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WATERLOO REGION

Wilfrid Laurier University says no staff or faculty fired over vaccine mandate

At University of Waterloo, progressive discipline continues. At least one faculty member has been fired and at least two other professors and one lecturer also face termination

By **Robert Williams** Record Reporter
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WATERLOO — As the University of Waterloo moves to terminate faculty who have chosen not to get vaccinated, its neighbouring institution is not taking the same hard stance.

“Wilfrid Laurier University has not terminated any employees under our mandatory vaccination policy; any employees who were non-compliant were placed on an unpaid leave of absence,” a school spokesperson said in a statement on Thursday.

“The university is continuing to enforce our mandatory vaccination policy up to May 1, after which time the requirement for proof of vaccination will be paused.”

Any staff and faculty who have active contracts will be invited back to work in-person at that time.

At Waterloo, staff who did not comply with the mandatory vaccine requirement were put on an escalating discipline path in January. Many were officially terminated in February.

Now, Waterloo is moving ahead with a discipline path for any remaining faculty who have chosen not to get vaccinated. At least one faculty member, chemistry professor Michael Palmer, was fired on Monday. The Record is aware of at least two other professors and one lecturer who also face termination.

While Laurier will not terminate any employees who choose not to get vaccinated, it did warn that similar unpaid leaves could be on the horizon if the school is forced to revert course.

Starting May 1, Laurier said it will continue to follow recommendations from public health and encourage its community to stay up to date on their vaccinations should public health conditions change, and vaccination and mask requirements be brought back.

“The high vaccination rate in our Laurier community is one of the main reasons we are able to make the changes on May 1,” Laurier president Deborah MacLatchy said in a release.

“Remaining up to date on your vaccination status will ensure your work or study is not disrupted, should vaccinations be required to access any of our campuses or locations in the future and/or the meaning of ‘fully vaccinated’ changes to include additional doses.”

Should the vaccination requirement be reinstated, MacLatchy said, the university will not offer remote or hybrid options for in-person classes for students who do not meet the vaccination requirement.

“Failure to demonstrate proof of vaccination under a future mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy risks deregistration from in-person courses for students who cannot verify compliance,” MacLatchy’s statement read.

Staff and faculty who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations risk being put on unpaid leave should the vaccination requirement be reinstated.

In the meantime, Laurier will continue to strongly recommend that its community wears masks after May 1, and will provide the masks to students, faculty and staff at no cost.



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