**Vic USW COVID-19 Update #11 – May 11, 2020.**

**Temporary Self-isolation Due to Compromised Immune System**

In their April 21 email update on the Vic pandemic pay continuity programs, the University indicated that from May 1 onward employees who are in self-isolation because of a compromised immune system would be placed on sick leave and that they were expected to work from home if their job duties could be done remotely. As we stated in our last update, the Union rejected the idea that an employee in that situation would have to work while on sick leave. We followed up on this issue with Human Resources and they agreed that an immunocompromised employee working remotely would be treated the same as any other employee working from home and they would not be placed on sick leave.

**Efforts to Reduce the Number of Layoffs**

The University has committed to pay continuity (including sick leave) until May 31 for employees in self-isolation and for those working on campus in jobs for which there is a reduced need. There will be a limited number of students living on campus through the summer. How many students there will be is not certain, but it will be a small number. Unfortunately, all events, conferences and bookings by external groups in July and August have been cancelled. The cancellations include the children’s camps.

After May 31 we can expect layoffs to be implemented in a couple of departments. Our experience over the past twenty years indicates that the Vic jobs most vulnerable to layoffs during economic downturns are those in departments that depend heavily on revenue from sources that lie outside of the University’s core, student oriented, mandate. When the 2003 SARS pandemic brought significant turmoil to the Canadian economy, revenue from outside sources was greatly reduced and there were significant layoffs in Food Services and Housekeeping that summer. It took several years for the summer business to be built back up to the point where layoffs were no longer implemented in Food Services.

The Union continues to work towards an agreement with the University on arrangements that would provide an alternative to a full implementation of the layoff language in the collective agreement. Although we will not be able to avoid having temporary layoffs, the goal is to create the possibility of reducing the number of them and the length of some of them. We expect that we will be able to announce details of the alternative arrangements soon. Once the Union reaches a full agreement with the University, meetings will be scheduled with the members who will be affected by layoffs so that we can share details of the alternative arrangements.

**Carrying Forward Banked Vacation Days into the Next Vacation Year**

At least one Vic manager has incorrectly told their employees that, based on the language of collective agreement Article 23.04, they cannot carry forward more than five banked vacation days into the 2020 – 2021 vacation year. That is a misinterpretation of the collective agreement language. A Vic USW employee can, without the permission of their manager, carry forward from one vacation year to the next the number of vacation days they accrue in a year, plus an extra five vacation days.  This means that an employee who accrues fifteen vacation days in a year can carry forward twenty vacation days from one vacation year to the next and they do not need their manager’s permission to carry forward those twenty vacation days.

If your manager is telling you that your right to carry forward vacation days is different than what is described above, or if you have any questions about the carry forward provision, please contact the Union. Below are the names of your Vic USW representatives and their contact information.

**University Subsidized Taxi and Uber Rides to and from Campus**

A few members have contacted the Union because their manager said that they were not sure if the University’s agreement to pay for taxi and Uber rides to and from the Vic campus workplace was still in effect. Human Resources has confirmed that the University-paid taxi and Uber program is under review but, until further notice, employees who must travel to the campus to work will continue to be reimbursed if they use a taxi or Uber ride.

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