

SMUFU NEGOTIATIONS - REPORT #1

Following the focus groups and bargaining survey held during the winter semester, the SMUFU Negotiations Team and the SMUFU Executive crafted the Union's positions for this round of bargaining. The Union's positions were endorsed by the SMUFU Executive.

The Union's position contained many minor housekeeping changes to make the administration of the Collective Agreement more efficient; for example, replacing paper copies of applications documents with electronic copies. The Union also proposed bringing the Pregnancy and Parental Leave clause in conformity with the new Federal legislation that allows for a combined leave period of 61 weeks.

Besides these changes the Union proposals had three main objectives:

1. To obtain a fair salary settlement that keeps us competitive amongst Atlantic Canadian universities, and which addresses anomalies in the salary scales for Librarians and Lecture Stream faculty.
2. To obtain a 2-2 teaching load.
3. To obtain health care benefits for retirees.

These three objectives were strongly endorsed by members during the focus groups and on the survey.

SMUFU and the Employer exchanged their respective positions on July 4. The Employer's proposals were mostly housekeeping, many of the same issues that the Union had noted. The Employer did not table any major changes. We commenced bargaining on July 18 with another session on August 1. We agreed to many of the housekeeping issues at these two meetings. We also tabled our monetary positions at the last meeting.

Our next meeting is August 15 when we expect to see the Employer's response to our money offer and their positions on the teaching reduction and retiree benefits. We are hoping that they will continue the constructive atmosphere that, so far, has marked our bargaining sessions.

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