

Bargaining Update #3

Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, Chief Negotiator

August 12, 2012

The CUASA bargaining team met late into the night on Friday August 10, 2012.

We believed that we could achieve a deal that night. The employer indicated that they too believed that a deal was possible and, in fact, they have been pressuring us to finish quickly. Yet, at 1:30 am, after we had waited for several hours to see their financial offer, they suspended the negotiations because they could not cost the numbers. We will meet again on August 23, 2012.

Over the summer, the bargaining climate has been affected negatively by the Ontario government. The Ministry of Education has been pressuring all Ontario universities to offer bare bones financial packages. But the government directive was clear that employers must honour existing Collective Agreements and continue to bargain in good faith for those who were already at the table. The employer at Carleton has interpreted this message as a claw back from the original bargaining mandate approved by the Board of Governors. We don't yet know how all the other universities in bargaining will respond, except for York University, where the employer stuck to their original mandate. They have just settled with the union in a three year deal with 2% each year and improvements in paramedic benefits, and an increase in sabbaticals from 80% to 82.5%.

After rather paltry scale increases in the last two rounds of bargaining, we expected to make some gains in salaries and benefits. When compared to other Ontario universities, CUASA members are among the worst paid academic employees in the province. CUASA members' second and subsequent sabbatical salary rates are tied for dead last in the province with only one other university and many are at 85-90%.

We know times are tough in Ontario but they have been tough for CUASA members for a long time. The employer always has an excuse to pay us poorly. As an association, we have to ask when will it be our turn?