

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM FOR CONTRACT ACADEMIC STAFF



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By Laura Rossi, on behalf of the CASBU CBC

While maintaining the cautious optimism described in our last bulletin, we regret to report that we have come up against some insurmountable barriers to moving forward with one of our main proposals for this round of bargaining. Despite efforts to be creative and open-minded on both sides of the table, we were just too far apart on the issue of moving Full-time Instructors to twelve-month contracts. We have refused to move forward with any gains that could potentially benefit a few Members at the expense of others. Although the employer has acknowledged our desire to see a progressive evolution and professionalization for contract academic staff, they maintain that this is simply not a realistic or attainable goal in the current volatile climate of declining enrolments and economic uncertainty.

The mandate you charged us with at the onset of this round of negotiations was to seek recognition for long-standing Members, and acknowledgement of research and service performed by CASBU Members. Our substantial contributions to this institution in both of these areas continue to go unrecognized, and appear to be a low priority to the employer. Thus, it has become clear that our second-class citizenship status is here to stay, and that our meagre pleas for equality and respect will continue, for the time being, to go unanswered. It is terribly disappointing that our attempts to make progressive and meaningful change have managed to get little traction in a time of economic uncertainty. This reality has forced us to withdraw major cornerstones of our proposals, in the interest of protecting our Membership, and staying true to the principle of equity. Despite this setback, we are seeking to move forward in an open discussion on the remaining matters.

After five days of negotiations, we have managed to move forward with several other smaller and housekeeping issues. During the first week of June, we have a five-day back-to-back bargaining schedule that will see us tackle the toughest issue, financial compensation. In this final stretch of bargaining, we are hoping to make some gains for all Members, and with any luck we will have a tentative agreement by the end of this week.

Thank you for your continued support.