

A FAIR DEAL

Protecting the University



trying to catch up...

Compensation and its discontents

from the NUFA CC: Wendy Peters, Susan Srigley &
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If you feel awkward discussing finances, you are not alone. But please note that we are not asking for the moon, nor even parity with our colleagues. Rather we are simply asking for fair compensation for our work, something that every other university in the province acknowledges, except it seems, Nipissing.

For the last two rounds of negotiations the NUFA bargaining team has attempted to make gains in compensation. We have had little success. When other provincial faculty associations were racking up 5, 6, 7, and 8 percent salary increases (not to mention compensation in other forms such as improvements to pensions and benefits, and PER and research funding), NUFA was told that Nipissing University is “*not the same*” as other universities and therefore Nipissing faculty cannot be compensated in the same way. No matter how hard we pressed at the table, it was always the same answer: “if you don’t like it, the door is open.” Ultimately we settled for 3 percent across the board (ATB) salary increases

each year. As you may be aware, successive 3 percent ATB increases – while seemingly reasonable – have resulted in salaries that are 27.85% **below** the provincial average (weighted and adjusted to scale). In other words, if you were working at just about any other university in the province your average salary (across all ranks) would be thousands of dollars more than it is at Nipissing.

There is no simple way to catch up. To gain parity with our colleagues in the province will take time and lots of negotiations over several rounds of bargaining. However, this does not mean we should fall further behind our colleagues in the meantime.

This round of negotiations your NUFA bargaining team put together a compensation package that includes not just ATB increases, but a variety of creative ways to ensure that we do not fall any further behind the provincial average, including:

- a modest one time market adjustment of \$1500
- five additional steps to our grid
- an additional step on the grid upon promotion

Imagine our surprise when we made our arguments at the table and were told that Nipissing University is not prepared to deviate from provincial norms where ATB increases have averaged 1.8% per year since 2010.

Our administration has proposed:

- not 1.8%, but rather 0%, 1%, and 2% ATB for the three years of our Collective Agreement.

They have two rationales for this offer. **First, times are tough.**

And second, Nipissing “is the same” as every other university in the province.

Well, maybe not exactly the same. Not a single provincial university, with the exception of Waterloo in 2009, gave their faculty a 0% wage increase. As it stands today, we rank last in the province in financial compensation; we are so far behind that the OCUFA statistician who did our salary analysis wondered if our numbers were wrong! Unfortunately, they weren’t.

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