

Dear fellow Contract Faculty,



Here is the last installment of the newsletters outlining the bargaining priorities that you listed as top concerns for CF at Laurier. In previous editions, we've covered [Compensation](#), [Job Security](#), [Benefits](#) and [Pensions](#).

In this edition, we'll have a look at an issue that – particularly since the pandemic – has become a primary concern for most of us.

ISSUE #3: PART 3 SICK LEAVE

GOOD TO KNOW: HOW ARE OTHERS PROTECTED AT LAURIER?

Particularly in the case of Sick (and other types) of Leave, it is important to know how other Laurier employees are treated.

The Collective Agreement for our **FT faculty** colleagues allows for up to 120 days of sick leave as well as the opportunity, should it be needed, to apply for benefits under Laurier's Long Term Disability Plan. Within our own CA, **PT Librarians on Contract** are entitled to 21 sick days, while **PT Librarians on Continuing Appointments** are entitled to the same sick leave and benefits as their FT colleagues on a prorated basis.

FT WLUSA members and **Management** at Laurier receive an immediate 20 sick days and continue to earn 1 ½ days for each month of employment to a maximum of 105 days. Even **PT WLUSA** members are credited 10 sick days and earn additional sick days for each month of employment up to a maximum 105 days. In the unfortunate circumstance where an absence extends beyond 120 consecutive calendar days, **FT and PT WLUSA** members that are enrolled in the University's Long Term Disability Plan can apply for those benefits as well.

CUPE members, **IATSE** members, and long serving **FT and PT UFCW** members can have up to 105 sick days, annually.

TOUGH TO HEAR: HOW ARE CF PROTECTED AT LAURIER?

Contract Faculty at Laurier are allowed up to 7 days of paid sick leave time per academic term. Any sick time outside of these 7 days (that is not covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act) must be supported via other means, like Employment Insurance, with no supplemental income from the University. For those of us who have dealt with EI in the past, we know what this means. A four-week illness (for example) would likely mean no pay of any kind or from any source until we were already back to work.

AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO DEPEND ON US?

It is not always about our own health, though, is it? Accommodations to sick leave have been made for **CUPE** and **UFCW** members who, for example, must attend to a child, spouse, parent or sibling who is sick and dependent upon them for health care. **WLUSA** members and **Management** are eligible to use up to a full 50 sick days per year to provide care. And in our **FT colleagues'** Agreement, sick days are not only fully protected through the inclusion of Compassionate Leave, Compassionate Care Leave, and Personal Leave benefits that extend anywhere from 3 to 30 days, but they are unrestricted and reasonably more generous.

LAURIER'S PUBLIC FACE VS. ITS PRIVATE TREATMENT OF CF:

While the public-facing Laurier declares its commitment to 'supporting and enhancing the well-being of its staff and faculty', inwardly its policies and agreements send the clear message that 'it depends.' When the university says it is committed to its faculty and staff's well-being and that it is dedicated to providing an inclusive healthy work force, it obviously 'depends' on **who** it is that needs that support. It 'depends' on whether or not the employee is CF.

And while it would seem straightforward that those who deliver approximately 50% of Laurier's educational mandate - those who are on the frontlines in classrooms, face-to-face with hundreds of students per week - would be top of mind when it comes to 'enhancing the well-being' of Laurier, it's clear that CF are not being considered in that health equation.

Instead, we live with the knowledge that 7 sick days may not be enough to keep ourselves and those who depend on us healthy. We know that illness longer than 7 days for ourselves or our family members might mean the loss of our courses and stipends. We know that EI is insufficient support for a family without a primary wage-earner. We know that relying on EI and not having access to Long Term Disability can mean a quick descent for our families into poverty.

We know – undoubtedly - that we are the most precarious employees on campus and that we also have the least protection for the curveballs that life (as we've seen with the pandemic) can throw at us.

It is shameful – SHAMEFUL – that, when it comes to us or our family members getting sick, most of us would be better off if we were making sandwiches at Laurier instead of teaching its students.