

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE
CUPE 1975 - October 4, 2007

On October 4, 2007, after 2 days of bargaining, the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina presented CUPE with a settlement offer in an effort to bring bargaining to conclusion. ***Negotiations ended at 4 pm Thursday, October 4th despite significant movement by the Universities on the issues CUPE indicated were of the greatest importance.*** As of tonight, no further bargaining dates have been set.

The Universities are committed to bringing negotiations with CUPE 1975 to a conclusion after 7 months of bargaining. Having listened to the Union carefully, and with the goal of balancing the needs and expectations of the Union and its members with the interests and financial resources of the Universities, we are confident this is a competitive and sincere offer that recognizes the valuable contribution that CUPE members make to our Universities.

Q. Why have the Universities not reached an agreement with CUPE?

- Some of the issues remaining outstanding are predominantly issues at the University of Regina. The Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina are required by law to bargain together and only when issues for all parties have been resolved can an agreement be reached.
- Due to the complex nature of bargaining, bargaining with the CUPE 1975 local is always protracted.
- The Universities have a responsibility to make reasonable management and financial decisions on a multitude of competing priorities. This offer is a strong commitment to our CUPE staff and is competitive in the market place and provincial environment.

Q. What progress has been made as of October 4, 2007?

Summary of Agreed and Outstanding Issues as of October 4, 2007		
	Agreed in principle	Outstanding
Earned Days Off	✓	
Increase to Unsocial Hours Premium (\$0.90 /hr)	✓	
Increase to Hazardous Work Premium (\$100)	✓	
Increase to Rescue Team Premium (\$120)	✓	
EAP stakeholders Agreement	✓	
FAPA Wage Increase (12%)	✓	
Pension Increase (6.5%)	✓	
Increase to Salary Ranges (6% 2007, 4% 2008, 4% 2009)	✓	
Increase to Joint Union Management funding (\$20,000)	✓	
Protocol to Review Recurring Relief Status	✓	
Lump Sum Payments for Red-circled employees		✓
Increments of 2% per year	✓	
General Wage Increases		✓
Essential Services Protocol		✓
Benefits Funding		✓
Phase I and Apprentice open competitions	✓	
Increments to less than satisfactory performers		✓

- Q. What is the Employer suggesting regarding Earned Days Off (EDO's)?**
- EDOs are a retention perk that we are committed to keeping.
 - We understand that EDO's are important and highly valued.
 - Some departments operate solely on the money they generate and the cost to replace those away on EDO's has made operations of these units difficult.
 - ***The union has agreed to review the EDO schedules for these operations, taking into consideration the operational demands and the needs of individual employees, changing the EDO's only if mutual agreement is reached.***
 - ***If no mutual agreement is reached the existing EDO schedules would remain in place.***
- Q. What is meant by 'open competition' and how does this affect seniority or bidding rights?**
- The University remains dedicated to creating equal opportunity for access to all University jobs.
 - Open competition allows for the Universities to hire the best candidate from a large, diverse candidate pool, including current CUPE members who are highly qualified for these positions, rather than having seniority limit the candidate pool.
 - ***Despite the importance of this issue, the Employers' proposal has been withdrawn.***
- Q. What is red-circling and what is the Universities' position on this?**
- In the last round of bargaining, in order to maintain pay equity for women, a number of individual salaries were red-circled. Some salaries were increased and some salaries were frozen (red-circled).
 - Red-circling means that salaries for male-dominated jobs are frozen until newly negotiated ranges catch up and/or exceed the frozen salaries (over time).
 - ***To remove red-circling would be to reintroduce pay inequities.***
 - The current proposal ensures pay equity for all employees, including 64% of the bargaining unit who are women.
 - The current offer reduces the number of red-circled jobs to about 30 employees by 2009 as per the plan in the last round of bargaining
 - ***Our current proposal offers one-time lump sum payments to all red-circled employees in each of the three years of the contract of 4.5% in 2007, 4.75% in 2008 and 5.0% in 2009 (market supplements are not included in the calculation of eligibility for wage adjustments).***
 - ***The October 4 proposal from the union accepted one-time payments as a resolution to this issue.*** CUPE has not agreed to the amount of one-time payments being offered by the Universities.
- Q. Is it true that that some members have not received an increase in 2 years?**
- As explained above, there are about 300 red-circled staff in predominately male-dominated jobs who have not received an increase.
 - Some of the salaries were red-circled in the 2006 agreement. Those employees are paid salaries at the top of their ranges.
 - As the tops of the ranges increase, by 2009 about only 30 employees will remain red-circled.
- Q. Why are the U of S and U of R bargaining together with CUPE?**
- The two Universities by law are required to bargain jointly with CUPE.
 - The issues of the locals and the Universities are not the same.
 - Bargaining is therefore usually lengthy.
 - In this round of bargaining, there are significant differences in our ability to resolve issues with the locals at each University on important issues like benefits and the application of increments.

- The collaborative problem-solving approach that the University of Saskatchewan CUPE Local traditionally engages in at our University is eroded in this joint process as the two locals try to address competing interests.
- The Universities also have differing financial priorities and fiscal challenges. The University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina are two different and distinct employers.

Q. What is the Employer's most recent financial offer?

- **The financial offer is competitive and fiscally responsible.** The average CUPE employee will receive about **16% over 3 years** including increases to their pension plans.
- Including increments in expanded ranges, the average employee will see an increase of 4.5% in 2007, 4.75% in 2008 and 5.0% in 2009. In addition, the Employer has proposed increases to the matching pension contributions. The pension contributions will increase from 4.82% to 6.0% in 2008 and again will further increase to 6.5% in 2009, for a total increase of 1.68% to pension contributions.
- The Employer is proposing an increase in the unsocial hours premium from \$0.80/hour to \$0.90/hour and is proposing to expand this to cover casual and recurring relief employees.
- **This offer is comparable to the settlements reached with other bargaining units on the U of S campus in recent years.**

Q. What changes are being proposed to sick leave?

- The Universities are committed to investments in benefit plans in exchange for improvements to the plan design. This is necessary to ensure our ability to provide competitive benefits which meet the needs of our employees into the future.
- This would require restructuring of the short-term and long-term sick leave plans to provide the most effective coverage.
- For example, the University offered to fully fund LTD premiums, which would mean employees would no longer directly pay premiums equal to about 1.6% of their earnings, meaning a direct savings to each employee.
- **Despite the importance of this issue, the Universities have offered to withdraw this item from the table.**
- **The Universities are not willing to increase our investment in benefit plans without serious discussion about plan design. To invest further without such discussion would not be fiscally responsible.**

Q. Are regular increments tied to performance?

- The language of the current agreement (*which the Union agreed to in the 2006 round of bargaining*) reads that increments are provided **"to recognize growth in proficiency from experience and a satisfactory level of performance to employees"**.
- The union agreed to this language in the last round of bargaining, and now wants to revert to the former language because at the University of Regina, in a few rare cases, increments were withheld for unsatisfactory performance. (This issue is more appropriately addressed by a grievance / arbitration process at the University of Regina.)
- **The Universities do not want to change this language.**
- It is not in anyone's best interest to provide increments to the few CUPE staff who are performing at a level that is less than satisfactory. This is inconsistent with the Universities goals of service and excellence, which we all share.
- In 2006, the Universities changed the salary model to provide these increments. This was a move away from a single pay rate for most jobs.
- **The Universities have offered to increase the tops of the ranges by 14% over three years, which makes the increments a significant financial investment in our CUPE staff, to value their commitment to their jobs.**

Q.: What is Essential Services Protocol and why is it important?

- We believe that members of CUPE would place the health and welfare of employees and the public as a priority in the event of job action.

- We appreciate CUPE's assurance that they will not put patient or animal health and safety at risk, nor compromise any major research projects.
- We fail to understand the union's reluctance to put that commitment in writing.

Q. What is next?

- We remain committed to reaching a tentative agreement that is meaningful to all parties and is in the best interests of the University and CUPE staff.
- We are hopeful that CUPE will reconsider its current position and conclude an agreement.

Please refer to the HR website for our complete proposals at http://www.usask.ca/hrd/memos/bargaining_updates.php.