

NEGOTIATING NEWS #15:

More on Conciliation

September 19, 2018

On Thursday and Friday of last week, September 13 and 14, the MUNFA bargaining committee met once again with the team from the university administration in the latest round of talks in conciliation. These meetings were scheduled two weeks ago, and despite the administration having had this time to prepare their proposals, during these scheduled sessions, the MUNFA committee spent most of our time simply waiting for the administration. When they finally appeared, the parties concentrated on Articles 19 (Disciplinary Measures and Non-disciplinary Relief from Duties), and 26 (Miscellaneous Working Conditions). Neither Article was central to MUNFA's goals in this round of collective bargaining, but have important concessions that the administration is seeking, including consistent language with the Tri-Agency Framework on Responsible Conduct of Research in Article 19, and health and safety, support services for Academic Staff Members (ASMs), parking costs, and the continually worrying lack of childcare access at Grenfell Campus in Article 26. Some progress can be reported, but the parties remain apart on many issues.

The administration also presented us a part of Article 3 (Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty Members) – a response to the new paradigm dealing with teaching equivalencies MUNFA offered last time – but did not negotiate the entire Article. The administration did reiterate that post-tenure review remains one of their goals, and it will be included in Article 3 next time it is presented to us.

In its latest attempt at “fake news”, the administration suggested that MUNFA was misrepresenting their demands in such a review. We are quite aware, and have been explicit, that the administration is simply targeting a certain group of tenured faculty, many of whom are long serving members of the university community, who, through significant achievements in research and teaching, have made considerable contributions to the academic life of Memorial. As such, it is nothing more than thinly veiled, systemic ageism. In addition to these human rights concerns, we also believe that such a proposal is simply the “thin edge of the wedge”. We are, in principle, opposed to post-tenure review – in any form. We believe it undermines its critical role in sustaining academic freedom. So we are against this one specific case of post-tenure review as well. We believe that were we to submit to the administration's demands in this case, we would not only be violating a substantial principle, but also, pragmatically, bringing us closer to a situation where there will be post-tenure review for all ASMs. To add insult to injury, the administration wants ASMs to do this work for them, proposing that, “Such a review shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures for non-decision year reviews as outlined in Clause 11.06”, just downloading more divisive, administrative work to ASMs.

When asked when MUNFA would see proposals from the administration on revised Articles 23 (Term Appointments), and 27 (Intellectual Property) – crucial advances MUNFA views as essential in a new Collective Agreement – as well as a responses on Article 22 (Leaves), and Article 31 (Salaries and Benefits), all we received from the chief negotiator for the administration was a vague response about a

future date. After 14 months since MUNFA indicated our desire to enter collective bargaining, and nearly eight months since active negotiations began, "...a future date" continues to worry us.

There is still much work to do, and the clock is ticking.

MUNFA's Negotiating Committee:

- Jon Church (Chief Negotiator), Medicine
- Alison Coffin, MUNFA Executive Officer (non-voting)
- Dan Duda, Library
- George Jenner, Earth Sciences
- Kurt Korneski, History
- Leroy Murphy, Business
- Dave Peddle, Grenfell Campus
- Nathalie Pender, Grenfell Campus
- Nicole Power, Sociology
- Richard Rivkin, Ocean Science