

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM FOR CONTRACT ACADEMIC STAFF



We invite you to come to a Membership meeting on Thursday 26 June @5pm in F210 (video-conferenced to Brantford and Bracebridge) to support the Bargaining Team for a new mandate for this round of negotiations.

Do **WE** Belong at Nipissing?

By Mark Crane (Chief Negotiator) and Laura Rossi on behalf of
the CASBU CBC

The CASBU bargaining team has already reported its failure to make any significant gains in this round of bargaining on the issues of recognition and respect for Contract Academic Staff. As we licked our wounds and strove to come to terms with this disappointing reality, at the very least we expected that, with our major proposals for recognition of service and research removed from the table, we could at least expect to bring negotiations to a speedy end with a moderate, but fair, compensation package. Alas, on the issue of money we quickly came to an impasse with the Employer, whose meager financial offer would not only keep us at the bottom in comparison with seventeen other universities in the province, but also threaten to sink us further.

We know that the Employer is facing significant financial challenges and we have been ready and willing to work with them to play our part in facing them. We cannot, however, support a deal that will further marginalize an already marginalized workforce. The 300 or so CASBU Members who provide upwards of fifty per cent of the teaching at Nipissing deserve a deal that recognizes their crucial role in the academic life of this institution. The Employer's financial offer was both insulting, and to the bargaining team's mind, wrong-headed. It represented, in monetary terms, about one-tenth of one per cent of the total annual operating budget. That's right, one-tenth of one percent ... for a group who shoulders a significant portion of the burden of delivering on the University's pledge of "one student at a time." Away from the bargaining table the Employer's rhetoric is that despite its unprecedented budget deficit, it continues to make strategic investments that will allow the university to build on its key strengths. To our minds, a strategic investment in the people who make the Nipissing experience great makes clear sense. Pushing them further to the margins does not.

As a counter to their offer, we proposed a financial package that was extremely moderate. In fact, it would have seen some significant concessions for both Full and Part-Time Instructors, with a modest increase in the part-time stipend to stop us from falling further behind other universities in the province. Despite the fact that in real terms our proposal cost very little over what they were offering ... about the cost of ONE Associate Professor's annual salary split over two years ... the Employer quickly turned it down. We have called in a conciliator from the provincial Ministry of Labour for meetings on June 24 and 25 to see if some outside assistance can help us come to a deal. In order for us to make any headway on those dates we need to show the Employer that we are united and that we want a fair deal. If you believe that the work of Contract Academic Staff needs to be respected and paid a living wage for that work, please come out and show your support.