

# Collective Bargaining Update

## November 2006



Since the last Collective Bargaining Update in April 2006, the University Administration has continued negotiations with three of our four major unions. In this update, we will outline the progress to-date and some of the challenges we face as we work toward achieving a balance between the needs and expectations of employees and the strategic priorities and limited financial resources of the University. Outcomes of collective bargaining will play an important role in helping to shape our future success.

At each table, University representatives have taken a problem-solving approach and tabled a list of themes and interests for discussion. In an effort to ensure productive dialogue, we have identified priority areas and offered focused proposals to our issues as the Employer, while being respectful of the needs and wants of the staff represented by their unions.

Bargaining has been slow at all the tables. We have recently taken a critical look at the structure of our teams and the time we have committed to bargaining to improve our approach: we encourage the union teams to do the same.

### CUPE 1975 – Building on a Solid Foundation

We anticipate that collective bargaining with CUPE 1975, representing those with jobs in trades, clerical, general support, technical and some specialized areas, will begin soon. As of yet, we have not received notice to open bargaining. Once again, the University will be bargaining jointly with the CUPE locals at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. We will continue to focus on the good working relationship we have with CUPE at the University of Saskatchewan to continue the important work begun in our last round of collective bargaining.

### Sessional Lecturers (CUPE 3287) – Union Rejects Offer

CUPE 3287 represents about 400 Sessional lecturers across campus. The University had hoped to resolve all issues and reach an agreement with CUPE earlier this year. A final offer from the University was tabled in April 2006, after months of bargaining, because we believed an

agreement in principle had been reached. The major components of our offer included:

- A two year agreement with average salary increases of 2.8% effective September 1, 2005 and 2.7% September 1, 2006. The offer added a flat increase of \$180 to the stipend for Level I and Level II and \$400 for Level III in each of the two years of the contract
- A 1% increase in the employer matching contribution to retirement savings
- An increased investment in the Sessional Academic Participation/Professional Development Fund
- Introduction of a new fund to compensate members who participate on committees of Council
- An increase to the fund which supports Sessional executive members who participate in joint union/management meetings

CUPE 3287 rejected this offer and proceeded to table a three year deal which included average wage increases of 5.9%, 6.2% and 4.8% effective September 1, 2005/2006/2007. As well, the union proposed further discussion of a transition fund to support the hiring of Sessionals into academic appointments. The University does not support such a fund as it interferes with collegial recruitment processes for academic appointments. The bargaining teams met again on October 5, 2006 with no satisfactory outcomes.

### Administrative and Supervisory Personnel Association (ASPA) – Proposals Tabled

The Collective Agreement between ASPA and the University covers about 800 professional and technical staff across campus.

Representatives of the University and of ASPA began bargaining on May 12, 2005. Initially, the University attempted to engage in an interest-based approach with ASPA and tabled a list of themes and interests for discussion.

After 12 sessions, both parties felt that progress was slow given the eight months that had been invested. Together, we agreed to provide more specific proposals while still engaging in interest-based discussions.

In March 2006, changes were made to the representatives of the University bargaining team. The University tabled focused proposals that provided the Association with a better understanding of the University's interests.

Our proposals focused on the following key elements:

- Flexible alternatives to support recruitment, retention, restructuring and reassignment
- Revised and streamlined notice and severance provisions that reflect fairness, fiscal responsibility, and recognition of legal standards
- Provisions that ensure employer driven responsibilities and processes are not limited by the Collective Agreement, simplifying current bureaucratic processes
- Re-alignment of benefit programs to support healthy and productive work environments and eliminate the current benefit programs financial deficit, and ensure the plans are sustainable in the long-term

The University is now preparing to table a compensation proposal which will include strategies to realign the compensation model to support recruitment and retention goals and a high performance culture.

Bargaining resumed on October 5, 2006. During that meeting, ASPA confirmed there would be changes to their bargaining team. On October 31, 2006, ASPA provided the University team with a number of bargaining proposals.

Additional bargaining dates are scheduled for the balance of the year and we look forward to continuing discussions around all interests, issues and the University's proposals.

### University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association (USFA) – Bargaining Began May 2005

About 1,000 faculty members are covered by the Collective Agreement between the USFA and the University. USFA and the University have been bargaining since June 2005. After a year of bargaining, during which proposals were exchanged but little progress made, the parties took the

summer off to re-group. In September 2006, USFA delivered a new proposal to the University, which effectively "started over". In that spirit, the University has made a number of changes in its approach to bargaining, given the considerable time invested to-date without reaching agreement. This includes a commitment to more bargaining time and changes to the bargaining team. USFA's proposals are being considered against the University's strategic bargaining interests which were introduced to USFA early in the process:

- Streamlined and improved processes through a reduction of bureaucratic complexities
- Increased flexibility and remove barriers to support recruitment and retention and academic priorities and plans
- Compensation and rewards to ensure competitive salaries and benefits which support the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty

### Summary

Our collective bargaining agenda is, as you can see, rather busy. We are committed to fair and forthright negotiations with all our unions. We are determined to arrive at effective collective agreements which support the continued progress of the University. This involves lots of hard work and personal commitment. Thank you, on behalf of the University, to those involved in collective bargaining.