this work NOW.** If you haven't watched the presentation Dr. Ian Milligan (University of Waterloo) put together for CAUT, watch it! He is a history professor and really gives an idea of how much work it will take to turn a face-to-face course into an online course. He's concise. He's real. He says shifting a face-to-face into an online one is probably as much work as prepping a new course. He urges us all to make the time NOW to be getting our courses ready. Go to: <https://www.ianmilligan.ca/post/caut-webinar/>
2. **Get signed up for PD now.** There will be lots offered. We had 100 faculty and teaching staff sign up last week for the first PD being rolled out this week. Go and get a glimpse into an online synchronous class and see what asynchronous tools are about so you know what we're even talking about.
3. **Take out your course outlines right now and start working on them.** Most of us will know this week what we are teaching and roughly when we are teaching so we can take out our course outlines and look at what we hope to do in our courses. That's an important first step in this process. It may be a great time to think about if there are things you want to change. What is it you want this course to do? You can be thinking about the texts, content, readings, etc. you are planning on using.
4. **Keep signing up for PD.** In two weeks, there will be targeted PD. We'll be offering things like "*How to effectively use break out rooms for small group discussions to create engagement in online classrooms?*", or "*What are ways you can get to know your students and deepen your relationship with students in online classrooms?*" or "*How can I enliven my lectures to engage my students in online learning?*". We'll have a bunch of topics. The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Faculty Development Committee will also be offering professional development opportunities as well. There will be PD related to specific technical tutorials to answer questions such as "*How do I load my PPT to Collaborate?*" or "*How do I create breakout rooms?*".
5. **Sign up for a mentor.** We'll be putting a call out for folks who would like to work with a faculty mentor throughout May/June so you can get personalized help as you keep working on transitioning your course online. We have a team of roughly 35 faculty and teaching staff who have been teaching online on campus who are happy to act as mentors.
6. **Consider the context of COVID 19.** If we are teaching online, it will be because we are still in the middle of the pandemic. You should take that into consideration as you plan your course. It means that we will still be in the middle of stress and some of us and some of our students will be quite stressed. Take that into account as you plan your course. You may want to cut back slightly on what you'd normally plan in your course, since conditions won't be exactly "normal". Consider everyone's cognitive load if we are still in self-isolation.

7. **Manage expectations for yourself.** If you are new to online learning, remember that all change is emotional and personal. Acknowledge that, while you know your content and you know your teaching style, you are “learning” new tools in a new platform. Remember that and set realistic goals for yourself. Try to develop familiarity with a few good tools and build up your competence slowly. Don’t stress yourself by trying to become a techno wizard the first time round. We aren’t looking for or expecting perfection this first time round. We are looking for good online teaching which supports, as much as is possible, the reputation we have for knowing, engaging, and supporting our StFX students in our classrooms.
8. **Make sure your tools are in good shape.** Get your technology in shape. Make appointments to get your hardware and your operating systems checked and updated if needed. And do it in May and June, which will be much less busy than waiting until mid-August.

Please be sure to reach out to myself or members of the Task Force at any time. Our job is to help us all move to online learning, if we need to, and to make that online learning be of good quality. I fully believe we have, collectively, all the expertise, tools, and supports necessary to do that.

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### [CAUT Marks Day of Mourning](#)

(Ottawa – April 28, 2020) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) stands with unions and employee associations across the country to observe this year’s National Day of Mourning in recognition of workers killed or injured on the job.

Nearly five million workers in Canada have been deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a number of frontline workers already losing their lives to the virus. The crisis has starkly revealed inequities in our workplaces, with many of those who risk their lives daily working for minimum wages, with few benefits, and in insecure positions.

Every employee has a right to safe working conditions, and fair compensation. On this Day of Mourning, CAUT calls on governments and employers everywhere to use the lessons being learned during this extraordinary time to rebuild a more equitable and better world.

On the Day of Mourning, it is with deep sadness the StFXAUT acknowledged the heroism of RCMP Member Constable Heidi Stevenson who died in the line of duty while protecting and saving the lives of many others during the recent Nova Scotia mass shooting.

Our hearts and thoughts remain with the family of Constable Heidi Stevenson, her husband, Dean, her two children, Connor and Ava, and Heidi’s mother, Avon Brophy, who worked with the StFXAUT for eight years.





## Physical Activity and Exercise while Physical Distancing during COVID-19

By Angie Kolen

It's been 7-8 weeks since those of us who are not providing frontline or essential services have been physically distancing and working from our homes. This change in our work and down time has likely had a considerable effect on our health – both physically and mentally.

One of the things we may be struggling with is how to be physically active in and around our homes. Before I provide suggestions, let me share WHY it is important to move and to move often. Engaging in physical activity everyday benefits both our physical and mental health. I will not go into the details – there is LOTS of research that identifies these benefits. Let me simply emphasize the role it has on stress. Physical activity helps us to manage our stress – both in the moment and for future moments. When we are physically active – especially when this activity makes us sweat, it is effective in removing the stress hormones in our body at the moment. When we are regularly physically active (about 30 minutes per day), we respond to our stress with less stress hormones. So two major reasons to be physically here (though there are soooooo many more!).

Finally, before I share some ideas, let me remind us that this is not the time to exercise yourself to a perfect weight, to achieve a certain shape, or to become the most physically fit ever. Be kind to yourself and realistic with your physical activity – these are not usual times. Let us do what we can each day and what fits with our living situation and conditions.

As mentioned above, we should aim to be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day (this does not have to be all at once) with more minutes better for us. One of the best things we can do for ourselves is to get outside to walk – while keeping a physical distance from others (2 meters, remember). If we have a bicycle and helmet, that is a great option too. And if our bodies still allow it, a jog or run can feel really good as well.

What about inside our houses? What can we do inside? Put on some good music while baking, cooking, or cleaning and dance along. Maybe just put music on when we need a break and let go for a bit. The 80s music works well with me, sometimes I can be a “Dancing Queen” (though I am not young and 17 😊).

We can and should add exercise and bits of movement during our workdays too. In fact, we should get up and move at least once every hour. There are many things we can do, walk to the kitchen to get a drink of water, use the bathroom that is furthest away in our house, go up and down the stairs (if available). We may even choose to take breaks to specifically add some exercise – 30 seconds, followed by 10 seconds rest, repeat/switch exercises. Think jumping jacks, skipping on the spot, walking lunges, squats, push ups (on the wall, on the ground, from our knees, toes), plank (front, side, back), curl ups, leg lifts, donkey kicks, standing crunches, knee lifts, leg kicks, swimming arms, triceps presses, etc. There are many apps we can get – most free that share short (some only 7 minutes) workouts that allow us to get some exercise during these breaks. We are not too busy to do this – we will become more productive and effective after these short breaks with exercise/physical activity (LOTS of research to support this too).

We can be even creative during some of our *Zoom*, *Teams*, *Collaborate*, and *FaceTime* meetings – we can stand, walk, skip, dance, etc. on the spot while listening and stopping when we speak. We might even do some standing stretches – think side bends, arm swings, arm circles, front and back of the leg stretches, arm and shoulder stretches, neck half circles, shoulder shrugs, toe taps, etc., When we have phone meetings, we can walk around our house while talking. I have been bold enough to set up my laptop on a self-created “desk” over my recumbent exercise bike and pedaled while listening to webinars and taking notes on the side.

It's really not that hard to add little bits of movement in our day – and we will benefit from it. See what YOU can do; share your ideas – though remember it is not a competition. Take care of yourselves – physically and mentally with your physical activity – every day.

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On April 22, 2020 the federal government announced the new Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB). The program which is part of a \$9 billion package has been created to aid post-secondary students and recent graduates not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB ). The program will run from May to August 2020 and provides \$1250/month to those eligible and \$1750/month to students with disabilities or who are caring for dependents. As well, a new Canada Student Service Grant was also announced which will provide up to \$5000 to students to help them to continue their education in the Fall.

For more information please see:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/22/support-students-and-new-grads-affected-covid-19>

### **Post-secondary Stakeholders in Nova Scotia seek Financial Aid**

By Matthew Moore May 1, 2020 (Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/unions-representing-universities-seek-financial-aid-1.5553010>)

#### **Open letter signed by 17 officials from unions, student group seeks various support**

A coalition of unions and a group representing students, staff and faculty at Nova Scotia's universities and community colleges is looking for increased financial support from the federal and provincial governments amid COVID-19.

[An open letter by the coalition](#) highlights the fear that COVID-19 could cause catastrophic outcomes for universities. The groups are asking for no staff cuts, lower tuition and increased financial aid for students.

The letter is signed by 17 officials from organizations including the Canadian Federation of Students and various faculty and public sector unions.

Scott Stewart, president of the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers, said a loss of international students this fall could have a huge impact on the bottom line for universities.

Cape Breton University, where Stewart teaches, had an international student population of 65 per cent last year.

With tight border restrictions and flights grounded around the world, Stewart worries what the outcome will be once students return this fall.

"We run the risk of some huge deficits for the coming year," he said.

"We're asking the federal government to consider universities, as they have considered other businesses, and provide money during the pandemic to keep us afloat."

#### **"One-time ask"**

The letter said students face added financial pressure because "Many students will not be able to secure sufficient savings through summer jobs and federal income supports. Many of their families will also be under increased financial constraints."

Stewart said this would be a "one-time ask" for this fall semester, saying even though the [federal government has provided money to help students](#), many will have access to fewer finances.

A letter to faculty at Cape Breton University this week suggested the university could have a \$45-million shortfall.

Gordon MacInnis, vice-president of finance and operations at CBU, said enrolment for September opens June 1.

He said he worries about how operations will cope if there is a large drop in enrolment.

"In the absence of additional revenue from public sector supports, that's going to put tremendous pressure on the operating costs of every university in the country," MacInnis said.

### **"Harsh reality"**

Stewart said universities are asking for no layoffs in the higher-education sector.

"The federal government has already committed to helping businesses [by contributing a large percentage of employee salaries during this pandemic](#)," he said. "We urge that this policy be extended to universities and colleges."

MacInnis said the university is doing all it can to avoid layoffs of full-time faculty and staff for as long as possible.

"That's the harsh reality of it. We're having discussions with how we can cut costs in our operating budget," he said.

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education did not provide comment by deadline.

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## **OCUFA urges University Administrations to Respect Collegial Governance Structures when Addressing Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

April 23, 2020 (Retrieved from: [https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/ocufa-urges-university-administrations-to-respect-collegial-governance-structures-when-addressing-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/?utm\\_source=Academica+Top+Ten&utm\\_campaign=cf5453f82a-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_04\\_24\\_05\\_02&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b4928536cf-cf5453f82a-47732597](https://ocufa.on.ca/blog-posts/ocufa-urges-university-administrations-to-respect-collegial-governance-structures-when-addressing-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/?utm_source=Academica+Top+Ten&utm_campaign=cf5453f82a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_24_05_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b4928536cf-cf5453f82a-47732597))

OCUFA is concerned about the erosion of democratic, transparent, and accountable collegial governance practices at Ontario's universities as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. With it becoming abundantly clear that universities will not be able to return to their usual operations in the foreseeable future, some administrations are foregoing their responsibility to respect the shared governance structures of their institutions and, instead, are making academic decisions without the involvement of senates and academic councils or proper consultation with faculty.

OCUFA appreciates the priority university administrations have placed on protecting the safety and health of members of the campus community while determining how best to wrap up the winter term. In the past few weeks, universities have had to take many unprecedented emergency measures and implement swift changes to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as institutions shift to making longer-term decisions about their academic and operational activities for the summer and fall terms, they face challenging decisions about how to carry out the teaching and research that is core to their purpose. OCUFA is extremely worried by the unilateral and non-consultative approaches some administrations have engaged in to make these decisions. These approaches have seen the voices of faculty ignored, undermining the collegial governance processes that are vital to the effective operations of Ontario's postsecondary institutions.

Ontario universities pride themselves in their shared model of governance, where voices of members of the campus community are heard and decisions are made through democratic, transparent, and accountable collegial processes. Therefore, it is very concerning that some administrations are undermining these principles by ignoring their obligation to follow proper procedure and respect the long-standing decision-making structures of their institutions. Given the technological capacities of our universities that render remote meetings possible, there is no justification for excluding faculty voices by circumventing critical governing bodies and processes. As the OCUFA policy statement on collegial governance clearly states, “while postsecondary institutions need to change to adjust to changing political, social, economic, and cultural conditions, these changes need to be determined and implemented through collegial processes that involve the meaningful participation of faculty, staff, and students.”

Respecting these foundational decision-making structures is not just an exercise in democratic accountability, but the most effective way for universities to address the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is only through the collective wisdom and efforts of all members of the campus community that Ontario’s universities will be able to chart a path forward that maintains the quality of education and research. As more information becomes available about future enrolment and university revenue, and as further decisions need to be made about course delivery, research, student support, and campus safety measures, administrations must engage with faculty through existing collegial governance structures to ensure that all decisions with academic implications are made by senates or equivalent bodies.

Public universities exist to create knowledge, educate, and serve the common good. As postsecondary institutions continue to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vitally important that the safety of the campus community is prioritized. However, universities must not use this pandemic as an excuse to ignore their democratic, transparent, and accountable collegial governance structures. University administrations must respect collegial governance and the voices of faculty.

Ontario’s universities have a vital role to play in helping the province navigate this pandemic, but it is only by working together that we can effectively guide our institutions towards a future where the vibrant energy of students and faculty returns to our campuses.

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### [TAMARACK INSTITUTE GUIDELINES FOR WORKING REMOTELY](#)

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Bruce MacKinnon cartoon; reprinted from Saltwire.com March 12, 2020

## Women Academics seem to be Submitting Fewer Papers during Coronavirus.

“Never seen anything like it,” says one Editor.

By Caroline Kitchener April 24, 2020 (Retrieved from: <https://www.thelily.com/women-academics-seem-to-be-submitting-fewer-papers-during-coronavirus-never-seen-anything-like-it-says-one-editor/>)

Men are submitting up to 50 percent more than they usually would.

This was supposed to be a big year for Einat Lev. She planned to do field work in Hawaii and Alaska, submit a major research proposal, then finish writing the last of five papers necessary for her tenure application. In September, she would finally go before the review committee, the final step to becoming a full-fledged associate professor of seismology at Columbia University.

Now, with her 7-year-old daughter at home, Lev can only work four hours each day, instead of her usual 10. She mostly had made peace with the delays, finding joy on long walks, helping her daughter identify neighborhood flowers and birds.

But then she heard from a male colleague. They'd started their careers around the same time. His wife took care of their kids full time. Lev's husband has a full-time job.

“On the bright side of things,” the colleague said of his experience, “[self-quarantine] gives me time to concentrate on writing.”

Lev wanted to scream. “That sounds like such a luxury,” she replied. “I can't even imagine.”

Six weeks into widespread self-quarantine, editors of academic journals have started noticing a trend: Women — who inevitably shoulder a greater share of family responsibilities — seem to be submitting fewer papers. This threatens to derail the careers of women in academia, says Leslie Gonzales, a professor of education administration at Michigan State University, who focuses on strategies for diversifying the academic field: When institutions are deciding who to grant tenure to, how will they evaluate a candidate's accomplishments during coronavirus?


“We don't want a committee to look at the outlier productivity of, say, a white hetero man with a spouse at home and say, ‘Well, this person managed it,’” says Gonzales. “We don't want to make that our benchmark.”

Astrophysics is one field in which COVID-19 seems to be having a disproportionate effect on female academics, said Andy Casey, an astrophysics research fellow at Monash University who analyzed the number of submissions to astrophysics “preprint servers,” where academics typically post early versions of their papers. For *The Lily*, Casey compared data from January to April in 2020 to the same time period in previous years, noting “perhaps up to 50 percent more productivity loss among women.” Especially because women are already underrepresented in astrophysics, Casey said, the drop off has been easy for editors to spot.

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### CAUT BULLETIN APRIL 2020 EDITION: VOL. 67, No. 4

 [President's message / Zombie schemes & bad outcomes](#) By Brenda Austin-Smith

 [Coronavirus Q&A / COVID-19 & the academic workplace](#)

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## Mental Health Messaging for StFX Faculty/Staff

Reprint: Email sent to StFX Faculty & Staff, April 17, 2020 9:48AM

Dear Faculty and Staff,

In these uncertain times, it is important to prioritize your mental health and wellbeing. While anxiety is a normal reaction in the face of uncertainty, it can also progress to the point where it becomes hard to manage. Please know there are numerous mental health resources available to StFX employees and families.

### StFX Employee and Family Assistance Program

EFAP is available 24/7 and can provide you with immediate and confidential help for any work, health or life concern.

Access your EFAP:

- By phone: 1-800-387-4765
- By website: [workhealthlife.com](http://workhealthlife.com)
- Download the MyEAP app in your app store

### ICAN (Conquer Anxiety and Nervousness)

The Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) Mental Health and Addictions Program has accelerated the launch of an online program called ICAN (Conquer Anxiety and Nervousness) for people aged 18 and up with mild-moderate anxiety with or without mild depression.

It is now available for people looking for help with anxiety and depression, and includes three months of telephone coaching. **This is not a crisis service.**

Participants will learn and understand anxiety and valuable life skills that have been proven to overcome anxiety. Adults receive a manual or access to a secure website, skill demonstration videos, and most important, weekly telephone support from a coach. The interactions are private and confidential.

This program is offered through the Strongest Families Institute. [Please visit their website to self-refer.](#)

### Mindwell U

Mindwell U is a free online program that takes as little as five minutes a day and can be accessed anywhere, on any device. This self-guided program challenges you to take five minutes out of your day to learn the basics in mindfulness; the practice of paying attention to thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations in the present moment through a gentle and nurturing lens.

Each day you will complete a "Take 5" session during which you learn new mindfulness skills to improve your mental health. This practice lowers stress and increases resilience. The challenge also teaches "mindfulness-in-action" so you don't have to stop what you are doing to become calmer, present and more focused. To access this program please [visit their website.](#)

### National Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

The National Centre for Addiction and Mental Health also has some great resources related to COVID-19 and Mental Health which are accessible [on their website.](#)

If you have any questions related to these services, please reach out to Human Resources [hr@stfx.ca](mailto:hr@stfx.ca).

**Jennifer Swinemar-Murray, CPHR**  
**Director, Human Resources**

## People are Getting Creative with their Work-from-home Setups

By Harmeet Kaur March 18, 2020 (Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/17/business/work-from-home-setups-coronavirus-trnd/index.html>)



## Key Dates from the 5th StFXAUT Collective Agreement:

### May 15<sup>th</sup>:

→ Deadline for each Librarian to submit to the University Librarian a copy of an Annual Report of professional activities. (**Article 3.3 Annual Report:1.0**)

→ Deadline for Performance Evaluation for Lab Instructors. (**Article 4.6 Performance Evaluation:2.0**)

→ Deadline for requests by Lab Instructors to Chair/Coordinator or Director for start date for next academic year (**Article 4.4 Conditions of Employment: 8.3**)

### May 31<sup>st</sup>:

→ Deadline for the Chair /Coordinator/Director, School of Nursing to inform each Faculty member in their department/IDP in writing of the Faculty member's teaching assignment for the forthcoming academic year, after receiving the approval of the Dean for that assignment. (**Article 2.0.2 Chairs of Departments, Coordinators of Interdisciplinary Programs and Director, School of Nursing:2.1 b**)

→ Deadline for Faculty and Librarians with deferred sabbaticals to send a letter to the Chair, appropriate Dean, and Chair of the University Council for Research (UCR) indicating revisions or updates to the sabbatical plan or withdrawal of the sabbatical application (**Article 2.4.1 Sabbatical Leave:3.2 and Article 3.4.1 Sabbatical Leave:3.2**)

→ Deadline for Laboratory Instructors and Senior Laboratory Instructors to be given their teaching assignments from their respective Chair, Coordinator, or Director (**Article 4.4 Conditions of Employment:8.2**)

→ Deadline for all Laboratory Instructors and Senior Laboratory Instructors to be given their letters of appointment from their respective Dean (**Article 4.4 Conditions of Employment:8.3.1**)

### June 15<sup>th</sup>:

→ Deadline for announcement of the University/Research/Publication/Teaching Awards (URPTA). (**Article 2.7.1 University Research/Publication/Teaching Awards:5.0**)

### August 1<sup>st</sup>:

→ Deadline for application by Faculty and Librarians to request a Sabbatical Leave (**Article 2.4.1 Sabbatical Leave:14.1.2 and Article 3.4.1 Sabbatical Leave:14.1.2**)

→ Deadline for posting of Part-Time positions for fall term and winter term courses and full year courses (**Article 2.10 Part-Time Academic Instructors:2.3.e**)



**StFX ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS (StFXAUT)**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020**

**1:00 – 2:30 pm**

***ALL StFXAUT MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND***