



NEGOTIATIONS NEWSLETTER # 1

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Date: June 28, 2006
To: VCCFA Members
From: VCCFA Negotiating Committee

Communication

Your input is very important to us, so there will be newsletters, meetings, and drop-ins in the fall. If you or your department would like to meet with us, please contact a member of the committee or the union office. There will be a number of important meetings concerning negotiations in the fall and we hope you will be there to support us and help make the right decisions to protect and improve our working conditions.

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Malcolm Cant, CACE	443-8438
Mark Goertz, Library	871-7183
Ingrid Kolsteren, Union Office	688-6210
Karen Shortt, Office and Legal Admin	443-8525/8639
Rose-Marie Watson, CPE	871-7280

Bargaining Preparation

First of all, as your newly elected negotiating committee, we would like to thank you for taking the time to let us know your issues and concerns. We have been busy starting the information gathering process in order to put together our package of demands.

This involves:

- meeting with individuals, groups and departments, so far over 12 departments
- provincial and local meetings to strategize and organize bargaining issues
- reviewing collective agreement issues, grievances, and ongoing union issues
- reviewing left-over issues from the last round
- analyzing the survey results

With over 130 returned surveys, the response to the Preliminary Survey was very positive, and the results have provided us with some useful data. The results indicated the following important issues, not listed in any priority:

Salary	Non Regular rights
IRA Release	Working Conditions and Rights
Retirement	Job Security
Benefits	Pension Protection

Since the survey was concerned with identifying potential common issues, they have been forwarded to the bargaining conferences and are in the mix of potential issues.

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Common Table Issues

We have attended two conferences with other FPSE locals to discuss how best to proceed with bargaining common issues. Common table bargaining is a complex process, involving many compromises and much back and forth. Last round there were some issues which we had hoped would have come out differently. This time, we have flagged those from the start; furthermore, we have been instrumental in extending the discussions within our Federation and in proposing a form of association with other locals and unions which we believe will lead to an improved process. These preliminary discussions will end in September at the next conference. We will be bringing the results with our recommendation back to the membership for discussion and decision.

So far, FPSE talks have identified the following groups of potential Common Table issues:

- Job Security, including layoff and non-regular issues
- Salary increase
- Local pot of money to address local issues
- Improvements to benefits package
- PD Funds increase
- Leaves and Release Time improvements
- Academic Freedom – improved language and protection

The Bargaining Climate

This round of bargaining is likely to be a lot shorter than the last round, (not that it could be much longer). Recent settlements in the public sector and media reports show that the provincial government is interested in having labour peace until after the 2010 Olympics and provincial election. To this end, it is offering a signing incentive for those unions which complete their negotiations by the end of their current term and agree to other conditions such as not taking any job action. Our current collective agreement expires on March 31, 2007.

Although there is a lot of pressure on public sector unions, ourselves included, to settle their agreements in a timely manner, your negotiating committee will do everything possible to ensure we also achieve the best agreement for our members.

Two 2006-10 settlements in our sector, at Langara and Fraser Valley, have seen "base" amounts of 2.1% per year, with some acknowledgment that there may be further increases when the bulk of faculty bargain in 2007.

In the past several rounds of bargaining we have been bargaining provincially as part of a common table as well as locally with our college administration.

Two bargaining conferences with others in our Federation have helped prepare for a similar approach in 2007. After the next conference in September, we anticipate that we will have a set of proposals to bring back to the membership. The proposals will include both issues, what we bargain, and process, how we bargain.

Have a nice summer and we will see you in the fall.