MEMORANDUM

Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

To: Deans
From: Mark Green, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)
Copy: John Pierce, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)
Date: March 24, 2020
Subject: Teaching Assessment for Winter Term 2020 courses

As you are aware, the university’s recent decision to move toward remote delivery of academic programming as part of its response to the evolving and unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 has implications for the Winter Term 2020 administration of student assessment of teaching, specifically, the University Survey of Student Assessment of Teaching (USAT), and the Queen’s Survey of Student Experience of Teaching (QSSET), which was being piloted as a prelude to full adoption. Neither of these assessments is suitable for remote delivery because the USAT can only be completed in person, and the deployment of QSSET was only in its initial phases and not ready for use across campus.

Last week, working with the Office of the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning), Faculty Relations, and QUFA, I made the difficult decision that USATs would not be conducted for Winter Term 2020 courses, any USAT forms that had been completed by students for Winter Term 2020 courses would be destroyed, and, in respect of courses which were scheduled to participate in the QSSET pilot in the Winter Term of 2020, the pilot would not proceed.

While unavoidable in the circumstances, these decisions clearly impact the processes of assessment and evaluation of faculty members’ teaching. As a result, the university has also agreed with QUFA that faculty members, especially those who are reliant on an assessment of their teaching for future employment or promotion, shall be encouraged to exercise their right to submit, as per Article 29.1.6 of the Collective Agreement, “any information [they] believe to be relevant to the review of their teaching performance, including a Teaching Dossier per Article 29.2”. As well, instructors may submit, with a view to improving course design and/or teaching effectiveness, a Member’s Course Survey if it satisfies all of the criteria and conditions...
set out in Articles 29.4.1 and 29.4.2 of the Collective Agreement. Further, the university has agreed that faculty members shall not be penalized for the absence of USAT or QSSET results in the Official File, as per Article 34.2.4, for the Winter Term of 2020 during assessment processes with respect to Article 28 Annual/Biennial Performance Review, Article 30 Renewal, Tenure and Promotion for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty, and Article 32 Reappointment and Promotion of Adjunct Members.

I appreciate the support we have received in working with QUFA through this issue. This decision was difficult since surveys on teaching play an important role in the summative and formative review of pedagogical effectiveness for individual instructors, and for the institution as a whole. In this extraordinary situation, however, the institution is unable to carry out such surveys effectively, fairly, and in conformity with the agreed-upon principles set out in the Collective Agreement. I am also grateful to all instructors who continue to maintain a high standard of teaching during this challenging time.