

University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association

Bargaining Bulletin 2019 #01

Message from the Chief Negotiator:

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to thank the members of the UNBC FA for giving such an overwhelming endorsement of the bargaining team's bargaining priorities. The actual negotiations began on 5 March, and have continued since then. While we are still in the early stages of negotiations, I am pleased to be able to report that negotiations have begun in a good spirit. At this point, we have only begun to lay out our major bargaining priorities (the ones you endorsed), and hear the Employer's major priorities. We know that we share some concerns, although we also know that we have differences of opinion and some starkly different priorities. That is to be expected, but it is our sense that both sides are listening to each other and trying to understand each other's priorities. We hope relatively soon, to begin reporting significant progress at the table. In the meantime though, we hope that you will all stay engaged and attentive to the updates you will receive in the coming months. It is important that we know, and that the Employer knows, that you are eager to see timely progress towards the new collective agreement.

For your information, the Employer is represented at the table by: Barb Daigle (Chief Negotiator); Erik Jensen; Ernie Barber; Jennifer Keryluik; Brittany Smith; and Tracy Deck. Our team consists of: Ted Binnema (Chief Negotiator); Stephen Rader (*ex officio*, as President of the FA); Jacqueline Holler; Umesh Parshotam; Matt Reid; and Donna Sindaco.

Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator, UNBC FA

FUNSCAD Strike:

As you may know, the UNBC FA is among more than sixty members of the CAUT Defence Fund (DF). One thing that members of the fund do is support one another by joining each other on the picket line when there is a strike. You may recall that CAUT DF "Flying Pickets" joined us on the picket line from as far away as Memorial University when we were on strike in 2015. On 8 March 2019, I had the privilege of walking the picket line with our colleagues at FUNSCAD (Faculty Union of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) in Halifax. If you find it hard to imagine how a strike can take on a carnival-like atmosphere, you need to take a look at a very short video posted to youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5FJHuxb6Yg>. You will be interested to know that the folks at FUNSCAD were striking to achieve in pay and working conditions what their colleagues at other universities in Nova Scotia already enjoy. That might sound familiar. It was exhilarating for me and for the many



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other “Flying and Driving Pickets” from many points between St. John’s Newfoundland and Prince George, to support our colleagues in defending the rights of faculty. It was also exciting to see that students at NSCAD (and Haligonians who drove by the picket lines) overwhelmingly supported the faculty. Sound familiar? The Flying and Driving Pickets also greatly boosted the morale of the faculty, and, the faculty guessed, may have played a part in causing the Employer to ask the union come back to the table. That strike has since ended, with the parties agreeing to go to Mediation-Arbitration.

You should know that, the FUNSCAD strike notwithstanding, strikes have been uncommon among members of the CAUT DF over the past few years, even though there have been many strike votes. Between mid-2016 and now, there have been more than 20 strike votes among our member unions, but the FUNSCAD strike is only the third strike mandate to lead to a strike. The willingness of faculty members to show their resolve is usually enough to cause Employers to back down from unreasonable bargaining positions. We certainly hope that we do not find ourselves in the position of impasse at the negotiating table during the present round of negotiations, but it should be reassuring to know that the members of the CAUT DF support one another through thick and thin.

Ted Binnema, Defence Fund Trustee & President



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