

CUPE REJECTS UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN'S FINAL OFFER

SASKATOON... Conciliation talks ended last night as CUPE 1975 rejected the University of Saskatchewan's (U of S) final offer. Government's conciliator, Doug Forseth adjourned the process in view of the Union's lack of movement on the remaining issues.

The University offered a 17% wage increase over three years, which included wage, pension and benefit increases.

"We entered the conciliation process at CUPE's request in the hope that the talks would lead to a settlement," said Associate Vice-President, Human Resources, Barb Daigle. "As we worked with the Conciliator over the last three days, we made significant compromises and suggested creative solutions to meet the Union's needs. We are disappointed at the Union's refusal to entertain compromises or work with us to find solutions."

The outstanding issues centre on an increase to benefits funding and on language in the collective agreement that allows the Universities to withhold increments from non-performers (CUPE members also receive annual economic adjustments). Both Universities are in a position to fully fund the benefits programs currently in place for CUPE members. The U of S has a benefit plan surplus of \$106,965.

"We tabled a comprehensive offer which is competitive in the provincial environment and the marketplace" said Daigle. "This offer recognizes the valuable contribution that CUPE members make to our University. We are concerned that the two union locals appear to be deadlocked over differences in how to approach the issue of group benefits funding at each campus" Daigle added. "There is no solution in sight after three days of conciliation."

The University has developed contingency plans and is prepared in the event of any labour disruption.

We remain committed to bringing negotiations with CUPE 1975 to a conclusion after seven months of bargaining and having listened carefully to the Union. Our goal is to balance the needs and expectations of the Union and its members with the interests and financial resources of the University.

The University of Saskatchewan and The University of Regina are required by law to bargain jointly with CUPE despite significant differences in issues and approaches at the two universities and in the two union locals.

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Note: Additional information can be viewed at www.usask.ca/hrd Collective Bargaining Updates

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