

CUPE Local 32876 Collective Bargaining Update – March 16, 2007

Since our last published update there has been some significant developments at the CUPE Local 3287 (Sessional Lecturers) bargaining table.

In early January, Local 3287 representatives contacted the University to reopen discussions in an effort to reach a collective agreement. The Union presented a Memorandum of Agreement which they believed had the potential to settle this round of negotiations. The University of Saskatchewan presented a counter proposal but no agreement was reached at our meeting.

On February 28th and March 2nd negotiations resumed. The Union tabled a revised monetary proposal for a four year deal (2 contracts – 2 years + 2 years) which called for 20% adjustments for Level 1 and 2 stipends and 25% adjustments for Level 3 stipends over the life of the contracts. At this meeting they indicated that their paramount concern was to achieve parity with the University of Regina rates for Sessional lecturers.

The University of Saskatchewan countered with a four year deal (2 contracts – 1 year + 3 years) which included 14% adjustments for Level 1 and 2 stipends and 16% adjustments for Level 3 stipends over the life of the contracts. The Union declined the offer and no agreement was reached at our meeting.

We believe that our current offer represents a fair and reasonable settlement and has demonstrated significant movement on behalf of the University. At our meeting, the Union advised the employer that they would be conducting a vote to gauge membership support for strike action.

The voting took place between March 12 to 14 at polling stations in Saskatoon and Prince Albert as well as by mail-in ballot. We have no indication of the number of Sessional Lecturers who participated in the vote. The results of the vote were posted on the Union website yesterday. They indicated that 78% of the voted in favour. ***It is important to note that a strike vote does not necessarily mean that there will be a strike.*** All indications from the union are that bargaining will continue and that the vote was conducted in an effort to show support for the bargaining team. The message on their web site currently reads:

“We have a 78% strike mandate. We hope to return to the bargaining table very soon, armed with this indication of support. Please watch the website for updates. Classes and all as usual for now.”

We understand and appreciate the concerns regarding potential strike action but we are confident that we will reach agreement. For now it is business as usual.

The employer committee remains prepared to discuss concluding these negotiations with CUPE 3287. We will keep you apprised of developments as we proceed with negotiations.