



# Bargaining Bulletin

The *Third Collective Agreement* between the Board of Governors of St. Francis Xavier University and the StFXAUT expired as of June 30, 2016. Prior to its expiration, we provided notice of the intent to engage in collective bargaining with a view to negotiate the next collective agreement. In late April 2016, we struck a Negotiation Committee which consists of Dr. Ken MacAulay (Faculty-Accounting), Chief Negotiator, Dr. Christie Lomore (Faculty-Psychology) and Kris Hunter (Lab Instructor-Biology). The university's administration also struck a negotiation team: Andrew Beckett (Vice President, Finance & Administration), Chief Negotiator, Dr. Petra Hauf (Dean of Science) and Jennifer Swinemar-Murray (Director, Human Resources).

## Consultation Process:

In preparation for negotiation, we engaged in broad consultation in various forms with our members. The purpose of consultation is to allow for the identification of issues that should be addressed in the negotiation process. Consultation allows our members to have a voice in the process, it allows our Executive committee to consider the various priorities of our members, and it allows our Negotiation Committee to prepare appropriate proposals for negotiation to address those priorities.

The various forms of consultation included two online surveys, which invited our members to identify and prioritize issues, meetings with our various member groups for more specific discussions of priorities, discussions with our Executive Committee members, the Chief Grievance Officer, etc. Our Contract and Benefits Committee conducted the two online surveys, collected data and language from various sources including comparators' collective agreements on a large set of issues, and more recently collected data specific to the requests of our Negotiation Committee. Fueled with the information from the surveys and data collection, our Negotiation Committee met with our Chief Grievance Officer to better understand issues in the collective agreement that concern our Grievance Committee and ultimately our members and also met with members of the Executive committee to identify additional issues voiced by our members for consideration. Finally, our Negotiation Committee organized a series of meetings to receive direct input from our various member groups.

Based on that extensive consultation process, our Negotiation

## Glossary of Terms

In the interest of transparency and clarity, short definitions of bargaining terms have been included in this Bargaining Bulletin and will also be included in future issues. A full glossary of terms will be made available on the StFXAUT website.

Below are two terms relevant to the various stages of negotiation:

**Good Faith Bargaining** means that both parties must be sincere in their attempts to reach an agreement. This includes meeting with the other side and making every reasonable effort to conclude an agreement. The bargaining process calls for a certain amount of give and take. Failure to agree with the other side's bargaining demands does not, in itself, mean that a party is not bargaining in good faith. However, a deliberate strategy by either party to prevent reaching an agreement is considered to be bad faith bargaining.

Committee prepared a set of proposal for presentation to the university administration. The issues identified across all groups of our members were consultation, workload, equity and compensation.

### **Negotiations in Process:**

As a preliminary stage of the negotiating process, a negotiation protocol was signed. We believe that initial signs for this round of negotiations are positive. In the negotiating protocol, the university's administration agreed to provide step increases to our members in July and September. As the *Third Collective Agreement* has expired, the administration would not be obliged to grant those step increases. However, in doing so, we believe that the administration has signaled the potential for a collegial and respectful bargaining process, and they have also distanced themselves from the approach of the previous administration, which refused to grant the step increases. Furthermore, we interpret the fact that the administration agreed to deliver a complete set of proposals on July 8, 2016 as another positive sign that the administration is committed to bargaining seriously and in good faith. The negotiation protocol discussion included the scheduling of meetings throughout July and August. The next negotiation meeting is scheduled for the end of July 2016.

On Friday, July 8, 2016, we exchanged initial proposals with the university's administration. Once our Negotiation Committee has had sufficient time to digest the initial proposals and has received further details from the administration, we will update the membership. Given the present climate in the province and current budget deficits at StFX, we fully expect that bargaining will at times be hard and difficult. We are, however, cautiously optimistic that a serious and collegial effort on both sides should lead to a successful conclusion of the process by early fall.

### **On-Going Communication with Membership:**

As the negotiation progresses through its various stages, we will update our members periodically through both the Bargaining Bulletins and meetings of members to ensure that our membership remains informed. While striving for transparency, we must, of course, also respect the boundaries inherent in the negotiation process. Specifically, we must refrain from bargaining in public. We are committed to respecting this boundary, and we expect the same from the university's administration.

## Glossary of Terms (cont'd)

**Public Bargaining** means public disclosure of negotiation strategy or disclosure of offers and counter-offers of the possible terms of a collective bargaining agreement. Public bargaining can be construed as not bargaining in good faith, because it can hamper negotiators' ability to make strategic compromises. Those compromises are at the core of the negotiation process that leads to a collective bargaining agreement.

Please visit [www.stfxaut.ca](http://www.stfxaut.ca) for further information throughout the negotiation process.