

# University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association

*Bargaining Bulletin 2019 #03*

## Message from the Chief Negotiator:

Dear Colleagues,

In April, we informed you that the FA team has opened 26 articles for renegotiation, and that the Employer's team has opened 48 articles. We also indicated that the large number of articles that the Employer has opened causes us worry, but at the time of our last update we had not seen any of their actual proposals.

We have now completed about 66 hours of negotiations. Unfortunately, we have not agreed on any of the articles yet.

The Employer continues to indicate that it seeks to address the issue of salaries at UNBC, and continues to acknowledge that across-the-board wage increases will not fix our problem. They continue to express their commitment to a new salary structure that will give us sector-norm salaries. We have already proposed a simple, easily implemented, fair, and equitable salary structure that will accomplish that goal, and that fits within the amount that the university has budgeted for Faculty salaries. We hope that this proposal will be the basis for further negotiations.

The Employer has tabled a several ambitious proposals calling on us to make concessions. They have proposed to roll back some of the most significant improvements the FA made in the last round, such as seniority for part-time sessionals, and have also proposed radical changes to other longstanding articles. For example, in the area of Discipline, the Employer seeks, among other things, to revise the Emergency Powers provisions in such a way that the President's powers are very significantly broadened. Specifically, they propose that "The President may exercise discretion" to suspend a member if the President has reasonable grounds to believe that actions of a Member could "result in harm to the reputation of the University, another person or to the University property." Needless to say, there are proposals now on the table to which your bargaining team could never agree.

We remember constantly your mandate to us: that we achieve sector-norm salaries without compromising the sector-norm non-monetary terms and conditions of work that you already have. Your unanimous endorsement of that mandate helps us greatly in the negotiating room. The Employer's team has listened carefully when we explain the rationale behind our proposals, and when we respond to their proposals. They have listened when we told them that we have a firm mandate from our membership. And so the Employer has already abandoned some of its proposals quickly after hearing our objections. So, at this time we still



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harbor cautious optimism that the robust discussions that have been occurring at the table will conclude in a timely renewal of the collective agreement. But it is crucial for you to know that the Employer is still making concessionary demands at the table, and it remains essential that you stay alert to future bargaining updates. Our ability to negotiate a fair agreement on your behalf depends upon your continued support and vigilance.

On 24 May, the Faculty Association Executive will meet at a day-long retreat. At that time they will have the opportunity to discuss the course of negotiations.

Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator

and the rest of the team:

Jacqueline Holler

Umesh Parshotam

Matt Reid

Donna Sindaco

Stephen Rader (*ex officio*).

