



NEGOTIATIONS

NEWSLETTER #13

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TENTATIVE AGREEMENT REACHED AT COMMON TABLE

A tentative agreement was reached between FPSE locals and the College employers' group on Friday, March 18th.

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The main elements of the agreement are as follows:

- A three-year term from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2007
- Salary (see attached Appendix A, Option 1 and Option 2)
 1. An option to add 2% to all steps on the scale no later than August 1, 2005.

(See attached #1 Stipend) Each local has the option to receive a stipend that adds 2% to all steps in exchange for negotiated transfers (also called "savings offsets") in both the Common Agreement and our local agreement. We anticipate that most of the transfers would have to come from local agreement provisions that are underutilized and have less value to members than a stipend that would be treated as salary for all purposes (including pension contributions, future increases, and taxes).

If members chose this option, we would negotiate with the College as to how to achieve these transfers. If agreement could not be reached, the matter would be arbitrated and resolved within 40 days.

2. 3.3% added to the top of the scale as a new step on April 1, 2006. (This means moving from a ten-step to an eleven-step scale.)
 3. The difference, if any, between 1.5% and the total salary increase of any BC faculty collective agreement for the 2006-2007 fiscal year added to the top step effective April 1, 2006. (See notes in Appendix A)
- Improved menu of labour adjustment strategies (but no mandatory offering of voluntary severance)
 - Provisions to address the working conditions of instructors delivering distributed learning and international education i.e. outside Canada.
 - Compassionate care leave of up to 8 weeks, with benefits, to care for gravely ill family members.
 - A deferred salary leave plan
 - Bridging of benefits from the time of retirement to the commencement of benefits under the Pension Plan (maximum 90 days)
 - .6% of faculty salary added to our current PD funds (about .5%)

PROCESS (see attachment #2 Provision for Ratification)

We will be holding a ratification vote at the following time and location:

**Special General Meeting
Croatian Cultural Centre
Room B
3:00 pm
Thursday, March 31, 2005
Interpreters will be provided**

We will be voting on the following:

- A. Acceptance or rejection of the tentative agreement described above.
- B. (Only if the agreement is accepted) Whether members want to receive a 2% stipend in exchange for negotiated savings offsets.

Local Bargaining

Although we are scheduled to meet with the College on March 29, 30 and 31, it is unlikely that we will have concluded local bargaining before the ratification vote. An acceptance of the tentative agreement would mean that local bargaining would continue after the vote. Any unresolved local issues, including the negotiation of a stipend, would be subject to final and binding arbitration. **There will be no separate vote on local items.** It may seem daunting to ratify in advance an outcome that is unknown. While we cannot provide a guarantee, we have faith in the arbitration process and have an understanding that there will be no local concessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We cannot say that we are pleased with the tentative agreement. We did not make real gains in the important areas of job security and equity. A number of other important items, such as early retirement incentives and increased release for IRAs, are also missing from the offer. The salary increase in the third year is not equitable. The process for resolving local issues and the stipend question is not risk-free. On the other hand, we were able to bring up our top step by a significant amount, and there is the potential to give everybody a lift in the second year. We also expect that the potential arbitration process for local bargaining will be conducted fairly and consistently. This deal is, as the saying goes, the best we could do under the circumstances.

**The Negotiating Committee recommends acceptance
of the employers' offer.**

Stipend

The 2% stipend is the only way to provide a salary increase for members at all steps on the scale. The committee believes that money can be reallocated in the Collective Agreement in a way that is not too painful. In considering areas for transfer, the committee wants to minimize negative impact on members

and students. These are possible areas from which 2% could be transferred (there may be others):

- PD Funds – both the VCCFA and the adjudicated PD funds, and the new PD money
- Education Leaves
- Sick Leave – maximum accumulation and accrual rate

As with local issues, the negotiation/arbitration process for resolving the stipend issue means taking a risk because the arbitrator may transfer items we don't agree with. Based on our study of the Collective Agreement and the experience of other public sector unions, we think the risk is small.

It has been difficult for the Negotiating Committee to make a recommendation regarding the stipend. Members are, of course, free to accept or reject our position.

The Negotiating Committee recommends that the VCCFA participate in the stipend/transfer process.

DROP-IN SESSIONS

The Negotiating Committee is holding drop-in sessions to answer members' questions about the offer.

<p>Wednesday, March 23rd</p> <p>City Centre – 11:00 am - 2:00 pm (Faculty lounge)</p> <p>King Edward Campus – 11:30 am – 1:30 pm and 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm (VCCFA Office)</p> <p>International Education – 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm</p>
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Please feel free to contact members of the negotiating committee. Thank you for your support.

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