

TO: All MUNFA Members
FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee
DATE: August 5, 2021
SUBJECT: Update on the Administration's Bargaining Offer

As noted in a recent Information Bulletin, MUNFA received a proposal from the administration to renew our Collective Agreement (CA) for two years ([the offer is outlined here](#)). Since last communicating with you, MUNFA has received feedback from many members via email and at two Town Halls held on July 15th and July 22nd.

A dominant theme in feedback from Academic Staff Members (ASMs) is the value of the Collective Bargaining process. Many ASMs echoed the MUNFA Executive's concerns about losing the chance to improve members' working conditions (and, by extension, students' learning conditions) if we accept the administration's proposal, which precludes opening the CA before August 31, 2023. As the Parties signed a [Memorandum of Understanding in May of 2020](#) to effectively delay collective bargaining by a year, accepting the administration's offer now will mean there will have been no improvements to the CA since April 30, 2019 (the effective date of our current CA), with collective bargaining suspended for three years beyond the conventional date for opening the CA.

Over the past year, MUNFA has engaged members on workplace concerns and bargaining priorities. In turn, MUNFA's Proposals Committee has been working hard to develop CA language to address those workplace issues, which include: faculty renewal (complement), workload inequities, better conditions for contractual ASMs, strengthened collegial governance, Promotion and Tenure language, Indigenization and decolonization, equity, and climate action. These are the issues that MUNFA members have identified as top priorities countless times in recent years. Accepting the administration's "take-it-or-leave-it" offer would mean waiting another two years before tackling any of them.

Equally important to many of the ASMs who spoke at the Town Halls and contacted the MUNFA Office is the need to protect and support our most precarious colleagues, specifically contractual ASMs. The introduction of a new classification of ASM, "Newly Hired Employees" accompanied by changes to the criteria to qualify for post-retirement benefits, raises many questions about the impacts on contractual ASMs. The terms of the "take-it-or-leave-it" package prevent MUNFA from negotiating any changes to the post-retirement benefits or the criteria set-out by the administration, including protections to ensure contractual ASMs are not unfairly impacted.

Some members raised concerns around rejecting the administration's offer in the current political and economic climate, especially when offered a 2% salary increase in each of the next two years; others saw that context, alongside the importance of improvements to the CA that address non-monetary issues, as a reason for rejecting the package.

To give us time to hear from members, MUNFA negotiated an extension of the deadline for either Party to indicate their desire to bargain from July 19 to August 31st, 2021. The Executive Committee will consider all feedback from MUNFA members prior to making a decision about how to respond.