

## Contract Academic Bargaining Update

Dear Members of the Contract Academic bargaining unit,

I am writing to update you on the negotiations towards your first collective agreement.

First things first: welcome to the approximately 90 new members in our 400+ strong part-time bargaining unit. Welcome to AUNBT, the Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers. You may have heard that the AUNBT was certified as your bargaining agent by the New Brunswick Labour and Employment Board in February of this year. Even so, voting membership in the AUNBT is not automatic, and so I want to second our president, David Bell, in inviting you to join with part-time and full-time colleagues on both campuses to address the challenges we face in university education collectively. The membership form for part-timers can be found here: <http://www.unb.ca/AUNBT/AUNBTPTMembershipForm.pdf> Membership is free. At the same time, you can check out our website generally, with its useful links and information. The home page is [www.aunbt.ca](http://www.aunbt.ca)

### Bargaining Update

When I last wrote to you, your bargaining team (Wendy Bourque, Stephen Dutcher, John Neilson and Jula Hughes) had begun bargaining and had made good progress over the summer. Our task was assisted greatly by your responses to the two surveys (on working conditions and on non-teaching service) that many of you completed and sent in. In the fall term, it was more challenging to find dates that worked for both bargaining teams, and occasionally we had to take breaks to allow the UNB Administration team to work through our proposals. I remain cautiously optimistic about the progress of negotiations, although more time at the table will clearly be needed to move things forward. I can assure you that the AUNBT bargaining team will be available for negotiations. We have done and will do everything we can to move towards an agreement. At the same time I want to echo the president's report in saying that first collective agreements are big tasks and I ask your patience as we work towards a conclusion.

We have worked through most issues concerning *working conditions*. Proposals regarding the *appointment process and job security* are on the table

and negotiations are progressing on these issues. We have yet to deal with *benefits*. If you want to let me know about your priorities in this regard, feel free to email me personally at [jhughes@unb.ca](mailto:jhughes@unb.ca) or [aunbt@unb.ca](mailto:aunbt@unb.ca). Mailings sent to either address will be treated in the strictest confidence. The final bargaining issue will be *compensation*.

One of the gains at the bargaining table has been on the vexed question of continued email access. While negotiated contract gains usually come into effect only when a collective agreement is ratified, the administration has altered its email policy already so that your account will not expire until about a year after the course in question. *However, if this proves not to be your own experience then let us know.* You may also have noted that the administration has announced a special parking pass rate for part-time employees. The plan announced, while perhaps useful to some people, is *not* what we sought; we note it simply as an administrative response to the new reality of having to take part-timers seriously.

### **Fair Employment Week**

(Wendy Bourque, your VP Part-time on the AUNBT Executive, reporting...)

A very successful 'haunting' was held by contract academics on both Saint John and Fredericton campuses. On October 31st, in observance of Fair Employment Week, a number of AUNBT members spent several hours speaking with students and faculty



about part-time issues. The aim of the group was to raise awareness on campus about issues contract faculty face in connection with their employment at UNB. Those who passed by our displays were handed small ghosts with a packet of peanuts and a small card attached. The ghost was meant to represent the rather invisible presence of contract academics on campus, the peanuts were a nod to our small remuneration for what we do and the small cards each held a one-line message informing the recipient of one aspect of our work here at UNB that often goes unnoticed. We were pleasantly surprised, at both campuses, by the response we received from those we spoke with. Most students who stopped to speak

with us were quite unaware of the issues that confront those faculty who work for UNB part-time. Many inquired as to what they might do to help us receive the recognition we deserve for our contributions to the university. All in all this small effort at consciousness-raising was well received among the several hundred people we spoke to.

### **Thank you and Upcoming Events**

Thank you to Wendy, Karen Furlong, Carol Ferguson, Elizabeth McGahan, Arthur James, Stephen Dutcher and Jane Logan for organizing this important event that has raised the visibility of Contract Academics on both campuses.

**I look forward to meeting as many of you as are able to join us on the 4<sup>th</sup> (Saint John) or 5<sup>th</sup> (Fredericton) December for our AUNBT information meetings, where I will be able to discuss bargaining progress and challenges in more detail and respond directly to your questions.** For more information on these meetings, check the website at [www.aunbt.ca](http://www.aunbt.ca)

In solidarity and with best wishes for the season,

Jula Hughes