

Negotiating News #10

Management proposes six-year contract with limited salary increases, two-tier benefit scheme

Nov. 16, 2022

The Issues

On November 9 and 10, your Negotiating Committee met with the employer's bargaining team for another round of conciliation. At this meeting — six months after receiving MUNFA's salary proposal and, at the insistence of the conciliator — the employer finally offered its response as a set of proposals that would need to be accepted as a package by our members.

This package provides no improvements for contract faculty or workload; made no mention of collegial governance; and introduced concessions on post-employment benefits that would create a two-tier system. This proposal would increase the length of time it would take to qualify for post-employment benefits from 2 to 15 years (longer for contract faculty, for whom time between contracts does not count), and would create a division between current and future MUNFA members by offering current members more favourable benefit premiums.

On salaries, Memorial's instructors are already amongst the lowest paid in Canada. The employer's proposal is designed to drive salaries lower still.

Reflecting the university and the province's financial challenges, MUNFA members focused on equity in the last round of bargaining and agreed to a contract without an across-the-board salary increase — there has not been one since 2016. The 2019 contract was renewed for one additional year until 2021 with no change to salaries. This wage freeze combined with six years of inflation has seriously eroded the value of your existing salaries.

Despite this, the university is now asking instructors to accept raises that average 1.7% a year (between 2021 and 2028). The university is also demanding that MUNFA commit to a long agreement that prevents instructors from getting a real inflation-proof cost of living increase until after 2028.

MUNFA has asked for a normal and fair deal — a package that would amount to an average increase of 2.8% per year (covering the period from 2021 to 2026), though this would still not keep pace with increases in the cost of living. Both proposals involve effective reductions in salaries over the period, but the university's proposal amounts to members going 12 years without anything approaching a cost of living increase.

The length of the contract the employer proposes is highly unusual. In addition to creating enormous uncertainty around the future value of members' salaries, the agreement would lock MUNFA members into already-unsustainable working conditions for the next six years

In an effort to make some movement toward a deal while also fighting for the issues you mandated them to fight for, your bargaining team has lowered MUNFA's salary proposal and dropped a number of proposals regarding contract faculty and workload improvements. They also suggested that all MUNFA members take the split benefit payment scheme the university had suggested for future members in exchange for leaving the amount of time to qualify as it is. The university has rejected all counter proposals.

It is important to note that the proposals dropped by MUNFA can be reintroduced if this is what members wish. Concessions have been painful and unproductive. Before making any more significant changes, input from members is needed.

Where We Stand

On November 10, the provincially appointed conciliator indicated that the two sides were at an impasse unless either MUNFA or the employer makes notable movement. The university has indicated that they are unwilling or unable to negotiate on many of these issues, which means that any concessions made at the table would have to first come from MUNFA.

Your bargaining committee asked for a pause on conciliation to consult with members — the conciliation dates this week have been cancelled, and the next time the two sides will meet is on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

Your Bargaining Committee Needs to Hear From You

In place of this Thursday's conciliation meeting, there will be a MUNFA members' town hall to discuss the proposals currently in play as well as how to proceed. [You can register here.](#)

The Bargaining Committee and Executive Committee will also begin holding meetings by department to hear from more members; **if you would like representatives to meet with your department, please consult with your colleagues, choose a date and time, and then email munfa@mun.ca with the information.** Representatives will make themselves available at a time that works for you and your colleagues. Members of your Bargaining and Executive committees, as well as department liaisons, will begin personal outreach this week as well.

Proposals that are outstanding, by issue

MUNFA PROPOSAL	EMPLOYER RESPONSE
Collegial Governance	
1. Introduce definition of "collegial governance" to CA.	Rejected
2. Share with MUNFA copies of formal, public, institutional, or other public representations and amendments to earlier ones submitted in response to requests from federal or provincial	Rejected

government if they address the terms and conditions of ASMs' employment. If such copies are privileged, communicate to MUNFA the date and general subject matter of the representation.	
3. Share with MUNFA a copy of all present articulation agreements between the employer and all public and private education institutions or, if they are privileged, the date and general subject matter thereof.	Rejected
4. Share within 30 days of signing a copy of any new articulation agreements between the employer and all public and private education institutions or, if they are privileged, the date and general subject matter thereof.	Rejected
Contract Faculty Improvements	
5. Teaching Term Appointments for a single term of teaching will be no less than 5 months long, and for two semesters of teaching, 10 months long, to recognize the work that goes into preparing to teach.	Rejected
6. Term appointments will be converted to tenure-track if the incumbent has begun at least their fourth year as a regular-term appointee, or the incumbent has taught at least the equivalent of 36 non-laboratory courses or 24 laboratory courses in the six-year period preceding conversion; and if the ASM has consented to the conversion and the Search Committee has recommended it.	Rejected
7. If university fails to renew a term appointee's contract or reappoint before the appointee is eligible for conversion, university cannot advertise or hire for any similar position in that Academic Unit for a period of at least 3 years from the end of the previous term appointee's contract — except for documented issues of cause or cases where the appointee is no longer available or interested.	Rejected
8. Increase PDTER and PDTF for teaching-term appointments to \$1,800.	Agreed on Nov. 10 but not finalized (could still be rejected later)
9. Require at least 75% of appointments across the university to be Regular Term Appointments.	MUNFA dropped Nov. 9 (could be reintroduced later)
10. Require at least 75% of Teaching Term Appointments to be two years or longer.	MUNFA dropped Nov. 9 (could be reintroduced later)
11. Recognize the right of all ASMs, including contract faculty, to participate in university governance activities. Commit to amending bylaws of any academic governance bodies that restrict this. Appropriately compensate term appointees for their governance and service work through either stipends or course releases.	MUNFA dropped Nov. 9 (could be reintroduced later)

Faculty workload/complement	
12. The total number of ASMs with term appointments will not exceed 25% of tenure-track, tenured, and permanent ASMs in any one Academic Unit and for any one semester. No more than 25% of courses will be taught by non-MUNFA members in any one semester.	Rejected
13. Move teaching norms to 4 for all faculties and disciplines.	MUNFA dropped on Nov. 9 (could be reintroduced later)
14. Teaching norms for Grenfell Campus' School of Science and the Environment will decrease from 5 to 4, to align with the teaching norms for science departments at the St. John's Campus.	Rejected
Salary	
15. Increase per-course stipend from \$5,144 to \$10,000 by Sept. 1 2025	Rejected
16. Salary for all members will increase by 14% over four-year contract.	Rejected
17. All term appointees on contract in academic year 2021-22 and/or 2022-23 will receive a \$2,000 signing bonus.	Rejected (this was a response to employer proposal below and an effort to make it more equitable)
Post-Employment Benefits	
18. All current and future employees will have 60/40 cost-sharing plan for post-employment benefits (employee 60%, employer 40%) after two years' pensionable service.	Rejected (this was a response to employer proposal below and an effort to both make it more equitable and save the employer money, as it would come into effect immediately)

EMPLOYER PROPOSAL	MUNFA RESPONSE, PERSPECTIVE
Collegial Governance	
Nothing	
Contract Faculty Improvements	
Nothing	
Faculty workload/complement	
Nothing	
Salary	
1. Salary for all members will increase by 12% over six-year contract (up to August 31, 2028).	Rejected

2. Signing bonus of \$2,000 effective on date of signing for all ASMs; term appointments will be pro-rated based on duration of employment in previous year.	No — MUNFA bargaining team responded proposing that this be offered specifically to term appointments (not on a pro-rated basis). Employer rejected that.
Post-Employment Benefits	
3. Establish joint committee to explore viability of joint trust arrangement for managing group insurance.	No — MUNFA bargaining team indicated that this should be discussed outside of bargaining given it requires involvement from other labour unions on campus.
4. Current employees eligible for 50/50 cost sharing if they qualify for post-employment benefits.	No — This two-tiered benefits scheme will divide MUNFA members. It is unacceptable.
5. All employees hired after date of CA's signing have 60/40 cost sharing (60% employee, 40% employer) if they qualify for post-employment benefits.	(See above)
6. Increase length of pensionable service to qualify for post-employment benefits from 2 to 15 years.	No — MUNFA's Negotiating Committee regards this drastic increase as unacceptable, and as an affront to contract colleagues who will have to work for much longer than 15 years to meet the requirement.
Post-Tenure Review	
Employer has dropped this proposal	

In solidarity,

MUNFA's Negotiating Committee:

- Jon Church, Medicine (Co-Lead Negotiator)
- Nicole Power, Sociology (Co-Lead Negotiator)
- Dan Duda, QE II Library
- John Hoben, Education
- Nathalie Pender, Grenfell Campus
- Janna Rosales, Engineering & Applied Science
- Ken Snelgrove, Engineering & Applied Science
- Travis Perry, MUNFA Labour Relations Officer (non-voting member)
- Dale Humphries, MUNFA Labour Relations Coordinator (non-voting member)