

Negotiating News #2

February 2, 2022

The MUNFA and MUNL Negotiating Committees met on January 27, 2022, to begin collective bargaining. The employer's Negotiating Committee is composed of:

- Geoff Williams (Chief Negotiator), Director, Faculty Relations
- Sarah Anthony, Associate Director, Faculty Relations
- Dr. Shawn Bugden, Dean, School of Pharmacy
- Dr. Isabelle Dostaler, Dean, Faculty of Business
- Dr. Travis Fridgen, Acting Dean, Faculty of Science
- Dr. Greg Naterer, Dean, Faculty of Engineering
- Dr. Michele Piercey-Normore, Dean, School of Science and Environment

At this first meeting, MUNFA tabled our full set of proposals with specific language to advance the bargaining priorities of Academic Staff Members (ASMs) as presented in a previous [Information Bulletin](#). These priorities include: equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism; Indigenization of the Collective Agreement; improved working conditions for our most precarious colleagues; climate action; improved governance, openness, and transparency; and due process for our members. This set of proposals did not include changes regarding salaries in Article 31 – Salaries and Benefits, which will be discussed at a later date. As in previous rounds of collective bargaining, MUNFA will seek fair, reasonable, and equitable improvements in both ASM salaries and benefits.

The employer also tabled their set of proposals, which are being reviewed by the MUNFA Negotiating Committee. At first glance, the employer's priorities include:

- Requiring all ASMs to reside within Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Restructuring Search Committees such that the Administrative Head/University Librarian or delegate would chair the committee. *(This was proposed as an idea for discussion between the Parties, but the employer did not present specific language for consideration.)*
- Restructuring Promotion & Tenure (P&T) Committees in departmentalized faculties to more closely resemble the structure within non-departmentalized faculties and schools. They propose that these P&T Committees would operate on a faculty or school wide basis. *(This was proposed as an idea for discussion between the Parties, but the employer did not present specific language for consideration.)*
- Introducing a system of post-tenure review, a proposal which was rejected by MUNFA in the [last round of collective bargaining](#) as it would bring an end to the job security offered by tenure, which is a vital condition for academic freedom.
- Removing protections for ASMs within [Article 19 – Disciplinary Measures and Non-Disciplinary Relief from Duties](#). For example, the employer is proposing to strike Clause 19.18 (c) and (d) which, if an arbitrator rules an ASM was wrongfully dismissed, requires the employer to pay the full salary and benefits for the ASM while they were awaiting a decision.

- Revisions to the “right of first refusal” as agreed to in the last round of collective bargaining. *(This was proposed as an idea for discussion between the Parties but the employer did not present specific language for consideration.)*
- The introduction of “probationary and continuing appointments” for a “Teaching Stream Faculty.” *(The employer presented some documentation for consideration, but details were vague and it was unclear what the structural distinction would be for such a position.)*
- Restructuring of MUNFA members Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) as [previously proposed](#) in the employer’s take-it-or-leave-it offer of June 2021. OPEB refers to the group insurance benefits provided by the University to retirees and their beneficiaries in respect of coverage under life insurance and supplementary health and dental plans.

While the employer presented a number of issues for the Parties to discuss throughout collective bargaining, in many cases there was no concrete language presented for MUNFA’s Negotiating Committee to consider. This is a clear divergence from previous rounds of collective bargaining whereby the Parties present specific language for the other side to consider. MUNFA volunteers have been working since January 2021 to provide detailed recommendations that would improve ASMs’ working conditions and strengthen the core mission of our university. Despite not having received similarly prepared documentation from the employer, MUNFA’s Negotiating Committee will nonetheless take the time to review and discuss the employer’s proposals in preparation for the next bargaining session on February 14-15, 2022.

While we hope to secure a fair, equitable collective agreement that improves ASMs’ working conditions and supports the university’s central mission, MUNFA volunteers will be working on your behalf to prepare for all eventualities. To that effect, we continue to [seek volunteers](#) for a Job Action Committee and Contract Action Team.

Questions or comments regarding the above information can be directed to the MUNFA Office, munfa@mun.ca.

In solidarity,

MUNFA’s Negotiating Committee:

- Jon Church, Medicine (Co-Lead Negotiator)
- Nicole Power, Sociology (Co-Lead Negotiator)
- Dan Duda, QE II Library
- Patrick Gamsby, QE II Library
- John Hoben, Education
- Nathalie Pender, Grenfell Campus
- Janna Rosales, Engineering & Applied Science
- Ken Snelgrove, Engineering & Applied Science
- Erwin Warkentin, Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
- Amy Wadden, MUNFA Labour Relations Officer (non-voting member)
- Dale Humphries, MUNFA Labour Relations Coordinator (non-voting member)