

September 23, 2009

Bargaining Update # 4- Contract Academic Employees

Dear Members,

We begin by welcoming back our members to a new academic year and welcoming any new contract academic teachers and librarians to UNB. If you have not yet taken the opportunity to sign up with AUNBT, please do so at your earliest convenience and if you are aware of new colleagues, please direct them to the AUNBT website for the membership form:

<http://www.unb.ca/AUNBT/AUNBTPTMembershipForm.pdf>

As most of you know, it has been a year and a half since AUNBT was certified as your bargaining agent and over 15 months since negotiations began for our first contract academic collective agreement. We all wish we could pick up on the freshness and enthusiasm a new year brings to announce a new agreement and we share your disappointment that this is not the case.

Since we last wrote to you, in the middle of August, we met twice and agreed to three further meetings that were cancelled by the administration. Specifically, we agreed to a joint bargaining session with the full-time team to address some overlap issues between the two agreements and met on September 1. We tabled proposals and agreed to a subsequent joint session after we were told that the management team was not prepared to return to the part-time table unless these issues had been resolved. Two days that had been previously scheduled for part-time bargaining, September 3 and 4, were cancelled by management. We were promised that agreeing to further joint bargaining would generate momentum that would translate into progress in contract academic negotiations. Despite this, management also cancelled the next joint session, which had been agreed to for September 18. We are now scheduled to meet for another joint session on Friday, September 25th.

As indicated in our last update, we no longer hold out hope for a negotiated settlement in the absence of third party assistance and are actively preparing for "conciliation". While we do not doubt the individual good will of the administration team members, they are not available, not prepared, and without mandate all too often, and the limited progress there has been since March has come at a glacial pace and only through persistent and frustrating efforts on our part. Just by way of explanation, conciliation is a process by which a government-appointed mediator assists the parties in reaching a settlement of outstanding issues. If successful, it results in a collective agreement; if not, the conciliator issues a "no board" report. This is a necessary step towards either reaching an agreement or achieving a legal strike position.

At this juncture, we believe that membership support for your team and increased visibility of your contribution to the success of the university are crucial to moving us towards a successful conclusion. We will contact you in the next two weeks to set up meetings to discuss how we can make our collective voice heard. As a first step in this process, it would be helpful to us if you could let us know whether you prefer day-time or evening meetings. Also, if you are encountering difficulties in obtaining office space, adequate computer access, library and email privileges or any other problems, please be sure to let us know.

In solidarity,  
Your bargaining team  
Wendy Bourque  
John Neilson  
Stephen Dutcher  
Jula Hughes



