

Regional Colleges/Northlands College Bargaining Unit

April 24, 2013

Bargaining Update

The Regional Colleges began the bargaining process in mid-November of 2012; while Northlands College began during the first week of February 2013. Both groups have completed their non-monetary bargaining at separate tables (Regional Colleges finished in mid-January; and, Northlands the first week of February). During the non-monetary bargaining, there were no significant changes but both parties did work on clarifying language or developing language to clarify current practices or intent.

Both bargaining units then converged to bargain monetary items, such as wages and benefits, at one common table. This process began on February 27th when we met jointly to exchange monetary proposals with the employers. Unfortunately, monetary bargaining has not been overly successful to date.

Regional and Northlands Colleges staff take pride in the services we provide, the communities in which we provide them, and the students that we help prepare to enter the workforce or further their academics. These services add value to the Saskatchewan economy and society and we were trusting that this value would equate to a respectful offer in wage increases.

Unfortunately, the current bargaining environment is very challenging for all working people and our experience as we approached the monetary bargaining has been nothing less than frustrating. The employers have proposed significant changes to our collective agreement, particularly in areas of union involvement and staffing. Further, the employers have not been willing to enter into meaningful discussions on most of the proposals that were brought forth by our membership.

In March, the two bargaining committees met to review all proposals to try to figure out a method to move bargaining forth. As a part of this methodology, we brought together a focus group consisting of various stewards from all colleges on April 11th to have an open discussion forum on where we are and the issues that exist moving forward and to give the members a forum in which they could express their desires and concerns as well. After this meeting, the two bargaining committees met again to review comments from the meeting and develop a bargaining strategy to move toward meaningful bargaining.

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Your bargaining committees want to sincerely thank the focus group attendees for their candor and comments. This process has given us more direction in terms of what we hope to achieve and what our membership is will likely support as we work towards a new bargaining agreement. Next bargaining dates are set to begin May 1st and both parties have indicated their intentions to stay throughout that week and into the weekend, if required, to work towards an agreement.

Health & Welfare Trust

The SGEU Director of Disability Services, the Chair of the Health & Welfare Trust Committee, along with a representative from Blue Cross met with the April 11th focus group and gave an excellent presentation regarding the Trust, how it is set up, and the pros and cons about being a member of the Trust.

Grievance Report

There are currently 19 active grievances in the Colleges/Northlands College. Of these, one in particular is a policy grievance filed in the Regional Colleges. As each College is individually certified, a separate grievance was filed at each College which while it increases the number of grievances, is actually a single issue. There are two grievances which will be heard at arbitration this upcoming fall. One relates to hours of work at Parkland College and the other is a staffing grievance at Southeast College. The other grievances are moving through the grievance process as we work towards resolving them.

SGEU Assignment Changes

SGEU has done some re-organizing of Labour Relations Officer assignments. Audrey Yaremy has been assigned to grievances and dealing with member issues for Northlands College. Kathy Mahussier has been assigned to the Regional Colleges with other Labour Relations Officers Audrey Yaremy and Kathy Cook assisting in grievance administration in some Colleges to offset some of the work load.

Contact: Kathy Mahussier at kmahussier@sgeu.org or 306.635-9375

Contact: Audrey Yaremy at ayaremy@sgeu.org or 306.764.1202

SGEU 100th Birthday Celebration

SGEU officially turned 100 years old on February 21, 2013. The SGEU is celebrating this milestone of worker solidarity at Convention 2013 in Regina on April 25, 26 & 27th. We thank each and every one of you for being a part of our organization!

Labour law changes will hurt you and your family

Labour laws should make life better – not worse – for working families.

But government's plan to overhaul all of the province's labour legislation will make life tougher for Saskatchewan workers - union and non-union alike.

Under the proposed *Saskatchewan Employment Act* (Bill 85), many SGEU members are at risk of losing the rights and benefits of belonging to a union.

By declaring that many common job duties are 'confidential', the proposed changes could force hundreds of members out of their union.

Normally, only high-level managers and confidential employees - who have access to labour relations information - are excluded from the right to belong to a union. But the proposed changes mean that anyone who has anything to do with —

- budget planning or implementation
- policy advice, or
- business strategic planning

— could lose their right to belong to SGEU, or any other union.

Supervisors forced out

Another proposed change means that any employee with any supervisory duties can be forced out of the bargaining unit they currently belong to. Hundreds of SGEU members could lose the stability and strength of their existing bargaining unit. They would have to form their own - much smaller - unit.

Seniority, benefits, and other union rights will be up for grabs.

The fairness and balance we have counted on for decades in Saskatchewan workplaces is about to be disrupted. More power is being shifted into the hands of employers. Workers without the protection of a union, many of them young and inexperienced, will not have the workplace rights we have always relied on.

Non-union workers stand to lose the eight-hour work day, the 40-hour work week, overtime pay, and two consecutive days off. Changes to the rules governing employment standards will make life more difficult for non-union workers – less time for families, less control over work schedules, less pay for longer hours of work.

Send a message: Visit www.TheSaskway.ca for more information and to send a message to Labour Minister Don Morgan, and your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

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