

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: October 22, 2008

SUBJECT: Lecturers' Union of Memorial University of Newfoundland (LUMUN)

The MUNFA Executive has agreed to circulate to our members the attached letter from the Lecturers' Union of Memorial University of Newfoundland (LUMUN), which represents per course instructors on the MUN campus. For those unaware, LUMUN has been negotiating with the administration for some time and recently asked for a conciliator to become involved in their effort to arrive at their first collective agreement.



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October 20, 2008

Dear Friends,

The Lecturers' Union of MUN is calling for the support of all students, faculty and staff at this critical stage in contract negotiations. On October 1st LUMUN's Bargaining Committee announced that there had been little to no movement during the previous three days of bargaining, and that it was approaching impasse on the union's most important articles. These issues are:

- 1. Fairness in hiring.**
- 2. The value of a per-course instructor's teaching and of teaching in general at Memorial.**

While the University has referenced the concept of seniority in its proposals, it is standing hard and fast on language that ultimately fails to recognize the prior service of Per-course Instructors and leaves the final decision to hire or rehire an instructor up to the "opinion" of head the Academic Unit. LUMUN's position is that each Unit must follow the same, non-arbitrary, transparent and fair hiring process that recognizes an Instructor's teaching experience at this university first. For too long Per-course Instructors have suffered due to the lack of fair process in hiring. The University is also firmly insisting that new Per-course Instructors undergo a probationary period of three courses over at least three semesters. It is LUMUN's position that this simply adds insult to injury, making our employment just as, if not more, precarious than it currently is, and leaving instructors who teach only once a year on probation for as much as three years or longer. LUMUN is demanding fairness in hiring.

LUMUN's Bargaining Team presented our economic package on September 11th with the understanding that the University would table its response at the following meeting. However, the University failed to come back with anything. We believe that their unwillingness to respond to our economic package is a message to expect the worst. Having our wages frozen for the last ten years and having seen only one wage increase in 18 years, we feel that the University has the responsibility to pay Per-course Instructors what teaching is worth today.

The unwillingness of the University to move on these issues means that to make any further gains, the bargaining team must be able to communicate that it has the full support of Per-course Instructors and of the entire University community. The team has filed for conciliation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Relations Board and will, in all likelihood, be asking LUMUN members to demonstrate their support in a strike vote to be called in early November. A strong vote in favour of this would give the bargaining team the ability to call a strike, thus significantly strengthening our position at the table and our ability to achieve the contract Per-course Instructors deserve. A strong strike mandate means a strike if necessary, but not

necessarily a strike. Indeed, the stronger the mandate, the less likely the need to strike would be. LUMUN is asking students, faculty and staff to act in solidarity with us by demanding fairness for Per-course Instructors and by supporting the LUMUN Bargaining team in seeking a strong strike mandate from members.

Why should MUNFA support LUMUN?

While most undergraduate students do not know whether their Instructors are Per-course Instructors or MUNFA members, your members are only too aware of this. Per-course Instructors teach many of the same courses with the same dedication as Academic Staff Members. What is telling, however, is that roughly 300 Per-course Instructors do so semester after semester for a fraction of the pay, with a fraction of the support and without any job security.

Per-course Instructors no longer want to be a cheap source of contingent academic labour for Memorial. Taking into consideration inflation and the cost of living, our pay has actually diminished in value by roughly \$1200 in the last 18 years. Broken down into an hourly rate, Per-course Instructors make \$15.83/hour, less than what Graduate and Teaching Assistants make. Has the value of full-time academic staff members teaching gone up while that of Per-course Instructors gone down? Per-course Instructors want their service at Memorial to be recognized. We want to earn what teaching is currently worth at this institution and to work under a seniority mechanism that would finally guarantee a reasonable degree of job security.

What can MUNFA members do?

1. Support a motion at your AGM in support of fair hiring and fair pay for Per-course Instructors.
2. Tell the people you work with that you support LUMUN's attempts to improve the working conditions of Per-course Instructors.
3. Wear a button and put a poster on your office door in support of Per-course Instructors. These buttons and posters are available at the MUNFA office or can be sent to you by contacting LUMUN at lumuninfo@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

Lesley Thompson, President, LUMUN

Robert M. Lewis, Vice-President, LUMUN