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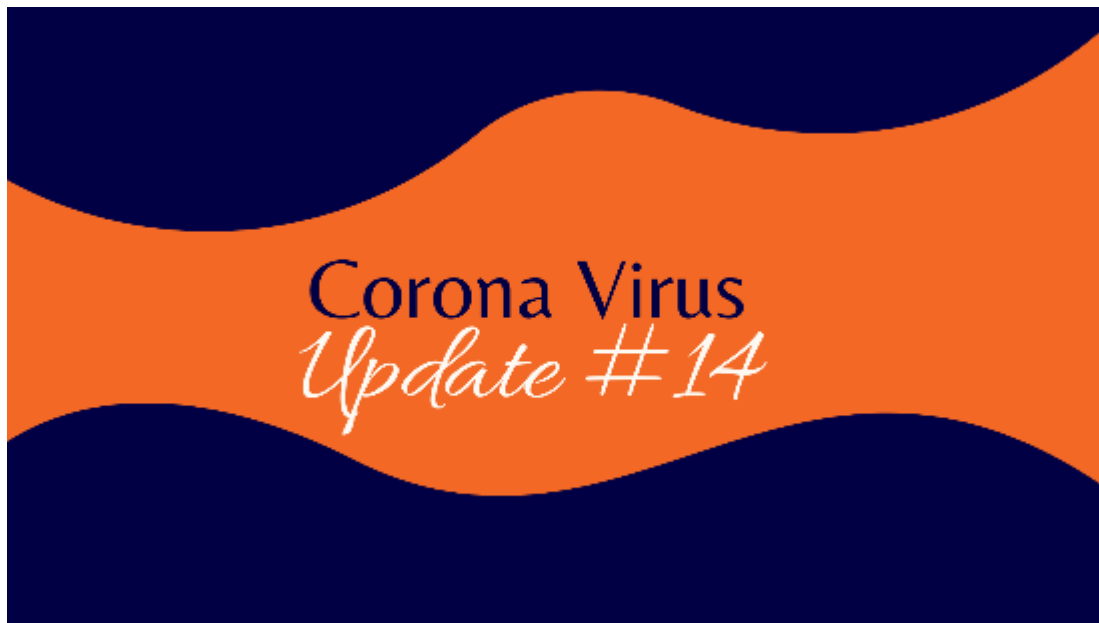
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Weekly Newsletter

NEWS & EVENTS | Thursday, April 2, 2020 |



Clarification on the Open Letter to President Gertler

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"Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do
just to keep in the same place. If you want to get
somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast!"

- Red Queen from *Through the Looking Glass*



Dear USW members,

I'm sure that many of you are feeling like we are – running as fast as we can just to stay in the same place. Things have been crazy for everyone at work, at home and in our communities for the past few weeks. Like you, we're doing our best to help our members, deal with their concerns and keep the Local running. In our haste to get the newsletter out yesterday, we didn't provide enough context or information on the Open Letter to President Gertler - the sign-on letter. We apologize for any confusion we have caused.

The sign-on letter comes from a coalition on campus called **Divestment and Beyond** which is made up of faculty, students and staff who want the University to do a better job of addressing climate change, but the group is also concerned about how the University responds to this pandemic. They see a relationship between the just transition that the labour movement is calling for as it relates to workers in the fossil fuel industry, and a just transition for workers negatively impacted by this pandemic. They created the sign-on letter in order to pressure the University to not lay people off. This is a letter being circulated widely throughout the U of T community and relates to all workers on campus, not just USW members. If you agree with the content, we invite you to sign and share. If you don't agree, then please ignore. As of today, there are currently 1082 signatures and the numbers are growing from the U of T community! Members wanting more information on the coalition can contact them directly at divestmentandbeyonduoft@gmail.com.

In addition to the work we're doing directly with the employer for our own

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who are seriously affected by this pandemic. We will continue to share them as appropriate and invite you to sign and share if you wish.

The union is meeting with Labour Management daily for updates, to raise issues our members are having and to talk about potential alternatives to lay-offs. Please don't interpret the sign-on letter to mean that mass lay-offs are imminent. The most recent information we have for our members at U of T can be found in USW COVID update #12 and in the [University's memo of March 31st.](#)

Impact on our Casual Members

Our casual members will be disproportionately affected by loss of work due to COVID-19. The federal government has created the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to offer urgent financial relief for anyone whose income source has been decimated by COVID-19. While the financial relief CERB provides will protect many people, there are enormous gaps in who is eligible. Millions of people will be excluded who do not meet the unfair eligibility criteria but will be left without an income. We are calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to close the gaps in the CERB so everyone can pay their bills and put food on the table during this crisis.

[Please take moment to sign and share this letter to Prime Minister Trudeau.](#)



Free Mental Health Webinars

The Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute is offering free weekly on-demand webinars. The Institute believes that the COVID-19 pandemic is reshaping our lives in a way that has great potential to impact our mental health. Things like heightened anxiety, social and physical disconnection from others; and reality of the unknown of what's going to happen in the near future is causing stress for people.

The webinars will explore key factors for understanding the impact of the COVID-19

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including insights for supporting children.

<https://ca.ctrinstitute.com/free-webinar/>



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