

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

BARGAINING UPDATE

AUGUST 18, 2021

SAIT

LOCAL: 039

NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE AT SAIT PROGRESS MADE, BUT INTENSE TALKS LIE AHEAD

Your bargaining committee met with the employer on July 16 and July 20. The employer approached your negotiator about beginning to try and repair the fractured relationship between the Local and SAIT.

While cautious, your committee was willing to move forward and see how this translates in bargaining.

July 16 started with announcements from the employer about changes coming to the workplace.

The employer informed us of its plans in several areas, including the return to campus; working from home; changes to new technology being used in the Office of the Registrar; updates to the Professional Credential Enhancement program and to the UPASS. Details were lacking and we will respond accordingly once we have a better picture of these changes.

Your bargaining committee appreciated the transparency from the employer and is cautiously optimistic they will continue to inform us of these important updates.

One contentious issue is what has happened in the Athletics Department over the past six months.

The employer temporarily laid off three employees and, less than a month later, abolished these positions.

The employer now wants us to create new classifications in the bargaining unit to have student workers run the Athletics Department and pay them much less than the employees whose positions have been abolished.

The Union welcomes the opportunity to create new bargaining-unit classifications and job opportunities, but not at the cost of

fellow union members who have been employed doing the same or similar work and who lost their jobs only a few months ago.

AUPE has filed a bad-faith bargaining complaint over the shady way the employer has acted in dealing with the Athletics Department.

Your bargaining committee was prepared with the relevant facts relating to this matter. We ended the day with the employer trying to figure out or piece together the timeline of the layoffs and abolishments.

After this somewhat uncomfortable end to our July 16 meeting, the employer started on July 20 with an apology and talked about moving forward in bargaining and repairing the relationship.

In the interest of negotiating the best collective agreement for our members, we agreed the relationship is important and said we would see how the rest of the day of bargaining went.

The employer was respectful, listened and moved on some of its positions. We came to agreement on the following articles: 10, 21, 26, 28, 46 and 47.

There was a noticeable difference in the employer's attitude at the bargaining table. The employer was responsive and seemed to be attempting to understand our point of view and withdrew some unreasonable proposals.

Although these two days were productive and we see bargaining now progressing, we are still in for an intense round of negotiations.

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We have seen at other post-secondary institutions that there is a co-ordinated effort by the UCP government to roll back wages and benefit cost sharing. Although we have not received the entire monetary package, we are preparing for the government-mandated roll backs.

We will continue to fight for the issues raised by the membership in the survey and to come to the table looking to solve site-specific items and improve the working conditions for all members at SAIT.

If you have any questions, or would like to provide any feedback, please contact one of the members of the negotiating team and we will be happy to respond.

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