

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM FOR CONTRACT ACADEMIC STAFF



“We are cautiously optimistic that, with your support, we can get there.”

By Mark Crane, Chief Negotiator, on behalf of the CASBU CBC

The CASBU Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC) is pleased to report substantial progress in negotiations with the Employer for a new Collective Agreement. So far, we have had four days of meetings with the Employer’s team, and as one member of our team put it, “It feels like we are already at the point that it took us eight months to reach in the last round.” In short, the shift to a compressed bargaining schedule has ramped up the pace of negotiations quite dramatically. While this is indeed a welcome change, it has also meant that we are already tackling some of the central issues raised by our proposals. Thankfully we had a bit of a break this week to review our progress and to gauge our success in meeting the priorities laid out in the mandate from you, our Members.

Though over all things seem to be progressing well, and the tenor of our conversations has stressed collaboration rather than confrontation, we still have some hard work ahead of us. It was no surprise to see the Employer stress declining enrollments and budget shortfalls as premises for seeking “efficiencies” (clearly code for cuts) in the terms and conditions of employment for contract academic staff. The same story, if with slightly different circumstances, is being told across the province. While we know that claiming poverty is always an employer’s mantra at the table, the CBC recognizes that at least some of the constraints are quite real, and are trying to be as creative and open to positive changes as possible so that they can help the institution free itself from some of those constraints. At the same time, however, the team is ever mindful of what you told us you want to see in the new agreement. Thus, your team is navigating a course that gives due attention to the health and vitality of the institution while at the same time keeping the needs and protection of our Members foremost in their minds.

The team goes back to the table on Friday May 30th, and then is scheduled to meet every day the following week. We hope that by the end of that week we will have agreed to the major components for a deal. We are cautiously optimistic that, with your support, we can get there. If you are on campus, please stop by the NUFA office to buy one of our fancy new T-shirts, and wear it proudly on campus during the first week of June. The more visible the support from our Members, the easier it will be for us to reach a deal. Solidarity keeps us strong, and will get us a fair deal. NUFA T-shirts are sold in the NUFA Office. Please visit us on the main campus A244, or if you teach at a satellite location or off-campus, contact Angela at x4499 or nufaoffice@gmail.com and we'll arrange to get one to you! T-shirts are \$15 each with a portion of the proceeds going to the NUSU Foodbank.