June 30, 2020

RE: Changes to Residence and Meal Plan in Fall 2020

Dr. McCauley,

We have recently become aware of several issues facing first-year and returning students wishing to live in residence starting in Fall 2020 that we would like to bring to your attention. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we want to ensure that affordability, accessibility, and student safety are prioritized while ensuring that students have every opportunity to live and work in on-campus accommodations should they choose to do so.

Above all, the health and safety of students must be prioritized. As such, we appreciate and understand the need to close first-year traditional residence buildings; however, this creates cascading issues for students who budgeted to live in double-occupancy rooms, Community Advisors (CAs) and Residence Advisors (RAs) who were promised work upon their return in September, and of upper-year students from Yamnuska Hall and other buildings who may be displaced. Additionally, international students returning to Canada or arriving for the first time are currently required to self-isolate for 14 days creates unique challenges for them.

Given these issues identified by students, we propose the following actions:

- Jobs of equivalent pay and benefits are made available for returning CAs and RAs who no longer have work available due to the closure of first-year traditional residence buildings.
- A needs-based bursary is made available for first-year students who cannot afford the increased cost (possibly up to $3,000 according to an email sent by Ancillary Services) of living in upper-year residences, and for upper-year students who may incur additional costs as a result of potential displacement from current residences.
- Residence rooms be made available for returning international students who will be living in residence to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival, and needs-based bursaries be made available should there be pro-rated costs associated with this additional time.
- Food services for any students required to self-isolate, either for travel-related reasons or due to COVID-19 infection, be provided for students living in residence.
- The university has currently committed to take-out options from the dining centre only in the fall semester. These options should be available for the entirety of the 2020-21 academic year (both fall and winter semesters, at minimum) to ensure there is no interruption or abrupt change in food accessibility for students living in residence.
- Clear, transparent, timely, and publicly accessible communication of the resources available for students living in residence, including new and existing financial assistance opportunities, which we would be happy to share as well.
Students returning to live and study on campus, and students arriving on campus and in Canada for perhaps the first time, will appreciate the efforts made to ensure a healthy and safe environment. The SU encourages you to implement the additional changes noted above to ensure that these students’ experience remains affordable, accessible, and safe.

We have met with Shane Royal to learn more about the plan for residence and meal plan in Fall 2020 and would be happy to meet again with you and members of your team to discuss these items in greater detail.

Respectfully submitted,

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Shane Royal, Director, Ancillary Services