
TO: Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies
School of Graduate Studies Academic Council

FROM: Dr. Lee Ann McKivior, University Registrar

Subject: Proposal - Academic Remedies as a Result of Disruption of Instructional Activities
January 30, 2023 – February 13, 2023



On November 12, 2000, a report outlining academic remedies was presented to Senate as a positive way forward following a disruption of instructional activities from October 31, 2000 to November 12, 2000. The attached report echoes many of the recommendations that were put in place at that time and were endorsed by Senate. Similarly, all outlining principles and resolutions proposed now are in order to mitigate the impact on students and faculty, both members returning from labour action and those teaching members whose duties continued during the disruption of instructional activities from January 30, 2023 to February 13, 2023.

As we begin the process of recovery, and again strengthen our Memorial community to support a culture of collaboration, cohesion and alignment, the proposed academic remedies remain rooted in our institutional values of:

- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Honesty
- Openness
- Trust
- Academic freedom
- Active listening
- Constructive critique and criticism
- Continuous communications

Equally important, as we formulate a path forward with teaching and learning, if there are overarching omissions within this planning, especially given the complexities and the sheer number of individuals involved, I trust that solutions can be found that support our students and work in their best interests.

In tandem with the acknowledgement that we need to support our students, students must recognize that they have a responsibility for their education and it is important that students work with instructors to negotiate equitable solutions that will support their learning and the academic integrity of the course.

At the request of Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic), I am presenting Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Executive Committee of the Academic Council of the School of Graduate Studies with principles and resolutions to consider as proposed in the attached report. Your committees represent the academic heart of the institution, with broad representation from the university community. I am also asking that this report be endorsed and presented at the meeting of Senate on February 14, 2023 at 4:00 PM.

Dr. Lee Ann McKivior
University Registrar

**Academic Remedies Proposed to Mitigate the Impact of the
Disruption of Instructional Activities
January 30, 2023 – February 13, 2023**

This report was commissioned by the Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and presented for endorsement to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Executive Committee of the Academic Council of the School of Graduate Studies. In addition, many of the recommendations proposed were implemented after the labour disruption that occurred in 2000 and this document has retained the related wording and descriptions.

The intent of the report is to present academic remedies that will minimize the impact on students and faculty, both members returning from labour action and those teaching members whose duties continued during the disruption of instructional activities from January 30, 2023 to February 13, 2023.

Recommendations are rooted in our institutional values and guided by a respect for the academic integrity of courses, the expertise of our instructors and the overarching need to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the interruption.

In the case of those students who are in a less than optimum situation, the purpose of this document is to provide appropriate academic resolutions informed by our Senate as recommended below. Equally, our aim is that there should be no penalty for students who participated in the labour action.

Our principles remain, as they were following the October 31, 2000 – November 12, 2000 academic disruption and are equally applied to those students whose studies were paused and to those whose studies were not paused.

1. PRINCIPLES

The governing principles of this document are: *Fairness to Students, Academic Integrity and Timely Information.*

1.1 Fairness to Students

Students affected by the disruption referenced above are entitled to leniency in the application of academic regulations, to reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence following the resumption of instructional activities, to reasonable extensions of deadlines and to such other remedies as Senate deems necessary and consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

1.2 Academic Integrity

It is the obligation of Senate to ensure the academic integrity of all courses. No dilution of standards normally expected of students should be permitted and there should be as little diminution as possible in the instructional or supervisory support given to students.

1.3 Timely Information

Students, staff, and faculty have a right to be informed in a timely manner of procedures to be in effect at the conclusion of the disruption, any changed requirements, and rescheduled academic activities.

Strict application of the principle of academic integrity requires that individual instructors and academic units ensure that normal standards of course content and assessment are maintained. However, the method of assessment may change as directed by the instructor and is encouraged given the proposed amendments to the term. Messaging should be communicated from instructors as quickly as possible to students if alternate forms of assessment are put in place.

Given the mixture of paused and not paused academic instruction during the disruption, and the compression of instructional time resulting from it, maintaining academic integrity may well place an unacceptable burden on some students, especially on those whose performance to date has been below average, or those who will be working to two different end of teaching term dates (April 6, 2023 for not paused courses/sections and April 10, 2023 for paused courses/sections).

Reconciling the principle of academic integrity with the practical consequences of the disruption and with the principle of fairness to all students therefore requires instructors, academic units and Senate to see that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that no student's academic standing is irrevocably damaged as a result of these circumstances. Guided by these principles, the proposed steps fall into three broad categories, namely *rescheduling of instructional activities for paused courses*, *recognition of teaching that was maintained during the labour disruption* and *relaxation of academic regulations and Senate policy* are outlined below.

The principle of timely information, especially in complex times, requires instructors, academic units and Senate to advise students not only of the measures that are to be taken to accommodate legitimate needs arising from the disruption, but of the requirement to maintain academic integrity. Timely information also enables informed decision-making, especially when the majority of our students had a combination of paused and not paused instruction. Stressing our three principles equally should ensure that students are made aware both of the need to concentrate fully on their course work during the remaining instructional time and of the availability of suitable remedies in case of a genuine inability to cope with the academic consequences of the disruption.

2. RESCHEDULING OF INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Based on where Memorial's academic expertise is housed, and on the recommendations following the previous labour action during the year 2000, it is recommended that the impact of this disruption on course offerings is best dealt with directly by the academic units, where the most appropriate remedies for individual courses/sections can be developed in consultation with the students affected. Such remedies will normally be governed by existing academic regulations, except as noted below. It is recommended that Senate approve the following guidelines governing any changes to the methods of evaluation and the rescheduling of academic activities.

2.1 Flexibility of Evaluative Devices in First Days of Class

Recognizing the different circumstances that students faced during the labour disruption, and leading up to the return to classes, instructors are strongly encouraged to consider the due date and weighting of evaluative devices (especially those weighted 20% or more of the final grade) to provide appropriate review and preparation time for students. This applies to both paused and not paused courses equally.

2.2 No Evaluative Devices on February 20 to 24

As previously announced by the Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and disseminated to the university community, no evaluative device can be administered or due on the days when the Winter semester break is scheduled (February 20 to 24, 2023).

2.3 Rescheduling of Evaluative Devices

Evaluative devices for paused courses/sections originally scheduled or due either during the disruption or after the resumption of academic activity can be rescheduled or cancelled. Equally, evaluative devices for not paused courses/sections originally scheduled or due during the disruption or after the resumption of academic activity can also be rescheduled or cancelled. In the case of not paused evaluative device decisions, instructors should be mindful of completion that has already occurred and weigh decisions against the benchmark of benefit to the student.

Resulting changes to the method of evaluation, including any redistribution of the allocation of marks for parts of the evaluation, can be made only after consultation with the students affected, and with the approval of the head of the academic unit. Such changes to the method of evaluation for any course must be communicated in writing to students no later than one week after the first meeting in that course/section following the resumption of academic activity. Accommodation should be made for students who advise the instructor that they are disadvantaged by the change so approved, and for students who utilize Accessibility Services and may be subject to special scheduling due to availability of space and resources.

Where appropriate, instructors impacted by teaching a section of a multi section course that may have both paused and non-paused instruction should collaborate to ensure that evaluative devices, including examinations, are equitable and reflect the instructional material provided to students.

2.4 Rescheduling Meeting Times

If, in the opinion of the course instructor and with the concurrence of the head of the academic unit, any component of a scheduled academic meeting time that is lost for a paused course as a result of the disruption, is not able to be incorporated in the remaining teaching days and has sound grounds for needing to be rescheduled, such rescheduling will take place only after consultation with the students affected. No form of evaluative device should occur or be due during this rescheduled time. Students unable to attend such rescheduled meetings are entitled to reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence.

2.5 Observance of Good Friday as a Holiday

Good Friday is observed on Friday April 7, 2023, with no instructional activity on that day.

2.6 Twelve Weeks of Lecture Condensed to Ten Weeks of Lecture for Paused Courses/Sections

April 10, 2023 is designated to be a teaching day where classes will follow the Monday timetable on this day. Additionally, to ensure 10 Tuesday teaching days for paused courses/sections, April 6, 2023 will follow the Tuesday schedule for all classes – paused and not paused courses/sections.

2.7 Evaluation and Numeric vs. PAS / FAL submissions

Final evaluations must be submitted to the Registrar with a letter grade and numeric grade as appropriate. An instructor, following discussion with a student or students, may change the method of evaluation to PAS (pass) - indicates performance meets expectations / FAL (fail) - indicates failing performance. This change in evaluation can be made on a per student basis and does not need to be applied to the entire class/section. Such decisions have significant impact on admissions (that use numeric grades), scholarship standing, graduate school admissions etc., and are encouraged to be made through discussion between student(s) and instructor.

If an instructor wishes to switch course grading for all students within their course/section from numeric to PAS / FAL they should discuss this with their academic unit head to maintain consistency between sections of the same course if possible and appropriate.

3. RELAXATION OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS and SENATE POLICY

Successful completion of the Winter 2023 semester by all Memorial University students is the first priority. For a multitude of reasons, some articulated and others unknown, some students will require special consideration in meeting the challenges associated with completing the semester. The following remedies, mirror the remedies recommended following the disruption of academic instruction in the year 2000 and are intended to mitigate the complications that the current disruption of instructional activities present for students, and are therefore recommended to Senate for approval in accordance with the governing principle of Fairness to Students:

3.1 Modification to Winter 2023 Teaching Length for Paused Courses

Up to and including Friday, January 27, 2023, 17 of the 61 scheduled days of instructional activity occurred in the Winter 2023 Semester. As of February 13, 2023, 33 teaching days remain, given the assumption that a return to class of paused courses will take place February 15, 2023. Senate Minute 116, 74/02/12, which states, in part, *that as of Fall Semester 1974 each semester consist of at least twelve working weeks* will be modified for the Winter 2023 semester which shall consist of 10 instructional weeks for paused courses/sections, plus any relevant makeup time designated at the academic unit level in consultation with the students involved. Under this structure, 10 teaching Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays will be maintained.

3.2 Regulations for Continuance and Readmission

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.11, *Regulations for Continuance and Re-Admission*, will not be applied at the end of the Winter semester to any student who would otherwise have an Academic Warning or be required to withdraw. This will ensure that the university has taken every possible measure to protect students from academic penalty arising from the disruption, and to prevent the precipitous dropping of courses by students. This suspension of 6.11 *Regulations for Continuance and Re-Admission* will apply for students with a course enrolment of paused, not paused or mixture of paused/not paused course make up. The Registrar's Office will write all students whose academic performance in the Winter 2023 semester would otherwise have led to academic warning or academic withdrawal, advising them to seek appropriate academic advice early in the Spring semester. In addition, an academic hold will be placed on their record until such time as they seek academic counseling. Finally, a notation will be added to the transcript in line with the notation used for both the 2000 strike and the COVID-19 pandemic:

ACADEMIC STATUS: Clear Standing
Academic leniency granted as a result of interruption of instructional activity
due to labour action

3.3 Deadlines for Dropping Courses

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.5.7.2 *Dropping Courses Without Academic Prejudice Changes*, and Graduate Studies General Regulation C4(b), *Changes in Course Registrations*, be amended for all students, and students be permitted to drop courses or to withdraw from the university without academic prejudice up to and including the last day of paused lectures in the Winter 2023 semester April 10, 2023, without required signatures and through Memorial Self Service. Students wishing to drop courses should first seek academic guidance.

Students wishing to withdraw from the university should first seek the appropriate academic advice from within their department, school, faculty or campus.

3.4 Regulations for Examinations and Evaluations

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.7 *Evaluation of Student Work*, specifically Regulations 6.7.2 *Course Syllabus*, 6.7.3 *Scheduling Parts of the Evaluation*, 6.7.4 *Changing the Method of Evaluation, Exemptions from Parts of the Evaluation*, and *Correction and Return of Student Work*, be amended to permit the administration of evaluative devices normally prohibited by that regulation as late as April 3, 2023, for courses that were paused. Amendments to these regulations would also permit instructors to amend their method of evaluation to avoid the need for a scheduled examination during the newly proposed examination period if that is deemed by the instructor to be the most appropriate outcome. Any alteration of assessment should be communicated as quickly as possible to students.

3.5 Obligation to Return Work to Students

While it is recognized that providing fulsome feedback to students relating to their academic performance is an important part of the journey to learning and informed decision-making, Academic Regulation 6.7.6 *Correction and Return of Student Work*, should be amended for those courses/sections where learning was paused. Once instructors have determined appropriate methods of evaluation, given the new condensed teaching timeframe, they should work to provide academic feedback to students as quickly as is appropriate. Courses that were not paused shall remain subject to the current regulation.

3.6 Final Examinations

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.8.1 *Scheduling of Final Examinations*, , be amended to ensure that all courses/sections where it is deemed that a final examination is not possible to avoid through the scheduling of an alternate form of assessment, will be subject to the date and time provided by the Office of the Registrar. While every effort will be made to adhere to the regulation in its original form, it may not be possible to schedule the final examination, for example for a course offered during the day with a daytime examination. When the student is unable, for good reason, to write the final examination scheduled outside of the original provisions of this clause, the student will be entitled to write a deferred examination.

3.8 Termination of Graduate Programs

General Regulation 4.13 Termination of Graduate Program (all clauses under Regulation 4.13.1) be suspended until June 30, 2023. This will ensure Memorial University is protecting graduate students from academic penalty arising from the disruption of the Winter 2023 semester. The School of Graduate Studies will email all students (along with their academic units) whose programs would normally have been terminated up until June 30, 2023. In those cases, students will be encouraged to consult with their supervisor or graduate officer for academic advice. This is consistent with the suspension of general regulations governing undergraduate student continuance and re-admission for the Winter 2023 semester as outlined in recommendation 3.2 of this memo. Finally, a notation will be added to the transcript in line with the notation recommended above and used for both the 2000 strike and the COVID-19 pandemic:

Transcript notation:

Academic leniency granted as a result of interruption of instructional activity
due to labour action

4. GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC UNITS

Academic units are encouraged to be flexible in using existing regulations and appeals mechanisms to minimize the impact of the disruption on students. This is especially important as we recognize that some courses/sections were paused and are now subject to new instructional timelines, and some courses were not paused and are continuing on the previously communicated and approved instructional timelines. Therefore, is recommended that Senate endorse the following guidelines for adoption by all academic units in dealing with individual requests:

4.1 Deferred Examinations/Incomplete Grades

For purposes of applying General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) Regulations 6.7 *Evaluation of Student Work* and 6.8 *Final Examinations* and Graduate Studies General Regulation 4.7.3 *Deferral of Examinations* and 4.7.4 *Incomplete Grades*, the disruption of academic activities referenced above is deemed *good cause* and *acceptable cause* for submitting an INCOMPLETE grade, and for permitting a deferred examination.

4.2 Extensions of Deadlines

Upon individual request, extensions to deadlines for submission of assignments, laboratory reports and other evaluative devices should be granted to compensate students for the compression of academic activities resulting from the disruption. Equally, extensions or timing leniency should be observed for student relaying on scheduling for academic accommodation.

4.3 Faculty/School Regulations

Leniency should be granted, where circumstances require, to students who may marginally fail to satisfy the requirements for promotion or advancement in undergraduate and graduate programs.

5. DEFINITIONS

The term *academic activity* includes any work subject to evaluation or necessary for a student to meet the requirements of a course.

The term *evaluative device* includes, but is not limited to, assignments, laboratory projects, presentations, performances, and tests.

APPENDIX A

Notes Regarding Scheduling:

To date, we have had:

- 3 Mondays
- 3 Tuesdays
- 3 Wednesdays
- 4 Thursdays
- 4 Fridays

As of February 15 there remain for paused courses:

- 10 Mondays
- 10 Tuesdays
- 10 Wednesdays
- 10 Thursdays
- 10 Fridays

Thursday April 6, 2023 will follow the **Tuesday** schedule of ALL classes (both paused and not paused).

The Winter 2023 semester will now consist of **10** of each of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday for paused courses/sections and **12** of each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for not paused courses/sections.

**Supplementary Motions to the document entitled: "Academic Remedies as a Result of
Disruption of Instructional Activities January 20, 2023 – February 13, 2023" for the
Meeting of Senate – February 14, 2023**

Motion #1:

Senate recommends that, where possible, instructors modify the remaining course material for the Winter 2023 term such that students are not subjected to unreasonable material overload. In subsequent courses in Spring 2023 or Fall 2023 for which the disrupted course is a prerequisite, attempts should be made, where possible, to include the necessary material that is dropped from a course this term. This may include eliminating the requirement of a final examination, where deemed appropriate, in lieu of other smaller in-semester evaluative pieces.

Motion #2:

That Senate approve the principle of placing a notation on the transcript of students whose performance would otherwise have led to academic warning or academic withdrawal as a result of the disruption in academic instruction and that the wording as outlined below, and endorsed by Senate during the previous labour disruption in October 31, 2000 – November 12, 2000 and during the COVID-19 pandemic be used .

ACADEMIC STATUS: Clear Standing

Academic leniency granted as a result of interruption of instructional activity
due to labour action

Motion #3:

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.5.7.2 *Dropping Courses Without Academic Prejudice*, and Graduate Studies General Regulation C4(b), *Changes in Course Registrations* be amended for all students, and students be permitted to drop courses or to withdraw from the university without academic prejudice up to and including the last day of paused lectures in the Winter 2023 semester, April 10, 2023 without required signatures and through Memorial Self Service.

Motion #4:

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.7.6 *Correction and Return of Student Work*, be amended for those courses/sections where learning was paused during the January 30, 2023 – February 13, 2023 timeframe. Once instructors have determined appropriate methods of evaluation, given the new condensed teaching timeframe, they should work to provide academic feedback to students as quickly as is appropriate.

Motion #5:

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) 6.8.1 #2 *Scheduling of Final Examinations*, be amended to ensure that all courses/sections where it is deemed that a final examination is not possible to avoid through the scheduling of an alternate form of assessment, will be subject to the date and time provided by the Office of the Registrar. While every effort will be made to adhere to the regulation in its original form, it may not be possible to schedule the final examination, for example for a course offered during the day with a daytime examination. When the student is unable, for good reason, to write the final examination scheduled outside of the original provisions of this clause, the student will be entitled to write a deferred examination.

Motion #6:

Senate approves that (Undergraduate) 6.7 Evaluation of Student Work, specifically Regulation, 6.7.3 #4 Scheduling Parts of the Evaluation, be amended to permit the administration of evaluative devices normally prohibited by that regulation as late as April 3, 2023, for courses that were paused.

Motion #7:

That Senate approve amends to the parameters for the University Diary to include 10 teaching Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for paused courses impacted by the Winter 2023 labour disruption. One Thursday (April 6) will follow the Tuesday schedule for all courses (paused and not paused) in order to achieve the 10 teaching days, and the Winter 2023 semester for paused courses will end on April 10, 2023.