

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM FOR CONTRACT ACADEMIC STAFF



“This race to the bottom has to stop.”

What is a Strike Mandate?

By Mark Crane, Chief Negotiator, CASBU CBC

At our meeting on Thursday 26 June, the CASBU Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC) will be asking you to endorse a new mandate for this round of bargaining. As we reported earlier, we received no traction on any of our major proposals and the Employer’s compensation offer is simply unacceptable and unworthy of you, our Members. Now we need to show the Employer clearly that the membership cannot accept a deal that will not only keep our Members as the lowest paid contract academic workers in the province, but also widen the gap even further. ***This race to the bottom has to stop.*** The clearest way to get this message across to the Employer is by empowering the CBC with a *strike mandate*.

First of all, it is important to dispel any common misconceptions about what a strike mandate means. Giving the CASBU CBC a strike mandate does not mean that we will automatically go on strike. Nor does it mean that we ‘want’ to go on strike – nobody ‘wants’ such a thing – but that we stand firmly ready to do so if we can’t come to an agreement at the table. Simply put, a strike mandate lets the Employer know that our Members are committed to getting a fair deal, and that we will use all of the means at our disposal within the context of collective bargaining in order to do so. It doesn’t matter how convincing our arguments are at the table if the Employer has its mind stubbornly set on a paltry compensation package that is completely out of step with recent deals in our sector. The Employer will pursue that goal as long as it feels that it can pressure us to take it. A strike mandate gives us some leverage at the table, and clearly tells the Employer that it must re-think its offer, and come up with something fair.

No doubt, some Members will have trepidation about making such demands on the Employer at a time when the institution is facing a potentially perilous financial outlook. The members of the CBC share some of that trepidation. We are not, however, asking for the moon; only for a deal that is fair and does not continue to widen the gap between us and the rest of the universities in this province. Nor are we aiming to break the bank; our counter on compensation was more than reasonable, and represented a mere drop in the bucket when considered in the larger context of the university’s budget ... about one-tenth of one percent. The specter of financial turmoil cannot be used to justify keeping us at the bottom and sinking us even further.

Please come out and show your support for the CASBU CBC as we work to get you a fair deal. The next meeting will begin at 5:00 pm on June 26 in F210 of the Main Campus, and will be video-conferenced to Classroom 3 of the Bracebridge Campus and Room 207 of the Brantford Campus.