

UMFA Strike Duties 2020

UMFA members who go on strike will be expected to withdraw all teaching, service, and research from the employer¹. Striking members will also be required to engage in activities that communicate UMFA's concerns to interested parties, including government officials, university administrators, students, fellow UMFA members, and the public at large. Alternative strike duties may also be approved by the Job Action Committee.

Typical strike duties will include:

i) Each weekday at least 1 hr of "online picketing"

Activities will vary among members based on their use of digital tools and social media platforms, but may include any or all of the following:

- Sending e-mail messages to MLAs, the University President, or members of the University of Manitoba Board of Governors;
- Creating content and posting to social media sites (e.g. YouTube, Facebook, Tik Tok, Reddit, Instagram);
- Commenting on, liking or disliking posts of others on either social or mass media sites;
- Forwarding news stories with a favourable spin to trigger online search engines to promote those stories to others;
- Performing other creative web-based activities we have not conceived of, as the Job Action Committee is happy to receive input from members.

Those who do not have access to the internet, or who would rather contribute any or all of their picketing time using media other than a computer, can:

- telephone and advocate UMFA's position to MLAs, university administrators, and others;
- Create banners or other public art displays to promote UMFA's message publicly: such as the tombstones erected in front of Premiere Pallister's home to protest the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and health care cuts). Members will be able to pick up pre-made signs, or create their own for public display at UMFA Strike Headquarters, 762 Pembina Highway (UMFA Hut), which will be staffed between 09:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. each weekday. Access to space and materials to create signs will be limited according to occupancy restrictions imposed by the Restart Manitoba COVID Response System, so members are encouraged to call or text Strike Headquarters at 431-277-4383 to make an appointment. Members picking up existing signs can drop by the UMFA Hut any time between 09:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. from Monday through Friday. All individuals requesting entry to the UMFA Hut will be screened used the Manitoba Shared Health COVID-19 Screening Tool, and will be required to sanitize their hands upon entry, and wear either a medical-grade or double-or-more-layered cloth mask at all times while inside the UMFA Hut.

¹ Exceptions might include: where time constraints would result in loss of data, where ongoing animal care is required, or where temporary suspension of research would preclude resumption of research once the strike ended.

ii) Attending a daily 1 hr "Picket Cluster" Meeting each weekday

For about an hour each day, UMFA members will gather together with 14-20 other members in Zoom-based meetings hosted by their designated UMFA Picket Cluster Captain so as to share and develop strategy, celebrate achievements, and build solidarity. You will receive an e-mail from your Picket Captain, inviting you to your initial cluster meeting on Monday November 16th. At that meeting you will be asked to introduce yourself, and describe what teaching, service, and research activities you are withdrawing from the UofM as part of your job action. These meetings will ultimately provide a daily forum for Picket Cluster Captains to update you on the latest developments in negotiations between UMFA and the employer, communicate key points that the Bargaining Team, Executive and/or Communications Group need you to promote, and allow you to interact with your fellow members while sharing and developing effective communication strategies. They may also allow members to commiserate over the hardship of being on strike. Further, in those meetings, you will have the opportunity to express your concerns or any ideas you may have for effective job action to your Picket Cluster Captain, who will share your ideas at the Picket Cluster Captain meetings hosted by the Job Action Committee 3 times each week. The JAC will share common concerns and promising ideas with UMFA Executive.

iii) Participating in Weekly Socially-distanced Mass Rallies

The Job Action Committee will organize mass rallies, like the UMFA car rallies held previously on the Fort Garry Campus and Provincial Legislature Grounds. These rallies will allow us to gather in large numbers to effectively communicate our message while maintaining social distance from each other. These rallies also provide opportunities to enlist the support of other universities and unions.

Alternative Strike Duties

Members who cannot perform typical strike duties, should contact James Hare (mbgopherman@gmail.com) to arrange for alternative duties that accommodate your needs.

While the Job Action Committee welcomes your ideas as to what specific alternative duties you would like to perform, your proposed duties will be vetted by the Job Action Committee to assess whether what you are proposing is equitable with the "typical strike duties" outlined above. At present, the Job Action Committee has identified the following alternative strike duties, though this list will be updated as alternative duties are suggested and approved:

- answering phone calls from the public
- responding to members by phone, e-mail, chat
- answering other e-mails
- monitoring various media sources
- social media response team
- serving as an HQ Shared Health COVID-19 Screener
- courtesy vehicle driving
- gopher at HQ
- preparing rally signs

Strike Pay

In recognition of the withdrawal of teaching, service and research activities from the employer, and participating in job action, striking UMFA members will receive a weekly tax-free strike benefit (\$200/calendar day = \$1400 week) for the duration of the strike. Because of privacy concerns over establishing direct deposit, and the labour required to e-transfer strike benefits, we will mail cheques on a weekly basis to the mailing address you provided to UMFA in completing the Member Survey, or where no mailing address was provided, make cheques available for pick up from Strike HQ from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday to Friday . As in 2016, UMFA will offer to pay the employer and the member's contribution to the members pension plan for the duration of the strike, but as in 2016, there is no guarantee that the UofM administration will allow this to be done.