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To: Dr. V. Timmons (President), Dr. Abrahams (Provost and Vice-President (academic)), Dr. N. Bose (Vice President (research)), Dr. J. Simpson (Dean HSS)

From: Dr. J. Dyer, Head, Department of Gender Studies

Subject: Maintaining Equity Amidst the Gendered Impacts of Covid 19

Amongst the many pressing issues facing the university community, one that my department has raised – students and faculty, and also students from other HSS departments who feel it is a ‘gender studies’ issue – is the gendered nature of labour and affective response to the pandemic.

Some students have children; many are lone parents; many profs are lone parents or primary caregivers of dependants. For all these groups, creating time to work at home is now an extreme challenge. In addition, many faculty and students do not have physical arrangements to work or to teach online effectively in their homes, whether it is private working space or a stable internet connection. To use myself as an example, I work on weekends and nights now; my kids have various age-specific and health needs which are exacerbated by the pandemic, making me far less available in the daytime and far more exhausted to accomplish my own administrative and research work, despite my other social privileges. I am worried about how colleagues and students in similar situations will integrate emergency teaching into similar care-based situations in the Fall, and I know many who face and/or will face impossible teaching and learning situations in Fall 2020. This problem is shared by many identities, but it is unquestionably gendered. The gendered nature of care work that is synchronous with teaching and research work will emphasize what we have already agreed in university meetings is the unequal and gendered field of the academy. Further, it is also the case that with these new family proximities, there has been more violence against women and marginalized people and less access to health care services and safe spaces, all of which impacts the result of who gets to flourish amidst the pandemic. This requires a productive response from Memorial that accounts for these inequities.

We ask you to amplify this concern to the university:

- There is clear evidence that **student and ASM success will skew masculine**, as per the research below, but this could be mediated with increased supports for all members of our community.

These are our requirements for equity and fairness:

- We must see a statement from the university that it **recognizes these disparities and a policy put in place that allows us to encourage and provide flexibility** with due dates, timelines, assessments, and quantitative expectations in both research and learning for students and faculty.
- We insist **MUN develops a dedicated fund for childcare expenses** for members of our university community (e.g., students, instructors, researchers), particularly if schools and child-care centres do not open or open slowly in the Fall.
- **Class enrolments must be capped lower**, particularly for those with care-giving responsibilities over 20 hours/week.
- **Reduce teaching loads** during the pandemic, particularly for those instructors whose caregiving responsibilities exceed 20 hours/week.
- Implement an **explicit stop-the-clock option** for tenure-track faculty, and not just an optional impact statement or, better yet,
- Implement **emergency alternative methods of evaluation of promotion and tenure files**, methods that reflect and answer to the socially systemic inequalities that contribute to the gender-based disparity in the academy (that facilitates the academic flourishing of some, and the languishing of others).
- Lobby the tri-council funding agencies for ways faculty can indicate the high-caregiving responsibilities that may be preventing the successful accomplishment of research at this time or **develop emergency alternative methods of assessment** in order to fairly account for long-term discrepancies.
- Alter determination of **full-time and scholarship standing for undergraduate and graduate students** to account for students whose caregiving responsibilities exceed 20 hours/week.

Rather than continue a situation in which much of the university will inevitably not meet their own or others' expectations, Memorial must take the lead and actively support everyone.



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