*If you or your organisation would like to sign in support of this statement,* [please sign your name here](link)*.*

*If you would like to support by sending SFU Admin and Senate an email supporting this letter,* [please click here](link)*.*

Note: feel free to add your personal story in your email in the text area, you may edit directly!

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## January 24th, 2022

## Joint Open Letter Regarding SFU's Return to Campus Plan: Unsafe, Inadequate, and Inequitable

On Monday, January 24th, SFU plans to begin a mandatory return to in-person instruction across the university. This mandatory return is being conducted despite the **high transmissibility of the Omicron variant**, the **overwhelming impact it has had on the healthcare system**, and the **danger presented to disabled and immunocompromised SFU community members and the wider Metro Vancouver community**.

Furthermore, this decision made on January 11th within an [announcement](link) was **not made in consultation with students, student leadership, union groups, and campus associations through appropriate and formal means.** In contrast, other universities like the [University of British Columbia](link) have [pushed back their own returns to campus](link), following proper consultation with Deans, academic heads, student leaders, and union groups or associations. It is imperative that SFU conduct a broad consultation, prioritising marginalised community members, and act to address their concerns, in order to serve the wider SFU community through the fifth wave of the pandemic.

**Student groups across Canada have been calling for an extension of online and hybrid learning,** including the [Alliance of BC Students](link) (which represents students at [Langara College](link), Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of the Fraser Valley, Capilano University, the University of British Columbia Graduate Students), [Douglas College](link), [BCIT](link), [Western University](link), and [McGill](link). [Organizations representing over 11200 students](link) in a joint letter have urged the BC Public Health Officer and Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training to recommend that universities provide remote and hybrid learning options in an approach that "acknowledges local health conditions, the size of their institution, and the needs of students and staff who are immunocompromised or living with those in high risk categories."

**At SFU, concerns over the full return to in-person classes and support for online/hybrid instruction are widespread,** as indicated by, [a survey conducted by student](link)

Senators, a [statement from the Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance](#), [SFSS survey results](#), and an [independent student petition with over 4100 signatures](#).

Additionally, although sources mentioned within [provincial health documents](#) and within meetings and emails provided by SFU state that mental health decreased with online learning, most research is done with participants from WEIRD (White-Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) populations. **These sources do not account for the Global Majority and those disproportionately marginalized by university systems with whom we are advocating** (i.e., BIPOC/PGM (People of the Global Majority), 2SLGBTQIA+ students, disabled and neurodivergent students, international students, students who are parents, students who are essential workers, janitorial staff, and those in high-risk groups for adverse COVID outcomes). These studies were also completed during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and causality (whether remote learning caused a decrease in mental health or whether the many abrupt life disruptions from being in a pandemic caused a decrease in mental health) can be challenged.

Moreover, these conversations are focused on an either/or approach - either we move to online learning or we resume on-campus. **We are asking the university to take a both/and approach, considering how we can creatively keep students safe and healthy by allowing hybrid options and multiple ways of learning.**

Indeed, other studies have shown that the difficulty with being remote was centred on instructor difficulty and not on student need for classroom connection ([Lischer et al., 2021](#)). Lischer and colleagues state: "The results of the open-ended questions indicate that distance teaching was a challenge for lecturers, which in turn created stress for the students. Thus, perhaps **more than anxiety and stress, the experience of a rapid online transition to remote teaching has revealed much about the deficiencies of the higher education sector and, perhaps, much about what needs to change in universities**" (p. 9; also see [Watermeyer et al. 2020](#)).The issue, then, is not with online learning itself, but post-secondary institutions' failure to follow through in providing sufficient resources, supports, and systemic changes for instructors to ensure accessible learning options.

**Furthermore, hybrid learning options are not new.** BC post-secondary institutions such as [Langara College](#) and [Capilano University](#) have been offering "mixed mode" courses prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies on hybrid learning [has found it improves student achievement,](#) and students have [long been calling for expansions of these options](#).

As such, we call for the University to take this letter and their approach to on-campus learning seriously. If SFU cares about prioritising mental wellness, the solution isn't to place students at greater risk of physical illness. **The solution is to provide greater mental wellness support.** SFU should focus on increasing or adapting mental health services and strategies to address this. This has benefits during COVID-19, and also increases the accessibility and diversity of mental health support for students in the future.

SFU's actions both encourage the spread of COVID-19 and understates the impact the Omicron variant will have on many community members. **In failing to meet the diverse needs of a diverse SFU community, SFU is [failing its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)**

**commitments** and fails to support the mental and physical health needs of *all* students, faculty, and staff

The undersigned SFU campus groups, and individual and organisational supporters, call on SFU to:

1. **Immediately delay a full return to in-person campus learning** until two weeks following 90% of the SFU community has received a third dose of the COVID vaccination and province-wide transmission rates are reduced;
2. **Strengthen on-campus protection measures** by providing appropriate PPE (i.e., N95 masks or equivalent) to all campus personnel and ensuring that infrastructure meets COVID-safe regulations, including ASHRAE guidelines for ventilation;
3. **Provide comprehensive and timely communication** with students, staff, and faculty that allows adequate time for course planning;
4. **Expand student financial aid and support** to alleviate financial burdens and mental and physical health impacts on students;
5. **Support and assist instructors and teaching assistants** in providing accessible and flexible course delivery (e.g., appropriate technology and training); and
6. **Immediately initiate and act on a broad public consultation** with students, faculty, staff, and the wider SFU community, with emphasis on prioritising the voices of community members who have been historically and continue to be marginalised and their representative groups. **SFU must also commit to changing and adapting policy to meet the concerns and needs expressed during consultations.**
7. **Update the presumed quarantine period** to better reflect the known infectious period for Omicron, and **officially recognize the risk of Long COVID** to the student population.

## SFU'S "WHITE FLAG" APPROACH TO THE OMICRON VARIANT

SFU is throwing in the towel. Through the lack of caution, foresight, and even acknowledgement about the risks to which they are exposing students, staff, and faculty, **SFU is contributing directly to the current Omicron wave and strain on healthcare systems.** Returning fully to campus in-person disregards the needs of a wide swath of the SFU population, particularly immunocompromised and clinically vulnerable community members. As well, it increases the risk of transmission during a time when cases continue to proliferate at an unprecedented rate and the overwhelmed healthcare system is at over 95% capacity from climbing hospitalizations.

Additionally, a 2021 study conducted by the University of Oxford found that ~37% of the people who were diagnosed with COVID-19 experienced one or more of the symptoms associated with Long COVID. **Subjecting the SFU population to long-term adverse effects of the virus** when not enough appropriate research has been done to understand the underlying causes for prevention and treatment is simply wrong.

As previously stated in an open letter by the SFU Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance, SFU has attempted to justify the decision to move back to in-person campus activity by emphasising that they are following provincial health orders. However, these provincial orders are also irresponsible, ill-advised, and still place people at risk. **Rather than adhering to health recommendations corroborated by science, SFU (and the BC**

**government) have prioritised economic interests over the safety of its campus members.**

SFU continues to share a public message of solidarity with student, staff, and faculty interests and claims that "we each have a role to play in keeping one another safe" during this pandemic. **If this is true, then why is SFU not playing theirs?** This claim is misaligned with their current decisions and actions regarding a hasty and risky full return to campus.

## INADEQUATE SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND ENFORCEMENT

### Ventilation

Many shared workspaces and classrooms do not meet ASHRAE recommendations for reducing COVID exposure. SFU's ventilation audit concluded that many of these spaces have inadequate MERV 10 filters, which do not block airborne virus particles (ASHRAE recommends MERV 13 filters for this issue). This is particularly problematic for Teaching Assistant and Sessional Instructor offices, which are often shared offices used simultaneously by multiple workers. We have yet to see public evidence that SFU's ventilation updates meet these standards. **Since COVID-19 is transmitted by aerosols, proper ventilation is an essential layer of protection still lacking in SFU indoor spaces.**

### Masking

**SFU has not provided an adequate number of sufficient quality masks to students, faculty, and staff.** With the highly-transmissible Omicron variant, cloth masks and surgical masks are no longer adequate as their filtration efficacy is minimal. The US CDC now recommends N95 or equivalent masks (e.g. KN95, KN94) for the general public. N95 respirator masks filter 95% or more of tiny 0.3-μm particles, and studies have shown that they are the "most effective in reducing the risk of a viral infection" from COVID-19.

### Distancing

Many of BC's COVID-19 restrictions are being extended to February 16th, including limits to indoor gatherings of various sizes, to enforce distancing measures in light of the Omicron variant. Yet universities are still allowing large gatherings in lecture halls. **Adequate physical distancing is impossible in crowded 150 to 300-student lecture halls** where some students may remove masks to eat and drink for the entire lecture, or break other safety protocols, without consequence.

### Enforcement

**The SFU vaccine declaration and violation reporting processes are currently inadequate**. Cases of some campus personnel leaving the declaration incomplete by not providing provincial proof of vaccination have not been investigated by the university, despite SFU promising to audit vaccination declarations. Further, SFU's COVID-19 reporting form is neither easily accessible (as the website is difficult to navigate) nor adequately publicised in school-wide messaging. Thus, students, staff, and faculty remain unaware of the form. Those who do manage to report violations—particularly in high-traffic public areas—have failed to see any change or response from the university.

### Rapid testing

Currently, there are no rapid testing sites on campus. Rapid testing sites were closed on December 3rd without notice or consultation with local joint health and safety committees, students, or unions. Due to the rationing of PCR testing for priority groups, rapid testing remains important for highly populated and high-traffic areas, such as SFU campuses.

**An "un-boosted" SFU population**
The Omicron variant is infecting fully vaccinated individuals, and a third dose of the COVID vaccine (or "booster") is of increasing priority to prevent community transmission. [Increasing evidence](#) shows that a booster is required to prevent infection by the Omicron variant. Elderly people, Indigenous communities, immunocompromised people, and healthcare and front-line workers are being and should continue to be prioritised in administering these boosters. The student population on campus (many of whom are in younger cohorts and have yet to receive their boosters) remain inadequately protected from the Omicron variant, and should not be made to return to campus until receiving this booster. **Thus, a delay to a full in-person return to campus should align with the latency in achieving [90% boosted vaccination](#) rates at SFU.**

## TRANSIT RISKS

**Many members of the campus community, especially students, rely on public transportation and are unable to arrange other means of transportation without also risking exposure to others in enclosed spaces.** Public transit is crowded, and safety protocols are not always followed or enforced (e.g., some patrons do not wear masks, physical distancing is often difficult during busy times). Many students spend **1.5 hours or more each way** commuting on public transit to reach campus. In some cases, students may be spending more time on crowded public transit than in classes.

For immunocompromised individuals (or those who live with immunocompromised people), **public transit is often not an option** and arranging travel alternatives can quickly become expensive and onerous (i.e., taxis or car share services with hourly charges, both which are not always readily available). **The entire experience can create extra stress and anxiety—especially during midterm season—making learning and work difficult.**

**Accommodations for students have not been reinstated, despite Omicron's high transmissibility.** Paid parking is still in effect, making it unaffordable for students to practice physical distancing. Many students will be dissuaded from taking public transport during this time at the risk of bringing this variant back home to their family members that may have underlying health conditions. Many students, faculty, and staff are also parents, adding an extra layer of unease to in-class learning as young children remain unvaccinated.

## CLASS DISRUPTION AND WORSENED TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

**SFU's current plan will disrupt classes and students will experience a lower quality of learning as a result.** It's irresponsible for SFU to assume that those who contract Omicron will only "miss a class or two", [as said in SFU's email to their faculty on January 7.](#) Instead, SFU should be planning and focusing their decision-making with the understanding that the [latest research shows](#) the infectious period for Omicron is [much longer than the contested five-day period](#).

The current plan also ignores the possibility of many campus community members developing "Long COVID" following infection. Long COVID (currently under ongoing scientific investigation) is the grouping of long-term complications which [impacts 10-30% of people who contract COVID.](#) **It can be anticipated that some students and instructors who develop COVID may also develop Long COVID symptoms, which will disrupt their courses, future plans, and overall well-being.**

Additionally, SFU claims that the two-week online period served to help professors prepare for in-person instruction. However, many instructors were unaware of whether in-person instruction would begin again and the January 24th return date came as a surprise for many. Further, many instructors have anecdotally reported **struggling with shifting to in person and dealing with the amount of students already testing positive**.

For TSSU members, many of whom provide much of the facetime teaching at SFU, **the return to in-person teaching and learning presents a serious occupational hazard** that puts workers and students "[at risk of disease, injury, and even death in the context of the COVID-19](#)". If departments do not provide N95 (or equivalent) masks, then many instructors and teaching assistants may be forced to double mask (the next best option) making it difficult for students to understand them during class. It is also difficult for instructors and teaching assistants to speak for long periods of time (i.e. through the duration of classes and tutorials) while wearing masks, especially if double masking. **The assumption that this learning environment is better than online instruction is uncorroborated and absurd.**

## LEARNING WHILE IN A STATE OF FEAR, PANIC, AND ANXIETY

[In SFU's most recent message on the return to campus,](#) they said that the decision to return to in-person instruction is "the single most important step we can take for overall student mental health at this time." If they do genuinely believe that returning to in-person classes will ultimately improve student mental health, they will soon be forced to confront that it is a mistaken belief.

**If they were to listen to students, they would learn that [many students do not want a return to in-person instruction.](#)**

[Students already deal with significant amounts of anxiety during their time in university.](#) **To add COVID anxiety to this is a burden students do not deserve.** [We know that anxiety and fear impacts one's ability to learn](#). Asking students to deal with that impact on their mental health is unreasonable, especially when the decision is supposedly in the name of student mental health.

A more effective way to address student mental health would be to improve the structures and systems that exist for online learning, alongside providing improved mental health services. This also meets the mental health needs of those who already find online learning more accessible than in-person learning. **Rather than forcing everyone back to working on campus, increasing the anxiety and distress of many, SFU could be supporting students and instructors in developing better online and hybrid learning practises.**

# IMPACT ON DISABLED, IMMUNOCOMPROMISED, CLINICALLY VULNERABLE, AND NEURODIVERGENT SFU MEMBERS

**SFU's Return to Campus plan is especially dangerous for disabled and neurodivergent students who are often at higher risk from COVID-19.** While many have taken to calling Omicron a "mild variant", this narrative leaves out those who are immunocompromised, older, or have other health concerns. These students (many of whom are disabled students or students with disabilities) will be especially impacted by Omicron, risking the complete derailment of their semester either from the trauma of the experience or the lasting effects of Long COVID.

With inadequate safety measures and inadequate enforcement of those measures - and a dearth of online options for learning - many of those who are at higher risk from COVID are being forced not to participate in classes, campus life, and the campus community. This experience is ostracising and disruptive to their education, future plans, and mental wellbeing. This contradicts SFU's claim that student mental health was the impetus for their decision toward a full return to campus. This is not an unfortunate necessity of COVID—**it is an active choice by SFU to privilege their own economic interests over the education of students with disabilities.**

When SFU speaks on the necessity of a return to campus due to "student mental health", they do not include disabled and neurodivergent students in their assessments. **For those who are disabled, neurodivergent or at higher risk, a return to campus would bring increased anxiety, executive dysfunction, and depression.**

**By focusing on adapting to inevitable sickness rather than trying to prevent it, SFU takes an ableist position that will lead to disastrous consequences for disabled people even outside of the school.** SFU's plan will add additional strain to the already overwhelmed health care system, impacting people unable to get surgeries and treatments for other conditions. SFU's plan will prolong the pandemic and seed the development of a deadlier COVID variant.

Disabled people are also at a higher risk of experiencing Long COVID symptoms. This is true of even the so-called "mild" COVID that Omicron is believed to be. There are long-haul cases with severe complications that are worse than the acute symptoms during the time of infection. Given other conditions like chronic pain and fatigue, Long COVID could adversely affect these students enormously and make them unable to continue with their education.

However, Long COVID symptoms would be impactful no matter who gets them. Many in the disabled community are calling this a "Mass-Disabling Event," because it has made (and will continue to make) a lot more people disabled on a long-term basis. SFU should not be contributing to this Mass-Disabling Event, and given the lack of adequate safety measures, SFU has shown to be unprepared and unwilling to support disabled students on campus, much less the great deal more that will arise from COVID cases.

The SFU Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance, a student-led network of disabled, autistic, neurodivergent, Deaf, mad, chronically ill, and mentally ill SFU community members, has released a statement opposing the full return to campus with thirteen (13) calls to action.

# LEADERSHIP IN PROTECTING BROADER VULNERABLE POPULATION

Not every student, faculty, or staff needs to be on campus at this time for the university to function, and remote and hybrid learning and working is possible (as evident in 2020 and 2021). **Requiring a full (and unnecessary) return to campus endangers both the campus community and the greater Metro Vancouver community.** Campus community members are not isolated; they have contact with other (sometimes vulnerable) members of the Metro Vancouver community in their homes, other workplaces, and community spaces. If students, faculty, and staff are required to return to campus, they risk infecting other community members. In encouraging this, SFU's policies endanger the entire Metro Vancouver Community as well as the SFU community.

**SFU has the opportunity to be a leader in the province and show that it does not want to be an intermediary site of COVID-19 infection spread throughout the broader community via thousands of students and staff.** UBC and countless other institutions have used their consultation processes with deans, academic heads and directors, student leadership, and union groups and associations to [extend remote learning until February 7th](#) and have also [extended their add/drop deadline to this date](#). UBC has also stated that the re-opening of the university will be dependent on virus data and spread. Furthermore, UBC's own medical school has extended their remote learning until the end of February.

**Meanwhile, the SFU administration has made its decision to return to full in-person instruction without consultation with students and vulnerable community members.** Representative groups such as the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU), and Graduate Student Society (GSS) have **all not been formally consulted.** SFU has continued to carry out **empty, performative actions** in times of unrest, despite consistently preaching that they are incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion practises. Consultations on decision-making for broader issues have rarely been carried out by SFU and this return to campus is another demonstration of this **lack of community engagement and response to community needs**.

In response, campus groups have taken it upon themselves to survey the student body. A joint student slate under the SFU Senate found that as of January 9, 2022, [47.04% of student respondents supported the idea of a completely online Spring 2022 semester, while 38.67% did not](#).

[A more recent survey by the SFSS](#) with 5344 respondents (nearly 20% of SFSS membership) found that [**64% expressed discomfort returning to fully in-person**](#) **instruction** in the Spring 2022 term. As well, when asked about their preferred course delivery format for the term, **almost 80% indicated they wanted some form of remote or hybrid learning.** 45% of students preferred completely remote delivery, 28% preferred hybrid, 5% preferred remote with in-person exams, compared to 20% who preferred in-person classes and 2% who were unsure. **In all, the survey indicates a strong majority of the undergraduate student body favours remote or hybrid learning for the Spring 2022 term.**

Additionally, regarding the past Fall 2021 semester, in which SFU offered a mix of in-person, remote, and hybrid courses, 86% of respondents expressed that the flexible teaching and learning style adopted was acceptable to very good, 76% felt they had acceptable to very good efforts to stay motivated, and 77% felt they had acceptable to good time management. However, of those that attended in-person classes, **over two-thirds reported that they felt unsafe** at least once. 54% of students who attended in-person classes did not think that proper COVID-19 measures were taken, compared to 46% who did. **While the mix of course delivery formats in the Fall 2021 term received overall positive reception from undergraduates, a majority felt that SFU's COVID-19 safety protocols were insufficient for their safety.**

Further, a petition by individual students [gained over 4200 signatures in a week](), advocating for a continuation of remote classes.

**This enormous dissent is indicative of SFU's approach as unsafe, inadequate, and inequitable.** A more balanced approach is required of SFU, one that considers the diverse needs of the SFU community through broad, comprehensive consultation and prioritisation of perspectives that have been, and still are, marginalised by university systems.

## THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE, FLEXIBLE LEARNING

**Remote and hybrid learning has brought about many accessible teaching practises that SFU has never widely implemented:**
- **Captioning:** Free Zoom captioning has provided **improved universal access** for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, students with auditory processing disorder, students who speak English as an additional language, and other students facing communication barriers.
- **Lecture recordings:** Lecture recordings allow students to structure their learning in the way most helpful for them, even if it differs from the majority. They also allow for students to better plan around medical appointments, familial obligations, and prolonged illnesses, and to still have access to their classes when ill or self-isolating. When surveyed, an [overwhelming 94% of undergraduate students]() indicated that lecture recordings would make courses more accessible in Spring 2022.
- **Live-streamed lectures:** Live-streamed lectures, by allowing students and instructors to stay home while ill, allow for reduced infection from all illnesses, and for a safer environment for those who do attend in-person and may have a weakened immune system. (see [Accessible Course Practices Campaign]())
- **Flexible schedules:** Remote and hybrid courses, if effectively supported and managed, incorporate both structure and flexibility in their schedules. This is a particular strength of hybrid classes, which offer structured in-person classes alongside more flexible online options.
- **Online exams:** Mid-term exams conducted online decreases the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for teaching assistants who must invigilate an in-person exam, as well as instructors and students  Online exams have also been more accessible for some disabled and neurodivergent students, who can meet their accessibility needs more easily with access to assistive devices, medication, and food, in their own homes.

- **Extended deadlines:** Extension of add/drop deadlines to mid-February have become an accommodation for many universities such as UBC, to relieve the financial burden of those impacted by the COVID-19 recession.
- **Access for stranded international students:** Because many students will be stuck across the world, hybrid and remote learning options have provided students with the ability to keep up with classes.
- **Access for students who are parents:** Graduate and undergraduate students with children are also able to take care of any ill children without missing courses and in turn, avoid spreading the Omicron variant to other individuals.

While we understand that not every student can learn effectively in an online environment, for equitable access to education, **remote/hybrid options must be made available for the numerous students only able to learn through online instruction at this time.**

**The pandemic is hardly over.** BC is still in the throes of the Omicron wave, with [case counts only just peaking and hospitalizations projected to rise in the coming weeks.](#) The continued spread and impact of COVID have led to doctors continuing to warn that is [not the time to "abandon any precautions."](#) **SFU community members and their close contacts at most risk of adverse COVID outcomes need online options in the interim** until transmission and hospitalizations fall far from their record-breaking highs.

**Online and hybrid courses allow the flexibility for learning and teaching to continue**, even on the relatively high likelihood that students and instructors contract COVID. It is crucial that online options for all courses are available to not penalise those that are needing to self-isolate, allow less class disruption when students/instructors fall ill, and ensure that disabled and clinically vulnerable students/instructors do not have to compromise their health for their education and careers.

**A balanced and equitable approach accounting for the diverse needs of the SFU community** would mandate a mix of hybrid classes, in-person classes, and expanded options for online/remote learning. To ensure faculty and teaching staff have adequate support to provide accessible, flexible learning options, SFU should invest in technical assistance, guidance, and resources. Teaching assistant support should be expanded to a level that ensures courses can be delivered in an online/remote/hybrid format or lecture recordings can be provided without either increasing faculty/staff workload or jeopardizing the quality of course delivery.

As communities and organisations across Canada rally behind a [just recovery for all](#), **we call on SFU to continuously retain the accessible practises originally brought about during the pandemic and put *all* of our community's health first.**

## OUR DEMANDS

The undersigned SFU campus groups, and individual and organisational supporters, call on SFU to:

**1. IMMEDIATELY DELAY A FULL RETURN TO IN-PERSON CLASSES**

- Delay a full return to in-person classes until 1) two weeks after 90% of SFU community members have received their third vaccine shots and 2) transmission rates are low; and
- Expand hybrid, remote/online, and live streamed/broadcasted course offerings with support, paid training, and paid preparation time for instructors and teaching assistants, and in consultation with the relevant unions.

## 2. STRENGTHEN ON-CAMPUS SAFETY MEASURES
- Obtain and distribute N95, KN95, and KF94 masks on all campuses, or otherwise provide a reputable supply source from which students, faculty, and staff may purchase;
- Ensure all open rooms meet [ASHRAE standards](#) for ventilation and immediately close all classrooms that are not equipped with Merv 13 filters or better;
- Reduce ventilation load by restricting class sizes to permit adequate physical distancing of at least 2 metres per person, or 50% reduced capacity, whichever is the smaller, taking into account ventilation status and class duration;
- Urge faculty to allow Teaching Assistants and Sessional Instructors to hold office hours online for the entirety of the semester;
- Provide comprehensive education and communication on the differing levels of benefit and best practises of using medical, non-medical, and cloth masks;
- Obtain and distribute rapid tests kits; and
- Open on-campus COVID testing and vaccination clinics.

## 3. PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION
- Provide at least 3-4 weeks notice on course delivery formats to allow adequate time for students and instructors to plan and adjust accordingly; and
- Communicate a wide variety of options, resources, and supports alongside any decision to remain online or in-person.

## 4. EXPAND STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND SUPPORT
- Provide bursaries for students facing barriers to technology (especially incoming students) and students impacted by COVID in their families and households;
- Expand library loans of laptops and other electronic devices for learning;
- Reduce Residence fees for January and February;
- Allow students to be released early from their Residence contracts;
- Provide refunds for parking passes purchased for this semester or academic year;
- Extend course withdrawal, refund, and tuition and fee payment deadlines;
- Reinstate the [Elective Grade System](#) for the Spring 2022 semester;
- Expand mental health supports for students; and
- Ensure that students are given academic accommodations for assignments and exams if they fall ill, without the need for a positive test result, given the current barriers to timely adequate testing and healthcare appointments.

## 5. SUPPORT AND ASSIST INSTRUCTORS AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE AND FLEXIBLE COURSE DELIVERY

- Create a plan and system for additional paid training and preparation time for instructors and teaching assistants to facilitate and encourage teaching in new formats such as online/remote/hybrid instruction or lecture recordings;
- Develop in consultation with faculty and teaching staff whose intellectual property forms the content of course materials, of systems to protect against theft of intellectual property in remote teaching and/or in-line provision of materials, and a commitment to actively pursue violations of intellectual property rights arising from this work;
- Provide technology and increased IT support for live streaming, captioning, and recording lectures;
- Provide necessary computer and technological equipment to instructors and teaching support staff in their homes so as to facilitate flexibility in student support where that can be achieved from home within normal workload expectations;
- Provide instructors and teaching staff paid training and additional preparation time in understanding accessibility and universal design practises in pedagogy; and
- Urge instructors to include various forms of virtual engagement (e.g. posting on Canvas discussion board) as class participation and avoid penalising students for missing in-person classes.

## 6. IMMEDIATELY INITIATE AND ACT ON A BROAD CONSULTATION WITH STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND THE WIDER SFU COMMUNITY
- Ensure the consultation is accessible through broad timely invitations, live streaming and videoconferencing, multiple written and oral avenues of feedback, and accessible materials;
- Specifically consult SFU student, instructor, and staff representative organisations publicly and without the use of committees that only end up exhausting consultants;
- Prioritise the voices of community members who have been historically and continue to be marginalised and their representative groups, including disabled and neurodivergent students, BIPOC/PGM (People of the Global Majority) students, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, international students, students who are parents, students who are essential workers, janitorial staff, and those in high-risk groups for adverse COVID outcomes, to ensure follow-through on EDI commitments;
- Publicise findings widely in accessible formats; and
- Commit to changing and adapting policy to meet the diverse concerns and needs expressed through consultation.

## ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORTERS

Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) Executive Committee
Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Executive Committee
SFU Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance (DNA)
SFU Students of African and Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA)
SFU First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Association (FNMISA)

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

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Update: Signatures will be inputted on February 24th 2022, There have been nearly 200 submissions