

REPORT ON BARGAINING

SIAST Academic Bargaining Unit

November 2006

By October 24, the eleven days we had spent in negotiations with the employer had yielded very little of substance. SIAST refused to outline their complete position, which does not facilitate a constructive bargaining process. In an effort to move bargaining forward, the union requested mediation. Fred Cuddington, a well-known mediator, brought the parties together in Saskatoon on November 9 and 10, with talks adjourning at midnight on November 10.

During mediation, the employer tabled language, in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement, which, at best, we would characterize as regressive. SIAST intends to significantly increase the number of casual employees while, at the same time, limit the rights of this expanded component of our workforce under the terms of the collective agreement. The remaining part-time and end-dated employees would no longer have access to the bumping process, thereby limiting their ability to retain employment, and they would not have access to severance upon layoff. Other concessional language would limit the mobility of our full-time employees within the organization. Additional employer-proposed language would give SIAST the unfettered right to move employees in and out of the scope of the collective agreement.

The employer also submitted language that we believe demonstrates a total disregard for the union's role within the workplace. SIAST proposes that employees no longer have access to expedited processes in non-appointment or bump disputes. Rather, the employer could potentially drag disputes out indefinitely and/or hire lawyers to defend SIAST's position in all disputes. The union's right to attend to and represent our membership in any and all aspects of the hiring process would be eliminated. As well, the amount of employer-paid release time for the campus chairs to attend to their co-workers problems would be slashed by half.

During mediation, we presented management with three successive draft Memorandums of Agreement. Each one represented a step back from the membership's direction at our Proposals Conference. We proposed a three year wage package of 8.5%, 0.5% plus COLA, 0.5% plus COLA, and that the educational supplements be leveled out and set at \$4,000, \$8,000, \$12,000 and \$32,000.

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We also put forward a Continuous Bargaining clause to protect us in the event another unit later makes gains above our settlement. We countered management's offer of a 5 day posting window with 7 days. We offered letters of agreement regarding Representative Workforce and a Union Management Committee. We addressed recruitment and retention in the following ways:

- supervisory and extension stipends were increased substantially
- a new step would be added to the pay grid valued at 5% for members with 15 or more years of service
- there would be a \$2,500 bonus for 20 years of service
- the allotment to Succession Planning would be doubled, as would the payout
- the Professional Development fund would see similar increases, and
- PEPP would increase to 7% matched and PSSP would increase by 2% matched.

On November 9, the government handed down a mandate of 9.5% over three years. Initially SIAST offered us 2%, 2%, and 2%. A successive offer yielded 3.0%, 2.5%, and 2.5%, but with no significant movement away from their extensive package of "take away" language. Clearly the employer is attempting to force the membership to buy back the concessions by accepting a minimal monetary package.

On November 20, the Negotiating Committee met with the Academic Steering Group in Saskatoon to provide an update on the bargaining and mediation process. The Negotiating Committee received direction to pursue the mediation process further while meeting with the membership to provide updates and solicit feedback. Meetings at the four campuses have been scheduled as follows:

November 28	Kelsey Campus, Lecture Theater (Room 104) 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
November 29	Woodland Campus, Academic Center (Room 120) 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
November 30	Palliser Campus, Macoun Meeting Room (3.213.05) 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
December 1	Wascana Campus (Room 155) 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Because bargaining has reached a critical phase, it is imperative that the Negotiating Committee receive your input. **Please make every effort to attend the membership meeting held at your campus.**

In solidarity

SAIST Academic Negotiating Committee

Jim Steele	Chairperson
Cheryl Solonenko	Wascana Campus
Jim Marcia	Palliser Campus
Bentley Wiebe	Woodland Campus
Garry Ramage	Kelsey Campus