

# BARGAINING BULLETIN



At StFX, Academic Staff compensation stands in stark contrast to ever-expanding Administrative cost. We remain well behind all comparator groups, and each year we fail to keep pace, the gap in lifetime earnings grows larger. Currently, the gap in lifetime earnings for a 30-year career between StFX and our regional comparator group stands at 2.55% (source: Salary & Benefits Committee, StFXAUT). Meanwhile, the cost of living in Nova Scotia continues to rise as evident in the 3.8% increase to the consumer price index (CPI) in 2011 (source: Statistics Canada). “Economists are projecting an increase of at least 2.5 per cent in the CPI in 2012” (source: Chronicle Herald, April 4, 2012). In sum, it costs us more to live each year, and each year that our earnings fail to match the growing CPI, the less real income we earn.

We must remind ourselves and everyone else that steps do not represent salary increases since we operate under a deferred salary system. Academic Staff do not earn compensation in keeping with

our job responsibilities and qualifications until we have put in a substantial number of years on the job sufficient to reach the upper levels of rank and salary. These upper levels impact only a small proportion of our members. At the low end of the scale, are Lab Instructors and Academic Skills Instructors. Very few lab instructors have twelve-month terms despite many of these members having been on continuing appointments for 10+ years. No Academic Skills Instructors have terms longer than 8 months.

Our benefits package is also substandard. A defined benefit pension would typically cost an employer a contribution percentage level in the mid-teens to ensure the benefit obligation is properly funded. Our Administration has saved a substantial amount of pension expense by shifting over to defined contribution pension, with a contribution at only 8% of salary, and they further bear no risk for the fluctuating value of the funds. Members have seen a real decline in the coverage provided as the costs

of health related goods and services have continued to increase while the maximum payments have remained stagnant for several years. For example, the maximum coverage for orthopedic footwear and supplies is \$40 in a calendar year when one pair of orthotics costs between \$200 and \$300. Eye care coverage for lenses, frames, and contact lenses is maximum \$250 every 24 months when the cost is commonly greater than \$400 for lenses & frames. This maximum amount has not changed in at least 10 years while prices have continued to increase. Hospitalization coverage has been reduced; two years ago our plan covered a private room. The current plan only covers semi-private room accommodation.

The benefits plan does not even adhere to the language in the *Second Collective Agreement*, which states, “All full-time eligible members are enrolled in the health, dental and emergency travel plan.” (source: *Second Collective Agreement*, p. 32). Instead, the *Summary of Benefits* states, “Medavie Blue Cross will at no time provide coverage for more than one spouse under the same plan.” (source: *StFX AUT Summary of Benefits and Pension plan AUT and Non-union*, p. 18).

# Comparator Benefits

In order to clarify the gap that exists between the StFXAUT and Academic Staff at other institutions, we have included an overview of some of the benefits enjoyed by our regional and national comparators.

## INSURANCE

At MSVU, \$1,500 per member is paid into a BeneFlex Health Plan.

Basic Life Insurance Premiums at MtA are 100% paid by the employer.

The long-term disability Insurance at Acadia is 100% paid by Employer.

StFX has no flexible health spending benefit, and employer pays 50% of basic life insurance premiums.

## PD/TRAVEL

Professional development and travel funding for Clinical Associates at UPEI is \$1200 per year. It can accumulate & carry forward.

Bishops provides \$750 per year in professional development funding for ALL employees (pro rated for 24 credit load).

Most groups at STFX have no designated PD fund, and there is no pro-rated fund for part-time academic staff.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Recreation/fitness facilities passes at Acadia and MSVU are 100% paid by employer for all employees.

Recreation/fitness facilities passes at MSVU cost \$75 per year for all employees.

StFX covers 50% of annual fee for recreation/fitness facilities.

Acadia allocates \$100,000 for childcare spaces/subsidies.

StFX allocates no spaces or subsidies for childcare.

Moving expenses at MtA: \$10,000 reimbursed for each full-time position.

Moving expenses at StFX paid to maximum 1/12 annual salary or Faculty/Librarians. Expenses for other groups in AUT not specified.

## TUITION

All employees get a 75% discount on tuition at MtA.

All members, spouses and dependents get a 100% discount on tuition at Bishop's.

At StFX, members receive 100% tuition credit up to max of 12/year. For member's child, 50% tuition credit with a number of restrictions; where both parents eligible only one tuition benefit payable per child; for member's spouse 50% tuition credit with a number of restrictions.

## LEAVES

Parental leave at Bishops is 32-35 weeks at 100% salary including EI contribution.

Parental leave at MtA is 30-35 weeks at 95% of salary including EI contribution (same at StFX).

Bereavement leave at MtA is 10 days (only 5 at StFX).

Adoptive leave at MtA is 30 weeks (only 17 at StFX)

Sick leave at Acadia, MtA, and Bishops is 6 months (only 105 days at StFX).

## LAB INSTRUCTORS

A seniority list for Lab Instructors is maintained at MtA.