

# BARGAINING BULLETIN



Welcome to the third Bargaining Bulletin. We would like to take this opportunity to reintroduce the AUT Negotiating Team as we welcome our members to a new semester. Chief negotiator, Dr. Brad Long (Associate Professor, Business Administration), along with Ms. Sherry Bowman (Clinical Associate, Nursing) and Mr. Bruce Sparks (Part-time Instructor, Art History), represent the AUT at the bargaining table. The Negotiating Team has now completed two rounds of bargaining with the University's negotiating team. We met from July 16<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> and from August 7<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> for a total of 23 meetings. We were able to honour our mutual agreement to have all proposals tabled by August 17<sup>th</sup>, with the understanding that salary and pension

specific items would be tabled at a later date. The Administration came close to honouring this agreement as well, but has indicated that they still have several significant proposals left to table when we resume our talks in September. Also, the Academic Skills Instructors at the Writing Centre are now members of our Association and specific language for them will be tabled on September 10<sup>th</sup>, our next scheduled meeting. We have planned to meet three times a week from that date onward.

Although a small number have been signed off, most of the proposals from both sides remain on the table. All of our proposals were tabled with a clear statement of the principle upon which each is based. We feel that we have made some strong proposals motivated by concerns of

equity and fairness, the importance of providing resources to enhance academic work, and the logic that job satisfaction and morale in some cases demand improvements to the working terms and conditions for numerous groups within our membership.

To date, relations at the table have been cordial with a great deal of discussion on most issues. On the other hand, every proposal that we make is immediately scrutinized for its financial implications and from the very first day the University has made it clear that they will resist any increase in costs. They have said that they will provide a detailed report on University finances at the September meetings, yet Dean van den Hoogen has already stated that the University's financial status is "dire." We feel that this is a product of a failure in planning and a failure to properly allocate available resources, and not a product of our Collective Agreement. Needless to say, we will be strenuously resisting their approach.

As you may know already, at the last meeting the University informed us that it would not be

**Stay tuned: There will be a general meeting of the StFXAUT on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The Executive will update members on the latest collective bargaining news.**

instituting step increases on September 1<sup>st</sup> as the contract requires. After consulting with the Association lawyer and with CAUT, our Association has insisted that the University withdraw from this position. CAUT has further advised us to file a grievance against such a clear violation of the Collective Agreement and labour law.

Most of you have also seen the University's posting of salaries over \$100,000 as required by the Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act. Unfortunately, this information may be construed as evidence that our members are sufficiently well paid. We should keep in mind, for ourselves and for the public, that only about 25% of our members exceed \$100,000

and only about 12% exceed \$120,000; and this is for highly qualified professionals after decades of achievement and service to the University. Conversely, about 20% of our members are part-time and rarely make even \$20,000 per year. Also, many employment contracts are for terms of less than twelve months, including almost all Lab Instructors and Academic Skills Instructors for example, and so posted salaries for these members are pro-rated. Finally, almost every measure of parity indicates that our salaries still lag far behind other Canadian universities.

Clearly we have a difficult job ahead of us and we are

grateful for our members' continuing support and suggestions. Particularly, after this stage in negotiations, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Handbook Committee and their seemingly endless meetings and document production, and to thank our research assistant for keeping it all straight.

Looking ahead, we are preparing to head back to the table in September. In addition, we look forward to a report from ANSUT in early September that compares the sizes of University administrations in Nova Scotia and reveals their respective consumption of financial resources.

## Effect of notice to commence bargaining

35 Where notice to commence collective bargaining has been given under Section 33 or Section 34 or in accordance with a collective agreement which provides for the revision of a provision of the agreement....

*(b) the employer shall not, without consent by the certified or recognized bargaining agent or by the Board, increase or decrease rates of wages or alter any other term or condition of employment of employees in relation to whom notice to bargain has been given until*

(i) a new collective agreement has been concluded, or

(ii) the bargaining agent and the employer or representatives authorized by them in that behalf, have bargained collectively and have failed to conclude a collective agreement,

and either

(iii) a conciliation officer has been appointed and has failed to bring about an agreement between the parties and fourteen days have elapsed from the date on which the report of the conciliation officer was made to the Minister, or

(iv) a conciliation board has been appointed to endeavour to bring about agreement between them and seven days have elapsed from the date on which the report of the conciliation board was received by the Minister. *R.S., c. 475, s. 35.*

*Nova Scotia Trade Union Act (<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/tradeun.htm>)*