

November 7, 2016

Important Bargaining Update: UMFA Responds to Latest Offer

Dear Members,

Following Thursday's conciliation session, the Administration promised to come back with some new ideas soon. Finally, on Sunday evening, Admin delivered its new proposal. This latest proposal offered:

- No salary increase;
- No improvements on job security; and
- No protection against arbitrary workload increases.

Administration has also moved backward by weakening proposals it had previously made on use of performance metrics.

The Administration proposed to provide a one-time \$1.5 million fund which could be used to employ graduate students to teach as instructors/lecturers; or to employ grad students as, for example, teaching assistants. The fund would provide a maximum of 1.5 hours per member per week at best. And it would expire in 18 months. And this measure would offer no protection against workload increases.

UMFA's Collective Agreement Committee met today at noon and unanimously agreed that this new offer is unacceptable because it fails to address the main bargaining priorities as expressed by our members. We will continue to bargain with the employer on our members' priorities. For your information, however, the full text of the Admin's offer is attached.

OUR PROPOSALS

Below are the main items that UMFA has proposed to the Administration, and which still remain outstanding.

Workload:

Protection against arbitrary workload increases is a top-of-mind concern for UMFA members. Last year Instructors in Arts had their workloads increased by 30% overnight. And members in all departments have found themselves with less time for classroom preparation and research as new administrative tasks have been imposed.

Administration continues to ignore members' voices on this issue. Last week, UMFA heard from Administration that they are skeptical of workload issues among professors and librarians. This was an insult and a somewhat shocking allegation at this late hour in negotiations. UMFA sent out a message asking members to document their workloads: thirty-six hours later the bargaining team presented 120 pages of single spaced text. Messages continue to come in from members describing their experiences with workload increases.

We have proposed a collegial process, based on the ones used at Queens, Brock, and Western. Under our proposal, changes to workload proposed by a Dean or Director must be ratified by UMFA members. This would protect members from potentially limitless, unilateral workload increases. It would not cost the university a cent. If agreement between UMFA members and the Dean or Director is not reached on the

first attempt, the Dean must continue working with their members on the establishment of an acceptable teaching responsibility policy. If agreement between the Dean or Director and UMFA Members cannot be reached after two attempts, the issue is referred to UMFA and the Vice-President (Academic). If agreement still cannot be reached, either party will have the right to refer the issue to arbitration.

While we agree that Admin should increase funding for markers and TAs, especially as enrollment grows, if Admin is serious about supporting students it should commit to this new funding to hire TAs and markers immediately -- without tying it to faculty bargaining.

We have also proposed protections on minimum class enrollment levels, course cancelation and teaching credit reductions, which are fundamental working-condition issues.

Performance Metrics: In its latest proposal, the Administration suggests that UMFA wants to outlaw the use of research metrics in assessing or evaluating members, such as during tenure and promotion applications. This is untrue. UMFA's proposal allows individual members to decide whether they want to include research metrics when they are evaluated. UMFA's proposal further states, "there shall be no requirement to submit such metrics," and that "there shall be no penalty for non-submission of such metrics." Under our proposed language, it would be perfectly permissible for a member to voluntarily and personally include research metrics among the materials on which they are evaluated.

Administrative Support: UMFA proposes that ongoing administrative support will be provided to members and guaranteed within the Collective Agreement. This support must provide assistance to members for travel booking and expense management systems (e.g. Concur). In contrast, the Administration proposes a Letter of Understanding declaring that it would make a one-time payment, which would fund unspecified supports and the implementation of recommendations provided by two committees and accepted by the Administration.

Job Security for Instructors and Librarians: UMFA called for specific provisions to improve job security for instructors and librarians in the Letter of Understanding on renewal, as well as specific security provisions.

Finally, after over 30 bargaining sessions, mediation and conciliation, UMFA's bargaining team has managed to secure tentative agreement on several of our proposals:

- Strengthened collegial process for tenure and promotion criteria;
- Re-signing of Letter of Understanding on University Renewal, which outline UMFA complement;
- Privacy;
- Confidentiality;
- No change parking rates

Picket lines and strike duty will continue as bargaining continues.

In solidarity,
Mark Hudson