



To [Deans of Faculties & Campuses and Chairs of Campus & Faculty Councils]

Re: Open Invite to Increase Safety & Decrease Barriers to Deferred Exams

Don't invoice our illness.

As the student union representing thousands of part-time undergraduate students, our membership includes students with disabilities, student parents, and student caregivers to the elderly - communities highly impacted by the pandemic.

We believe that we ALL have lessons to learn from COVID-19; and that we ALL share responsibilities to apply what we learned in preventing the spread of disease, to ALL our benefit. As our healthcare system's capacity is stretched by the transmission of COVID-19, the flu, and RSV, the safety phrase of "if you are sick, stay home" continues to be among the most effective ways to mutually care for each other. We encourage you to do what you can to make that a viable option for students at the University of Toronto.

Currently, students who are ill can request a deferred examination. **The safe choice comes with a cost - students are charged \$70 for a single deferred exam**, and \$140 for two or more. The safe choice comes with a time cost - where students usually cannot take their deferred exams until the next exam period or the next session in which the course is offered.

It's fees like these that are a barrier to sick students staying home. The current system pressures students who are sick, contagious with infectious diseases, or otherwise symptomatic or isolating to attend exams while sick in order to avoid costs and delays to their studies; in turn making others (both students and workers) sick. This lack of choice endangers those at greater health risks. This has spiraling effects.

We believe students should not be forced to choose between paying a fee, and protecting their fellow students while recovering from illness.

We believe that you can agree. We encourage you to be supportive in your leadership to:

1. **Eliminate fees for deferred exams.**
AND
2. Shorten the wait time to retake deferred exams.
3. Keep deferred exams processes barrier-free; including no hidden fees (i.e. medical notes).
4. Increase student involvement in pandemic planning.

You are receiving this letter because you have the influence to make positive change at U of T. Some of you may have already made changes to exam options to promote health and safety without undue financial or health risk to students. Please let us know what you have done or are prepared to do.

We continue to hear from students on this issue and will continue these conversations.

Please contact APUS to share strategies and solutions to ensure barriers to deferred exams do not pose dangers to the health of our community.

Signed,

Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
Jaime Kearns, President - president@apus.ca

cc:
Christy McMorrow, Academic Advocacy Coordinator - advocacy@apus.ca