

RIDER UNIVERSITY CHAPTER
American Association of University Professors
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vox facultatis

TO: Gregory G. Dell'Omo, President
Rider University

FROM: Jeff Halpern, Contract Administrator & Chief Grievance Officer, AAUP
Joel Phillips, Associate Grievance Officer, AAUP

DATE: March 13, 2020

SUBJ: Information Request: COVID-19

While quick action is necessary in a crisis, I must register the AAUP's objection to your failure to involve the AAUP in the planning and decision making related to the University's response to the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Health and safety issues are mandatory bargaining subjects, and you have a legal obligation to disclose information and bargain on this issue. Planning for actions that affect the health and safety of our members require the involvement of the AAUP as the legal representative of the faculty. Instead decisions were made without any input or meaningful communication with the AAUP prior to the announcement that went out to the all of the Rider community. In the same vein you have an obligation to involve the AAUP in changes in the terms and conditions of employment of the members of our bargaining unit, including changes in delivery of course content. As with health and safety issues there was absolutely no involvement, consultation or communication with the AAUP, prior to the announcement of decisions related to these matters. These violations continue to occur on an almost daily basis. These include among others, emails to the members of our bargaining unit informing them of mandatory changes in their syllabi without any union consultation such as;

As with the original spring break, classes will not be in session for that week, and assignments originally due that week will be due as of March 30.

This complete ignoring of the AAUP's legal rights to be informed of and involved in these decisions cannot continue to be tolerated. Nor will we accept as justification the need to move quickly in a crisis. AAUP representatives are fellow members of the Rider community and were and continue to be available to meet with representatives of the administration on short notice.

In preparation for such meetings the following is an emergency information request. Please provide detailed answers to the following questions.

On what basis was the decision made that "no classes should have required work or assignments until the week of March 30th."

What steps have been taken to provide faculty (including adjuncts) with access to technology and training that will allow them to continue to provide instruction on a non-face to face basis? In particular how will appropriate hardware and interconnectivity be provided for faculty working from home who do not presently have such capabilities

What steps have been taken to evaluate general dilution ventilation in campus buildings to make sure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems deliver adequate fresh air to work areas? Good indoor air quality can dilute the concentration of infectious viral droplets and aerosols and thus reduce the risks of infection.

What steps have been taken to increase cleaning of public spaces, bathrooms, and laboratories? Specifically, what protocols and schedules have been put in place to assure that this cleaning is effective against the buildup of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

What protocols are in place for the disinfection of public spaces, bathrooms and laboratories?

What steps have been taken to ensure that university sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that all employees are aware of these policies.

What steps have been taken to require contractors employing people who work on campus to provide non-punitive, paid sick leave for all of their workers? This includes subcontracted custodial, food service and other operations staff. These workers are vulnerable to pressure to work while sick. The nature of their work places them at higher risk of contracting and spreading infectious diseases.

What plans or protocols are in place or have been discussed on how we will respond if and when a member of the Rider community has a confirmed case of COVID -19?

I expect a quick response to this information request and a meeting/s with appropriate administration decision makers on these and other issues related to the University's response to the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

cc: DonnaJean A. Fredeen, Provost & VP, Academic Affairs
Robert A. Stoto, Vice President for Human Resources & Affirmative Action
Michael F. Reca, Vice President, Facilities & University Operations
Mark A. Solomon, Vice President, Legal Affairs & General Counsel
Richard L. Riccardi, Senior Associate Provost, Dean of Libraries
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Kelly A. Bidle, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Science
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