

Collective Bargaining 2011 Update, end of week 3

“We have reached our first pothole”

In my last bargaining update at the end of week two, I commented about “one or two items” that have arisen at the table. I will say now that one involves a change in practice from what WLUSA is previously accustomed to, and the second involves new University policies that affect you directly. These would result in drastic and potentially upsetting changes to how you will be treated by the University.

More details and clarity will be provided on these and on all matters relating to bargaining at the bargaining update meeting on Thursday July 14th from noon to 1 pm and in a repeat session for those who take a late lunch from 1 pm to 2 pm.

In reviewing our current round of bargaining, after completing 13 days of fruitful presentations, discussion and debate, I am happy to report that we have been successful in agreeing to ground rules, housekeeping changes and a few non-monetary items, which have all been signed off.

Bargaining Teams: Ours and Theirs

Members of the WLUSA/OSSTF bargaining team currently at the table are:

Paul Elliott (Vice President, OSSTF); Joe Hirschegger (OSSTF, chief negotiator); Niru Philip (chair, WLUSA Collective Bargaining Committee); Doug Roberts (WLUSA grievance officer); Keith Goulet (WLUSA past president); Connie Palenik (WLUSA president); and James Weber (ITS WLUSA staff).

The university’s bargaining team is made up of:

Allison Rawn, assistant vice-president: human resources; Michael Carroll, dean of the Faculty of Arts; Wayne Steffler, assistant vice-president: administration; Lisa Fanjoy, manager: online learning and continuing studies; Kate Konopka, manager: employee relations; and Stacey Hawkins, human resources generalist.

The discussion has been in depth and with the utmost professionalism. I am proud of our team’s efforts in this regard and can tell you that the experience and skill of both teams are matched in respect, execution, follow through and accountability.

However, it would be fair to say that we have reached our first pothole. And I’m confident that it will be no surprise when I say it involves the University managed pension plan.

At this point, we appreciate the University’s patience in allowing us time to ensure that our members are informed, and the bargaining team has the necessary background information in paving the way to an agreement that is reasonable and fair and in the best interests of the University, Students and WLUSA members.

Wilfrid Laurier University is celebrating 100 years of success in “inspiring lives of leadership”. I would like to take this time to thank the 500 plus dedicated Staff members and the countless number of retired Staff who have helped and currently help to educate and care for all of our Students, Faculty and Administration. WLU works, because we do!

Yours in Solidarity,

Niru.

Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC), Chair
OSSTF District 35 WLUSA

WLUSA Bargaining Update Meeting

Thursday, July 14, 2011

12-1 and 1-2

Bricker Academic Building - BA101

All WLUSA members are strongly encouraged to attend for a review of current updates

Ground Rules: Good Faith vs. Bad Faith Bargaining

This article is adapted with permission from the WLUSA CAS Negotiations 2010-2011 Newsletter, January 2011.

One of the frustrations that occurs when a contract is being negotiated through the Collective Bargaining process is how little actual information about what is happening at the “table” can be communicated to members.

The reason for this is rooted in the protocols that both union and administration negotiating teams must observe, particularly in relation to “bargaining in good faith.”

In a unionized environment, the parties are required under provincial labour legislation to make every effort to conclude a collective agreement. A key component of this is that all bargaining must occur at the table, between the negotiating team for the union and the negotiating team for the university.

What that means is that information about what’s happening at the table must be carefully communicated such that it does not seem as though the bargaining process is occurring more away from the table than at it.

Reporting on what is happening during negotiations must be undertaken very carefully. It would be considered “bad faith” bargaining to be seen as inciting unrest among the membership, in the same way that disparaging marks against WLUSA by the university would be considered bad faith.

Your negotiating team will make every attempt to let the membership know the progress of negotiations and will not keep information from our members that they have the right to know.

Understand, however, that reporting on the specifics of what is said and done at the table day by day is a grey area and must be approached very carefully.

As WLUSA members, we can be assured that we have a strong negotiating team that understands the needs of our bargaining unit well – and that they will be doing everything they can in the necessary negotiations to achieve a fair contract.

Questions?

If you have questions about the current collective bargaining talks - or about any other matter that relates to your job and the union - please talk to the WLUSA steward for your area. (Here is the list: <http://www.wlusa.ca/site/stewards>)

If he or she can’t answer your question, it will get passed on to WLUSA’s administrative assistant, Suzanne Mulhall, who will then pass it on to the appropriate member of the executive.

WLUSA collective bargaining under way

Members of our union’s collective bargaining committee – and others offering to do research in support of the negotiations process – have met regularly since last December.

Studying the current contract and grievances that have come up during the term of the contract, they discussed how well the contract’s articles have worked to protect members over the last three years.

During the membership meeting on Wednesday, June 20th, the bargaining team presented the bargaining brief for information. Although comprehensive, the bargaining team is confident that issues identified through the membership survey were addressed. The presentation is available online: <http://www.wlusa.ca/site/negotiations> – click on Negotiations Proposal Presentation.

Access to WLUSA/OSSTF bargaining information

With negotiations in full swing, we wanted to remind you about all the ways you can keep up with the news. The Communications / Political Action Committee (CPAC) is committed to bring you the information in all the ways you wish to receive it.

WLUSA Website:

<http://www.wlusa.ca/site/negotiations>

“Working with WLUSA” Blog:

<http://wlusaosstf.wordpress.com/>

WLUSA/OSSTF Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/wlusa>

@WLUSA_OSSTF Twitter:

http://twitter.com/wlusa_osstf

Newsletter: *Working with WLUSA*

