



NEGOTIATIONS

NEWSLETTER #10

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COMMON TABLE BARGAINING STALLS

The union negotiators at the common table (MID) presented a package proposal to the employers on February 2 in the hope of getting an agreement. Our package contains demands in four areas.

Job Security: no layoffs for the term of the agreement; mandatory offering of voluntary severance in the event of a layoff; and increased severance.

Equity Issues: no caps or bars on the salary scale; improved regularization procedures; and the right of first refusal to term instructors.

Working Conditions: language to address academic freedom and personal harassment; working conditions for instructors involved in international education or online courses; and an increase in professional development funds.

Compensation: improved medical benefits for instructors and retirees; and a salary increase.

On the last point, we are proposing a general wage increase that would result in a top step of \$80,000 by the end of a three-year term (ie. March 31, 2007). This would bring us into line with salaries already in place for top-paid college instructors in B.C. but still be substantially below salaries for top-paid instructors in Ontario and Alberta.

The employers countered our package on February 3. They did not budge on any of the issues mentioned above. Their proposal continues to be a two-year offer with zero compensation gains and nothing substantial on any of the non-compensation issues. They verbally said there could be some "exploration" of money in a third year and some PD funding, but right now these can only be seen as vague promises. **Unless the employers table a substantially different offer, an agreement is unlikely.**

LOCAL BARGAINING BEGINS

On the local front, we have, after much delay, begun talks with the College. We exchanged proposals on February 28 and will be bargaining over the next couple of weeks. Here is a summary of our demands:

Job Security

- Improvements to layoff and recall language
- Better conditions for instructors with non-traditional contracts (e.g. instructors with less than 50% ongoing work)
- Voluntary departure incentives

Salary

- Establishing fixed initial salary placement criteria
- Additional progression on scale (e.g. for upgraded educational qualifications)

Benefits

- More flexible renewal and retirement preparation leaves with higher stipend
- A minimum number of early retirement incentives per year.

Working Conditions & Rights

- Replacements for instructors on PD
- Minimum number of prep days
- Greater faculty involvement in college matters e.g. development of facilities and equipment/curriculum development/access to financial information
- Development of a process to deal with student complaints
- Increase in the number of counsellors and librarians
- Professional fees

Other

- There are a number of other important items.

THE COLLEGE'S PROPOSALS

The College's package is wide-ranging and includes the following:

- Deletion of term "area" and of the list of areas; greater role of management in determining areas and hiring criteria (This has significant implications for hiring, regularization, transfers and layoffs.)
- Increasing the number of assigned duty hours for counsellors and librarians from 25 to 35.
- "Discussion" of use of PD funds
- Inclusion of CUPE representatives on selection committees for IRAs
- Giving administrators the right to return to teaching positions at any time without loss of seniority
- Reallocation of release time for IRAs with no increase in total amount
- There are other issues that we need to fully assess

These are concessionary demands, and we will be challenging them. Talks so far have been respectful, and we have made progress on a number of housekeeping issues and two minor but substantive ones. The goal, of course, is to reach agreement, and we will have to bridge a wide gap between us. They have already told us that a number of our demands involve compensation, for which their mandate is - you guessed it - zero.

As noted above, key issues of job security, money and working conditions remain unresolved at the common table. We should be able to determine within the next couple of weeks whether a settlement is possible. **If not, we will be asking you for your support in the form of a strike vote.** Almost all the FPSE locals on the Bargaining Council have successfully conducted the "vote to vote" that we had at our January Special Meeting. These are Malaspina, Douglas, Selkirk, Northwest, North Island, College of the Rockies, Nicola Valley, Capilano, Emily Carr and the VCCFA. Malaspina has already taken a strike vote and has a mandate to take job action. Capilano will be taking a strike vote on March 7.

We ask for your support: it's vital. If you have any questions, please contact one of the members of the negotiating committee listed below. You will be hearing from us soon.

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Linda Sperling (Federation of Post-Secondary Educators – spokesperson)		

P.S. Copies of the VCCFA and the College's proposals are posted on the union's website www.vccfa.ca.