

1. Why A Strike Vote Now?

Why do the Executive Committee and Negotiating Team need the FA members to vote in favour of strike action?

A strike vote is being held because the negotiating team has exhausted the other avenues available to negotiate or mediate on all the outstanding articles. The Executive Committee has been in close contact with the team throughout the negotiations and is convinced that we will not be able to achieve our negotiation goals without the added force of a strike mandate.

Why take a strike vote?

The only way for a strike to occur is after a majority votes cast by the Faculty Association membership are in favour of a strike mandate. This decision would then give the Faculty Association Executive the power to call for a strike within 90 days of the vote.

Would a positive strike vote necessarily result in a strike?

A strike vote is not a strike. Historically in Canadian Universities, most strike votes result in accelerated negotiations that avert strike action. This is our hope and expectation; however there are no guarantees.

Can we bring in a mediator instead?

We have already worked with a mediator to get to the point we are at now. We started mediated negotiations in early November and were able to come to agreement on a number of articles, but we are still left with major issues unresolved after intensive mediated discussions. The bargaining updates from November and December provide details on this process <<http://unbcfa.ca/category/faculty-negotiations/>>.

How would a positive strike vote be used?

Voting “yes” expresses your support for the team and gives them more leverage at the table during subsequent negotiations because it provides the association with the ability to call a strike. A positive strike vote would give the negotiating team a strong mandate to make further progress on the outstanding issues, and hopefully be able to conclude negotiations without an actual strike. The negotiating team and the executive committee believe that more intensive negotiations would occur prior to a strike action.

Is there a second vote to go on strike?

No. A positive strike vote delegates authority to the FA Executive to decide on strike action and timing, based on the recommendation of the negotiating team.

2. What If A Strike Were Called?

When would the strike happen?

A strike would only happen if and when the Executive call for strike action. We would be in a legal strike position 72 hours after a positive strike vote. The strike mandate lasts for 90 days after the vote, so there is room to negotiate after the vote occurs.

What form would a strike take?

There are a variety of possible actions that could be taken at this point. These range from selectively refusing to perform part of work duties, short (less than one day) work stoppages, one day walkouts, rotating walkouts and ultimately a full walkout. How and when to deploy these would depend on the progress of continued negotiations.

If we go on strike, would we be alone?

If we did go to a strike, the CAUT Defence Fund would bring in “flying pickets”– our colleagues from Universities across the country as a show of solidarity and a means to bring national attention to our situation. Also CUPE and other Unions generally show solidarity and would refuse to cross the picket lines.

Could the Employer lock us out?

Yes the Employer could lock us out, even now before any strike vote, using the provisions of the BC Labour Code.

Would all FA members have to walk the picket line?

In general yes. Members who are on sabbatical would not be expected to walk the picket line. Members who are unable to walk the picket line would make special arrangement with the strike committee.

Would I get paid during a strike?

Yes, all members who work on assigned picket or other strike duties will get strike pay of \$84 per day (not taxable), seven days per week. Your UNBC pay could be suspended during a strike; the Employer will also cease to pay for benefits, which the Association will have to pay for during the term of any strike. Strike pay begins on the 4th day of strike action, as this is the policy of the CAUT Defence Fund, of which we are a member.

Does strike pay come from our own FA funds and dues?

After the UNBCFA certified, we also joined the CAUT Defence Fund <http://defencefund.caut.ca> and part of our dues are used to have access to this \$20 Million fund. Strike pay and some other strike and mediation related expenses will be paid by the Defence Fund.

What if I want to continue working during a strike?

Any work duties performed would undermine the strike. This includes all teaching and supervisory duties as well as participation in conferences and workshops. This includes online and distance delivery courses- all work that is performed as part of your University work duties.

Would regional campuses be affected?

The strike would be in effect at all the UNBC campuses. Local strike committees will coordinate with the central strike committee to arrange the local actions.

What about part-time instructors?

As an FA member you can elect to participate in the picketing and receive strike pay the same as all other members.

How will I stay in contact with the FA during a strike?

The FA will set up an off-campus strike headquarters, and will communicate with members through email and the web page. Contact will also be maintained through "picket captains" as part of the strike organization

What about essential services (maintaining live collections etc.)?

In most strike or lockout situations, the Parties will negotiate a side-agreement to allow ongoing biological or other sensitive research projects to be maintained, but this is not guaranteed.

Would I still have my UNBC email and access to online systems?

The Employer could choose to restrict or remove access to all online services. It is essential that all FA members provide non-UNBC email and off-campus contact info to the FA as soon as possible if you have not already done so.

3. What Happens If A Strike Vote Fails?

What would happen if the strike vote decision was negative?

The most likely scenario would be that the negotiations committee would resign, as would the executive committee members. This would signify that the membership are prepared to accept the last offers from the Employer.