

Update on Collective Bargaining:

Request for Feedback on “Final Offer”

October 18, 2018

MUNFA members who have been following our communiqués over the last 14 months will know that we entered this round of Collective Bargaining with the key goals of protecting academic freedom and [enhancing equity](#): gender-based equity and [equity for Contract Academic Staff Members \(ASMs\)](#) – those MUNFA members in the most precarious employment positions.

Between October 1st and 4th, conciliation gained breakneck speed after 14 months of administrative foot-dragging, ending with the employer presenting what it called a “Final Offer” to MUNFA. Rather than end the bargaining process at this point, MUNFA’s Negotiating Committee asked for a pause, to consult MUNFA members on the University’s proposed package. We subsequently held two meetings to outline details of that offer, along with the events leading to it.

Feedback from those who attended made it clear that many MUNFA members, across all ranks, are deeply unhappy at the University’s response to MUNFA’s proposals on Contract ASMs. Some members prefer that we vote on ratifying the final offer, even if they do not like every aspect of it. Others sent us very strong messages indicating that they are angered by the University’s refusal to do more to improve the position of contract ASMs and urging us to return to the table to fight for a better deal for our most vulnerable members.

For those who did not attend the meetings, this memo contains a summary of the bargaining process and “Final Offer.” **Please send your feedback to munfa@mun.ca by Tuesday October 23.**

The bargaining process

MUNFA entered the October 1-4 session having achieved the following:

- More equitable Promotion & Tenure language, which broadened the scope of recognized scholarly activity;
- ASMs’ right to opt for ‘banked time’ in exchange for student supervision and other forms of ‘overload’ teaching was re-secured;
- New and improved workload details for Counselling Faculty Members and Librarians;
- The right of birth mothers to take parental leave and some provision for leave to deal with domestic violence;
- Establishment of a collegial committee to address the question of course equivalencies on a University-wide basis.

MUNFA opened on October 1st by reminding the administration which of our key priorities remained unmet: Intellectual Property rights (Art. 27); the outstanding gender inequity among ASM salaries; and greater job security and pay equity for contractual academic staff (Art. 23). At this point, the University was still demanding a new provision for [Post-Tenure Review](#).

Exchanges with the administration on October 1-3 secured creator-owned IP rights in the Collective Agreement and a \$1 million dollar fund to correct gender-based salary inequities for female ASMs. The administration also agreed to right of first refusal (secure seniority language) and one step of salary increase for term appointees. **They did not agree to any of our other proposals on Article 23**, which included: longer contracts for Teaching Term Appointees (TTAs); robust provisions for conversion to the tenure stream; access to PDTER for TTAs; and complement language, to ensure the proportion of teaching done by tenure-stream ASMs will not be further eroded. The University also refused MUNFA proposals that would offer job security to ASM-CFEs (Art. 30).

The administration also demanded a 4-year contract, in which current ASMs would get 0% salary increases but the employer would retain unfettered rights to award Market Differentials to newly hired ASMs. MUNFA countered that if there was a salary-freeze for existing ASMs, why should we agree to give (some) new hires a raise, particularly in light of evidence that [MDs exacerbate existing forms of inequity](#)? MUNFA countered that if the administration wanted a 4-year deal, it should come with a 3 - 4 % salary increase.

On Thursday morning, the administration presented its "Final Offer" to secure a new Collective Agreement. Here, the University:

- Removed the demand for post-tenure review;
- Agreed to a 3-year deal (2017-2020), again without salary increases beyond our existing steps;
- Offered another step of salary increase on the Lecturer scale, raising the cap by two steps, and agreed to language enabling Teaching Term Appointees to seek support for research.

However, the employer withdrew the earlier offer of right of first refusal for term appointees. MUNFA countered that if the right of first refusal was restored to contract academic staff, MUNFA could agree to the deal, and a new Collective Agreement. The administration refused. They also refused to offer any explanation for why they would take back a cost-neutral item, only to replace it with an extra step of salary.

IN SUM:

MUNFA Gains: The “Final Offer” includes these gains on the existing Collective Agreement:

- P&T language;
- Workload for Counselling ASMs & Librarians;
- Creator-owned IP rights;
- Recognition of the right of birth mothers to take parental leave;
- Some provision for leave in situations of domestic violence;
- A \$1 million fund to mitigate gender-based salary inequities;
- A collegial process for addressing course equivalencies across Memorial;
- A two-step increase on the Lecturer salary scale and the right of TTAs to engage in scholarly activity should they choose to do so;
- A commitment from the University to make “best efforts” to establish a Child Care Centre at Grenfell.

MUNFA Concessions: MUNFA's team agreed that fees for parking permits could double over the course of the new CA.

MUNFA fought off demands for concessions on Post-Tenure Review, banked time, the removal of IP rights from the CA, and demands for a 4-year salary freeze. However, the effect of a 3-year freeze will be to lose ground vis-à-vis inflation and our comparator group of universities. Moreover, the continued use of MDs may lead to future inequities.

WHAT NOW?

MUNFA entered Bargaining determined to fight for fairness and equity for all our members. The University's refusal to extend job security to our most precariously employed colleagues is a serious injustice, one that cannot be defended either financially or morally.

MUNFA's Executive and Negotiating Committees do not believe the University's "Final Offer" is its best offer. **Now we want to hear from you.**