

FAST FACTS



April 12, 2019

President's Message

The regular school year's coming to a close, and I want to take this opportunity to discuss some of the collective agreement negotiations that have recently occurred around the country.

Several faculty associations have narrowly averted strikes over the past year. While the key issues obviously varied from one institution to another, a common theme was associations fighting back against employers that offered protections or improvements to only a subset of association members. The strongest associations are those where all teaching faculty are in the bargaining unit, and in many cases wage improvements and other protections were being offered only to tenure and tenure track faculty.

It is interesting to speculate why employers offer a concession to only a subset of association members. It is obviously cheaper to provide something to only some members. But the employer could just as easily offer a slimmer concession to everyone, or could extend the concession to everyone for a relatively small additional cost. The real benefit to the employer is that these

actions divide Association members and turn them against each other, which provides a permanent advantage to the employer in future negotiations.

Back in 2016, our instructors and librarians were the backbone of our strike. They participated in large numbers, took on many additional duties at strike headquarters, and because many of our instructors teach a large number of sections with high enrolments, were a tremendous source of pressure to bring the employer to the table. There is no question that without the bargaining power brought to bear by this group, and their commitment to the cause, the strike either would have dragged on longer and/or our gains would have been less.

The lesson is that Associations only work if we maintain solidarity. Any offers that only cover a subset of members should be viewed with great skepticism, because they come at a high, but unknown, cost. The cost is the potential loss of support from your colleagues who may be less likely to fight for you when you need it, which may be some unspecified time in the future. Solidarity may sound like it is altruistic, but it is also grounded in survival and self-interest.

Please keep this in mind whenever you're in meetings with your colleagues, and insist that benefits and concessions be provided to everyone. Enjoy the fact that summer is just around the corner, and I hope to see all of you at our Annual General Meeting on May 29 at 2pm in the Marshall McLuhan Hall.

In solidarity,

Janet Morrill
