

CCFA Contract Management Report Kelly Pitman

Greetings friends and colleagues.

I must begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the other members of the Contract Negotiating Committee: Chris Ayles, Frank Jankunis, Mark Kunen, Randy Tonks, and Lynelle Yutani, as well as to our FPSE staff reps, Tim Armstrong and Lesley Burke-O'Flynn, and to Val Montague, who headed the committee last year. We've had to work closely together under a great deal of pressure for a long time and we maintained our integrity and our spirit of cooperation.

You've seen our bargaining updates, so you know that it's been a difficult round for many reasons. One was our attempt to get the employer at the common table to acknowledge and address the problem of secondary salary scales in our system. Another was the same employer's rigidity about linking retroactive pay raises to settling by June 30. Still another is Covid, which has made real bargaining impossible because of an inability to have full discussions with the employer at both the local and common tables. And finally, we have the recalcitrance of both the Post-Secondary Employer's association and Camosun College.

When the pandemic hit, the CNC decided to pare down our proposals (and to ask the employer to do the same) in order to expedite the process. This was a hard decision to make after working so long and so hard on our proposals, but we felt that in the circumstances, this was the only way to provide our members with some security and to ensure that they received retroactive raises. Most unions in the system made the same choice for the same reason.

This is my first time leading the bargaining team, but I was on the committee during the last two rounds, and I can say without qualification that this round has been the hardest. One focus has been on how to gain access to the Service Improvement Allocation (SIA) funds available to each public sector union and earmarked for changes that directly improve services for students. For us this would be about \$350,000 per year ongoing. Our approach to negotiating the SIA was to craft proposals that would result in improvements for students and also benefit faculty members. The employer's approach, on the other hand, was to propose using the money to improve services for students but only in exchange for serious concessions from our members. Our local employer takes a lot of guidance from PSEA, but they also choose their own priorities. Frankly, what they brought to the table as "triggers" for releasing the SIA funds has shocked me, and I've been doing union work for a long time.

Here's the simple version of the discussions about the SIA.

We proposed adding another week of paid prep time for term faculty members and creating a Student Service Improvement fund for faculty-led projects that would, well,

improve services for students. This would have cost the employers nothing beyond the SIA funds and would not reduce their management rights.

In return, the employer proposed a similar fund, focused primarily on supporting development of online education. However, they stated that they would only create this fund in exchange for the following concessions: reducing faculty members' ability to bump or transfer if they get laid off; reducing lay-off notice for term employees, reducing control over workload averaging for unspecified non-teaching faculty members, reducing SD entitlements for unspecified faculty members, reducing faculty members' ability to take unpaid leaves, and reducing term faculty members' ability to regularize.

At the eleventh hour, the employer narrowed their requirements for "unlocking" the SIA funds to reducing layoff notice for term faculty members and reducing SD for unspecified faculty members. We rejected these proposals. Weakening the provisions in these areas would undo years of negotiating and harm our members, while doing nothing for students. In our view the potential usefulness of the fund does not come close to outweighing the importance of protecting the rights of CCFA members achieved through many rounds of collective bargaining.

This is called concessionary bargaining, when one side is seeking to *take away* rights from the other. We felt we had to say no. We did not come to the bargaining table to choose what rights to *take away* from our members, and we took the position that improving services to students need not necessitate harming faculty members.

Therefore, we have accepted a package that contains no SIA funding and no loss of current rights. We made this choice after much debate, and agreed that in this environment, making few changes and rejecting the SIA, which turned out to be a bribe, was the safest course for the CCFA as a whole. Therefore, the local agreement has few changes, and we live to fight another day. The proposals we have reluctantly withdrawn are ready to go for the next round of bargaining, which is less than two years away.