IMPORTANT BARGAINING UPDATE

The University of Regina presented the University of Regina Faculty Association’s negotiating team with a revised and final offer during mediation this week. We are grateful for the help provided by the conciliator appointed by the Province.

We believe strongly in the collective bargaining process, and we have been working with URFA over the last few months to reach an agreement that will benefit academic staff, while recognizing the fiscal constraints we face.

In recent years, due to a slowing economy, the public sector has gone through challenging times, and the University has had to adjust to that reality. We anticipate a similar reality in the coming year with regard to funding. In that context, salary and benefit increases are difficult to afford.

The four-year offer (2017-2021) we presented today contains a $5.645 million increase, or 8.55% additional money, to salaries and benefits of academic staff.

This includes a 3.75% salary increase over the four-year contract – 0% in both year one and year two, 1.75% increase in the third year, and a 2% increase in the fourth year of the contract.

It also includes an automatic increment for all academic staff members, a one-time $1,900 lump sum payment, a $1,000 signing bonus and a $12,000 professional development fund for sessional lecturers, along with all other benefit improvements already agreed to at the bargaining table.

By way of comparison, over the past year we settled four-year and five-year contracts with APT (Administrative, Professional and Technical), CUPE 5791 (Administration, Trades, Technical and Custodial) and CUPE 2419 (Teaching Assistants) for between 3% and 7% increases. In each of the first two years of the three contracts, increases were 0%; all contracts also included one-time lump sum payments.

From the URFA bargaining team we accepted a number of proposals that will substantially benefit academic staff and sessional lecturers.

These include:

- Doubling the Family Tuition Scholarship from $500 to $1,000; and the maximum payment per family member will increase from $1,000 to $2,000 per year.
- The Flexible Spending Account credit will increase from $900 to $1,000.
- APEAs will increase from $1,900 to $2,500.
- The department head, library department head and administrative stipends will increase.
- The Lecturer rank salary range and increments will increase.
- Significant improvements for sessional lecturers:
  - Supplementary employment benefits for maternal, adoption or parental leave that include 100 per cent of salary to offset the one-week waiting period for eligibility of receipt of employment insurance benefits;
  - The difference between the standard Federal Employment Insurance Benefits and 90 per cent of the average weekly earnings from a previous 52 weeks for a maximum of 36 weeks. This is a major benefit for sessionals, who previously had no top up funding;
- Enhanced Group Insurance, Dental, Optical and Extended Health benefits for sessionals, who have been employed for 26 consecutive weeks and have worked 780 hours or more;
- Another level of priority hiring that will give sessional lecturers more job stability and security, based on the number of courses and time employed with the University.

We have been able to find much common ground during negotiations with URFA. However, even with the enrolment growth we’ve experienced in recent years, we cannot afford all of URFA’s requests without significant increases to tuition and student fees.

Although we are hopeful URFA’s negotiating team will take this offer to its membership for a vote and members will vote to accept it, we want to outline the next steps in the event that it is not accepted.

If the offer is rejected, we must wait for the conciliator to make his report to the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. This is followed by a two-week “cooling-off” period. URFA is required to give us 48 hours’ notice prior to taking any job action.

If a strike does occur, we will provide regular updates for students, parents, the campus community and the wider community on a website that provides current information about class schedules.

Throughout the negotiating process, our focus has been on students. We are striving to limit tuition and fee increases. We have tried to reach an agreement to avoid any disruption to them, classes and campus life.

We encourage you to read the University’s position on these issues. Detailed information is posted on the Human Resource website at [https://www.uregina.ca/hr/collective-bargaining-updates.html](https://www.uregina.ca/hr/collective-bargaining-updates.html).

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*Email dated 12 March 2019*