

# BARGAINING BULLETIN



Thank you for taking the time to read this second Bargaining Bulletin. There have been several new developments since the first Bulletin in mid-June. First, the Administration has named their negotiating team, which consists of Dr. Robert van den Hoogen (Dean of Science) as Chief Negotiator, Ms. Helen MacGregor (Director of Finance) and Mr. Joe MacDonald (Interim Director of Human Resources).

Second, numerous committees of the AUT have been actively and thoroughly preparing for negotiations: the Executive Committee has met several times to review the totality of proposals and discuss their priority, the Handbook Committee is tirelessly drafting or reviewing the specific language of each, the Salary and Benefits Committee is compiling its own set of recommendations based on their research, and the Negotiating Team is both contributing to and receiving from, all of the above.

Fourth, the Executive Committee has received the results from the member questionnaire that was distributed in early June. This was the last in a series of outreach strategies intent on learning about the interests that exist throughout our diverse membership, and the results from this formal questionnaire add cumulatively to the results of the

informal and multi-faceted member consultation. As predicted, the questionnaire reinforced many of the priorities identified earlier through canvassing our members and helped to clarify which priorities are most critical. Thank you again for your valuable feedback. Those of you who included contact information with your questionnaire will be contacted soon. Adding the feedback provided to the Executive all together from the totality of sources, the Executive Committee has discussed and developed a mandate for negotiations that is representative and compelling.

With respect to the questionnaire specifically, the top four issues identified by our members as very or extremely important include Professional Development, Benefits, Compensation, and Retirement and Pension. The needs of under-served members were consistently noted as priorities throughout the top issues. The provision of resources to support professional development of all our members scored the highest in terms of importance, and this refers to a range of supports for conference travel, professional fees and subscriptions that all together promote excellence in our teaching and research. Improvements to our benefits plan was predominantly very or extremely important, and here the most common concerns of our

## Did you know?

If two members of the AUT are a couple, benefits are denied to one of the members, thus preventing them from coordinating their benefits coverage.

STFX has budgeted a zero dollar increment to the salaries of AUT members. According to the Government of Nova Scotia, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 1.9% in Nova Scotia from May 2011 to May 2012 (and only 1.7% in Halifax).

members include the narrow scope of services covered, the scale of coverage for our existing benefits, and the exclusion of various members in our bargaining unit. Also, given our drift away from parity and the escalating cost of living, it is perhaps not surprising that this questionnaire also highlighted compensation as being important to our members.

As we begin the month of July, we look forward to the commencement of negotiations with the Administration. We have several mutually agreed-upon dates reserved for this purpose beginning July 16<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to advancing the interests of our members, and by extension the quality and sustainability of the education we provide and the overall academic mission of this University, at the bargaining table.

**Stay tuned: Our next Bargaining Bulletin will provide insights stemming from our first week of negotiations with the Administration.**