



# BARGAINING BULLETIN

Colleagues,

CUASA is about to start negotiating our next collective agreement and I wanted to write to let you know about the process, time-lines and the current bargaining context. First I would like to thank all members for their participation in the electronic survey; we had a very high participation rate and received very good feedback. Second let me introduce you to our team. CUASA's negotiating team for 2010 is

- Kristof Avramsson, University Library;
- Richard Dansereau, Department of Systems and Computer Engineering, Salary and Benefits Officer;
- Gerald deMontigny, School of Social Work, Grievance Officer;
- Jason Etele, Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering;
- Brett Stevens, School of Mathematics and Statistics, Chief Negotiator;
- Tony Wohlfarth, CUASA, Executive Director.

The Employer has advised that their bargaining team will be identical to their 2009 team: Colleen Boucher, Stephen Green, Rafik Goubran, Margaret Haines, Tim Sullivan, Jerry Tomberlin. We are hopeful that with the continuity in the bargaining teams there can be a genuine commitment to negotiate a fair and equitable agreement in a timely fashion. We have scheduled five meeting times with the Employer's negotiating team in the month of May starting on Monday 17 May.

This round of bargaining will be a little different than some of the previous rounds. In this round, in the event of not being able to reach agreement on monetary items, we will settle all monetary items by submitting them to binding arbitration. This process is governed by Article 34 in our collective agreement. Without giving you the actual language from the agreement the provisions are

- Both parties agree that all non-monetary issues shall be settled prior to arbitration on monetary issues;
- New forms of benefits are non-monetary but their cost-sharing is monetary. Disputes on what is considered monetary and non-monetary can be submitted to an arbitrator for decision;
- After 60 days have passed since the agreement on non-monetary issues, either party may submit all unresolved monetary issues to binding arbitration.

I will keep you up to date on the ways in which this is affecting bargaining and impacting you.

I have also had a lot of questions directed to me about the Carleton University Pension Plan. Our pension plan is not subject to collective bargaining since it applies to all employees and is administered by the Pension Committee. To assess the implications of the current pension funding outlook for collective bargaining, the bargaining team is meeting with our members of the Pension Committee and this dialogue is continuing.

The next item I want to discuss is the recent provincial budget. I have had many colleagues talking to me about the budget, asking what it means and I was hearing many different interpretations of what the budget and accompanying legislation say. This prompted me to research carefully what was in the budget, what kind of payment restrictions are being legislated in Ontario and, more importantly, what is *not* being legislated. The *Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act* is the part (schedule 25 (pages 62--71)) of the 2010 Ontario Budget bill (Bill 16) which contains legislated provisions with regard to wages in the broader provincial public service (which includes universities). I have received clarification from the Ministry of Government Services about the terms of this Act. Let me quote the Ministry representative:

The Act implements a two-year freeze to compensation (salary, pension, and other benefits) for employees of the broader Ontario Public Service *who are not under a collective agreement*. (see section 4(2) point 1 of the legislation)

CUASA does have a collective agreement so the meaning is very clear: the wages and benefits of CUASA members have not been frozen; the *Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act* does not apply to us.

The Ontario Government has issued a statement that they would like to see no net increase in compensation for all employees in the broader provincial public service, although they were also very clear that structural salary changes like CUASA's CDIs do not count as an increase in compensation. One of the things the government says regarding this issue is "the Government of Ontario will not provide any additional funding to universities to fund compensation increases beyond what is specified in current collective agreements" I want to be very clear about this: the Ontario government has *never* included additional funding for compensation increases in their transfer payments to Universities. So the situation this year is *no different* than any other year. When asked to clarify this further the government stated that there is no policy that will penalize universities which fail to obtain wage freezes from their employee groups and the government went on to say that they do expect that employers will "aggressively posture" using the government's statement that they would like to see wage freezes.

So in conclusion: there is no wage freeze that applies to CUASA; the government has issued a statement that they would like no net increase in compensation but they are not changing their transfer payments in any way this year and nor will they penalize universities which give pay increases; lastly, CDIs are not restricted in any way.

I will keep you informed on how bargaining progresses and its implications for you. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [brett@math.carleton.ca](mailto:brett@math.carleton.ca).