

StFX Association of University Teachers take to the picket lines in legal strike action

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The StFX Association of University Teachers (AUT) began legal strike action today after eight months of talks with the University Administration yielded no settlement.

“High quality education for students at StFX is our priority,” said Peter McInnis, president of the StFX AUT. “Although we regret the impact of the labour disruption on students, by exercising our democratic right to strike, the Association hopes to avoid the further erosion of the quality of education at StFX in the long-term, and to ensure a fair and equitable settlement for our diverse membership.”

The Association represents over 400 members in eight different employee groups engaged in teaching and research at StFX. Over one-third are vulnerable due to precarious, limited-term contracts with limited or no benefits. Dispelling the argument that its members all make high salaries, the AUT reports that members who fall within this vulnerable group make on average \$25,000 per year, receive no health benefits, and are only employed on eight month contracts. “We cannot accept the broad disparities the Administration is trying to impose on us that would compromise the academic mission of this institution by undermining job security for academic staff,” said McInnis.

The AUT’s proposal hoped to rectify this disparity by asking for reasonable salary increases, on par with other regional and national settlements for academic staff, as well as modest improvements to health benefits, pensions, and the provision of professional development funds, a standard benefit for academic staff across the country. The Association also asked for modest contract length extensions for employee groups on less than full year contracts. However, the administration’s offer to date is below recent Atlantic university settlements and well below the cost-of-living.

The Administration has also ignored creative solutions from the union which would cover the cost of the union's demands.

The AUT will remain on strike until the Administration accepts its invitation to return to the negotiating table. “The Association remains committed to achieving a fair and equitable settlement at the bargaining table,” McInnis said.

Details of the AUT position and bargaining updates are available at www.stfxaut.ca; or contact the AUT Strike Headquarters located at the Antigonish Mall (735-3261).