

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: August 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Negotiation of a New Collective Agreement

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[Clause 1.39](#) of the Collective Agreement states that either Party may give notice in writing to commence collective bargaining not less than 30 days before August 31, 2020. As many Academic Staff Members (ASMs) will recall, the Parties agreed to delay collective bargaining last year due to the pandemic.

On June 1, 2021, the university administration presented MUNFA with a non-negotiable (“take it or leave it”) [proposal](#) that would extend the current Collective Agreement for two years. As a result, the Parties once again agreed to vary Clause 1.39, extending the deadline therein to August 31, 2021, so that the MUNFA Executive could consult the union membership.

After consideration of all feedback received, on August 18, the MUNFA Executive voted unanimously to notify the administration that we wished to commence collective bargaining. A letter to that end was sent to President Timmons on August 19, 2021.

[Feedback from MUNFA members](#) showed that some ASMs would have been happy to accept the administration’s offer. On the other hand, a majority of ASMs informed us that they wished to commence bargaining, and the MUNFA Executive agreed. Over the last 18 months, ASMs have alerted us to a variety of issues about their working conditions that require urgent attention: equity, workload, promotion and tenure language, infrastructure and deferred maintenance, health and safety, the climate emergency and decarbonization, Indigenization, universal design, among others. We have not been to the bargaining table since the 2017-19 round and to extend our current agreement for another two years with no negotiations would lead to a significant delay in addressing these concerns.

As a union, we would surrender hard-won power in accepting an ultimatum on salary and working conditions from the employer. One of our primary jobs is to bargain collectively. While we recognize some members felt the offer of June 1, even with the associated concessions, was acceptable, the MUNFA Executive considered it insufficient to the wider concerns about working conditions identified by ASMs and so we have decided to proceed with collective bargaining.

MUNFA will soon meet with the administration to discuss the logistics of negotiations and we will keep you updated.