

Bargaining Update #5

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CUASA Files for Conciliation

CUASA filed for conciliation yesterday August 29. We did not do so lightly but because we are convinced that we cannot make any more progress at the bargaining table without the pressure of a strike vote.

In this newsletter, I will brief on two matters: the outstanding issues and the meaning and significance of conciliation.

The issues:

Scale: The employer's offer of 1% is simply too low. It does not cover CPI nor is it in line with other agreements in the province which are much higher. CUASA employees already have salaries that are much lower than those at comparable universities and among the lowest in the province.

Benefits: CUASA members pay too much for their benefits. We pay part of the premiums and also co-pays. This is highly unusual. Generally the practice is to pay either part of the premium or a co-pay but not both.

Long Term Disability Insurance: CUASA is unhappy with the way that this plan is administered. CUASA members pay for this benefit entirely yet we do not own the surplus and do not control which company administers the plan. The employer is resisting any changes to LTD. Without oversight over the plan, we can't be sure that we are getting value for money and this can mean taking money out of our members' pockets.

Workload: There are no improvements in workload for faculty, instructors or librarians. Workload is a major issue for all members. In the case of librarians, the simple request for some time to do research which is part of their job descriptions (duties and responsibilities), has been rebuffed.

Sabbaticals: We have made some gains in terms of first-time 100% sabbaticals for instructor and librarians but no gains at all for second sabbaticals. At 80%, our second sabbaticals are among the lowest in the province.

Scheduling: When centralized scheduling was introduced to Carleton, CUASA members were told that the "powerful algorithms" would solve everything. They may have solved problems for the employer but scheduling continues to be a major irritant for CUASA members.

Professional Expense Reimbursement: CUASA asked for an increase of \$400 for our PER for the first year of an agreement, and another \$200 for the second year which would take us to \$2,000—pretty much the norm for the province. The employer has countered with a proposal to keep us at \$,1400—one of the lowest PERs in the province.

Custody and control: CUASA has proposed language that would protect our members from fishing expeditions in their personal emails and papers subject to academic freedom. The employer is resisting. Recently, rather than countering a FIPPA order with a defense that CUASA members have custody and control of their records relating to research and personal communications, the employer retrieved a CUASA member's emails with no notice to the Association.

The conciliation process:

This means that we have notified the Ministry of Labour that we have reached an impasse and we need help with bargaining. The Ministry will appoint a conciliator who will meet with both sides and try to bring us to an agreement. If the conciliator is not successful and the sides are still too far apart, the conciliator will issue a “no board” report and 17 days after it is mailed, CUASA will be in a legal position to go on strike.

Does this mean we will go on strike? Not necessarily. It does mean that we will take a strike vote and we will organize information pickets to publicize our positions.

I encourage you to come to the special meeting to discuss bargaining. It is being held Wednesday, September 5 at 2:00pm in Southam 416.