



ACCUTE
C/O Department of English
Carleton Hall, Room #247
University of New Brunswick
PO Box 4400, 19 Macaulay Lane
Fredericton, New Brunswick
CANADA E3B 5A3

June 3, 2020.

Dear members of the Canadian Association of Chairs of English:

I am writing to you as the President of ACCUTE with an urgent request that reflects a motion passed yesterday at our virtual Annual General Meeting: **to ensure that students are granted flexibility in submitting work to complete their winter term courses, given the unique circumstances of the pandemic.** It was brought to my attention during the meeting that some institutions are denying requests for student extensions to complete coursework and refusing to support instructors who wish to grant those requests. While individual contexts are undoubtedly relevant when assessing such requests, it is essential that institutions of higher learning acknowledge and respect the unique pressures and hardships faced by students, staff, and faculty at this unprecedented time.

I would ask you in your capacity as a Chair or Head of your Department to actively support students and instructors to ensure that flexibility is made a priority when helping individuals to complete their winter term obligations. Compassion is essential. Over the past several months, many students have faced additional burdens and impediments as they try to continue their studies—ranging from financial challenges to the realities of constant caregiving of family members and children and the increased demands placed on those working in essential services. Now is not the time to penalize students. If you do encounter instances of inflexibility at your respective institution, please do not hesitate to share that information with ACCUTE. We are committed to advocating for our members and will do our best to provide a national voice with which to express your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Andrews".

Jennifer Andrews, Professor and ACCUTE President (2018-2020)
(jandrews@unb.ca)