

TO: All MUNFA members
FROM: MUNFA Executive
DATE: February 13, 2023
SUBJECT: Highlights of Tentative Agreement

MUNFA members have been deeply humbled by the broad support we received during the strike from the public, staff, and from students in particular. We want to underline that we see this agreement not as an end to our concerns about the future of the university, but the beginning of a process to restore confidence in the future of the institution.

Indeed, aspects of our tentative agreement, particularly in relation to collegial governance, reflect our efforts to “open the door” not only to greater faculty participation in university governance, but greater student participation as well.

The tentative Collective Agreement will be sent to members ahead of a Special General Meeting so that all members can review the changes before discussing them at the meeting. This is a time-consuming process, and one on which MUNFA has to work with the administration. We expect to circulate this document to members as soon as we receive clean text from administration. Your Executive will meet tomorrow (Tuesday) to set a date for the Special General Meeting and ratification vote, which will then be communicated to members.

Below are some highlights of the tentative deal.

On salaries

This agreement is a major improvement on the ‘final, best offer’ package terms presented by administration in November. While the administration originally offered a raise of only 2% per year over an unusual six-year term, and MUNFA asked for a 14% raise over four years, we have agreed to a 12% increase with half of that increase being front-loaded.

The agreement also includes a substantial increase in the stipend for overload teaching that has an impact on several areas of compensation.

The agreement also contains a long-overdue improvement to parental leave.

On post-retirement benefits

Administration conceded to our demands. They have abandoned their proposal for a two-tier system. This is an important victory — particularly considering looming demands to make changes in the pension system. This was a red line for MUNFA that we could not cross, and we have not. **There are no changes to your post-retirement health benefits.**

On collegial governance

MUNFA believes we have achieved more than what we initially asked for.

Not only has our job action prompted the government to promise changes to the structure of the Board of Regents, but administration has also agreed to form a committee involving faculty and student representatives that will conduct a university-wide investigation and report on the state of collegial governance. This will not be the standard process of university administration grading itself on its own performance — it is a unique and generational opportunity to change the direction our university has been headed in. Together, students and faculty hold a majority on this committee. It also presents an important opportunity for our members to continue organizing around this issue.

On contractuals and precarious employment

The position of contractuals and our precariously employed members remains a sore spot in the relationship between MUNFA members and administration. Left to its own choices, administration might seek to replace all of us with short-term employees on precarious contracts, and fighting this drift remains a challenge going forward.

That said, we have made important, long-sought gains in this area. First, the tentative agreement includes changes to conversion language that expand existing tenure-track conversion opportunities to teaching term appointments, as well as a new opportunity for teaching term appointments to convert into a regular term appointment. This is combined with an agreement for a joint committee to develop a new system of permanent teaching appointments that would involve longer-term contracts and improved job security.

For contractuals on teaching-term appointments, contracts will include an additional month at the beginning of the academic term to ensure they are compensated for necessary preparation work — a significant improvement in pay and working conditions. All contractual MUNFA members will receive a signing bonus, two additional steps in the pay scale for lecturers, and a PDTF system that is equivalent to that for tenure-track appointments.

This is an important agreement. It is a massive improvement on the package presented to MUNFA in November. In important respects, it is a historic agreement, addressing longstanding concerns our members have had with the state of the university and laying the groundwork for further improvements still.

Key takeaways

The highlights listed here represent some of the key gains we have made since talks broke down in December. There is more to discuss, and that will be discussed, in the Special General Meeting.

We believe this is a very good agreement, earned by the collective sacrifice of our members and our allies. We are so proud to count you all colleagues and we look forward to working with all of you, students and staff in moving forward from this agreement to building a better university.