

**Dr. Karen Harper, President**  
Email: [president@cupe3912.ca](mailto:president@cupe3912.ca)

**Dr. Erica Fischer, VP SMU**  
Email: [vp.smu@cupe3912.ca](mailto:vp.smu@cupe3912.ca)

**Lauren McKenzie, VP TLC**  
Email: [vp.smutlc@cupe3912.ca](mailto:vp.smutlc@cupe3912.ca)

CUPE Local 3912  
Killam Library, Rm. 3618  
Dalhousie University  
Halifax, NS B3H 4H8  
Tel: 902-494-8872  
Fax: 902-494-6344

January 21, 2022

**VIA EMAIL**

Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray, President  
Saint Mary's University  
923 Robie Street  
Halifax, NS B3H 3C3

Dear Dr. Summerby-Murray:

CUPE 3912 represents over 200 part-time faculty and instructors teaching at Saint Mary's University (SMU) and The Language Centre (TLC) in the 2021-2022 academic year. We share the plea of Saint Mary's University Faculty Union (SMUFU) for a more flexible, supportive, and safety-oriented approach to return to campus. We are writing to seek your cooperation to ensure that CUPE 3912 members are afforded the same level of protection and flexibility as SMUFU members in these difficult times.

We have concerns in several areas, including but not limited to: (1) our members being permitted to teach and/or continue to teach remotely for health and safety reasons; (2) extended absences of our members due to them or someone in their household contracting COVID-19; (3) consistent and adequate information to our members; and (4) the provisions of adequate PPE to our members.

*(1) Teaching Remotely for Health and Safety Reasons*

We concur with SMUFU's position that faculty who wish to teach remotely for specific health and safety reasons should have the option to do so, and that such requests should not be treated as "accommodation" requiring medication documentation. After all, COVID-19 is known to all and continues to be a pandemic. We seek that the same flexibility be extended to CUPE 3912 members.

*(2) Extended Absences due to COVID-19*

We are concerned about how the Employer may treat extended absences due to COVID-19 related illness of a member or of another person in their household, including but not limited to government regulations requiring them to quarantine. Article 22 of the SMU Collective Agreement and Article 20 of the TLC Collective Agreement do not contemplate such extraordinary circumstances.

*(3) Consistent Provision of Adequate Information*

We concur with SMUFU's position that faculty have been provided with inadequate information. CUPE 3912 members were not even extended the courtesy of being provided with the limited information that the Employer gave to SMUFU members on January 19 and 20, 2022. In particular, our members are concerned about the following pressing issues relating to returning to in-person teaching at this time:

- safety procedures and support for addressing students who may not be following safety protocols;
- seating limits in classrooms; and
- air quality and filtration information relating to classrooms and hallways.

We join SMUFU's call that the Employer commit to responding to both full-time and part-time faculty concerns in a respectful and timely manner, join faculty in an open meeting to discuss these concerns, and provide concrete responses to faculty concerns in the aforementioned areas.

*(4) Provision of Adequate PPE*

We request that the Employer provide CUPE 3912 members with adequate PPE, including but not limited to N95 masks and face shields, as recommended by health authorities.

We look forward to hearing from you on these pressing matters in the nearest future.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Karen Harper, President

Dr. Erica Fischer, VP SMU

Lauren McKenzie, VP TLC

Cc: Dr. Malcolm Butler, Vice-President Academic and Research, Saint Mary's University