



THE BEACON

Volume 1 • Issue 2 • Dec 1, 2009

Published occasionally by StFXAUT,

The Beacon is an information bulletin for StFXAUT members.

UPDATE ON NEGOTIATIONS

The negotiating team has had 24 face to face meetings with the University to date. We have reached agreement on 42 articles. Negotiations are becoming more difficult as there are fundamental differences on some key items:

1. The University is proposing additional Faculty accountability through annual reports from all Faculty (tenured as well as non-tenured). We are working to ensure that any such reports are subject to the same restrictions and safeguards that are part of the current procedures for the evaluation of our members and cannot be used outside of these procedures.
2. The University has separated Financial Exigency from Program Redundancy. This proposed separation could seriously undermine the principle of tenure or permanence.
3. The University refuses to accept language that allows for promotion of Lab Instructors. They do not feel that Lab Instructor is a career position that could warrant promotion even though these benefits are within our legal mandate to negotiate.
4. The University refuses to accept language that prevents non-negotiated changes to benefit plans. They argue that we don't have the right to negotiate health benefits because the benefit is paid for by the employer.
5. The University re-presented their first financial offer as a second offer with no improvement. They say that this is a fair and full offer.

Some items that are still under negotiation:

- common sick leave policy for all members
- common retirement allowance for all members
- common academic freedom clause for all members
- employment equity policy
- workload issues
- professional development/travel funds

For more information about articles under negotiation log-in to the secure negotiations website:

<http://www.stfxaut.ca/negotiations>

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

WHAT IS IT?

Collective bargaining is the process through which a union or an association and an employer negotiate the terms and conditions of employment. The Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation defines collective bargaining as a process of decision-making between parties representing employer and employee interests, which implies the negotiation and continuous application of an agreed set of rules to govern the substantive and procedural terms of the employment relationship. According to P. Weiler in *Reconcilable Differences: New Directions in Canadian Labour Law* (1980), collective bargaining is not simply an instrument for pursuing monetary gains or establishing rules to protect the worker. Rather, collective bargaining is an experience in self-government. It is the mode in which employees participate in setting the terms and conditions of employment, rather than simply accepting what the employer chooses to give them.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Many aspects of our working lives are negotiated through collective bargaining; salaries, benefits, leaves and sabbaticals, rights, academic freedom, grievances, and governance. Member support is crucial to successful bargaining.

QUALITY AT RISK

Our members working conditions are our students learning conditions. STFXAUT has argued that its members working conditions relate directly to the quality of education at StFX. What we do here - teaching (including lab, clinical and Coady and Extension teaching), research, and service - determines quality, and the conditions under which we work influence the ability to attract and retain excellent faculty, the value of a StFX degree, and the future of this institution.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

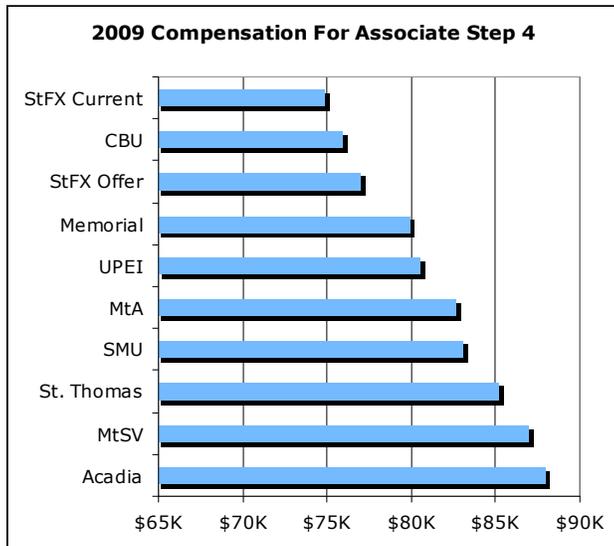
Come to STFXAUT meetings.

Learn the issues at stake.

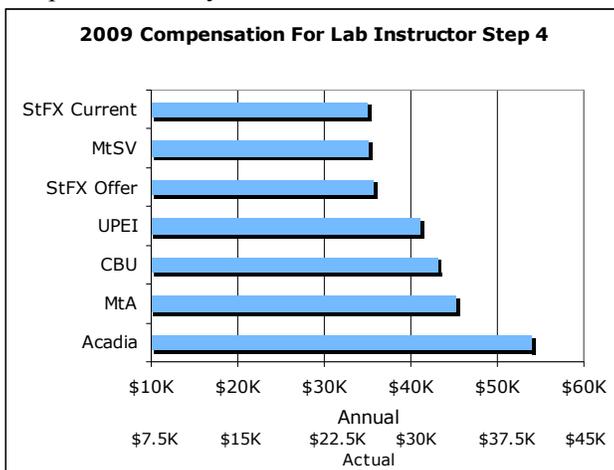
Discuss the issues with your colleagues.

HOW DO OUR SALARIES COMPARE?

The median position on the salary grid for faculty at StFX is Associate Step 4. Below is a graph comparing our current salary to many of our maritime comparable institutions including the 4 institutions that are designated in the current collective agreement as our comparators (Acadia, Mt. St. Vincent, Mt. Allison, and UPEI).



The median position on the salary grid for Lab Instructors at StFX is Instructor Step 4. Below is a graph comparing our current annual salary to many comparable institutions. Most Lab Instructors work on 9-month contracts and so receive 75% of these salaries each year. We are asking that Lab Instructors be compensated fairly.



NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION DECISION

Robert Theriault was awarded \$64,515 for financial losses and damages resulting from forced retirement. The decision was that the employer discriminated against Mr. Theriault when he was forced to retire. Krista Daley, Nova Scotia Human Right Commission

CEO, indicated that this decision recognizes that age discrimination is not different from any other type of discrimination (Province of Nova Scotia, 2009).

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Employment equity, a term coined by a Canadian judge in 1984, should be central to the mission of any public institution, especially a university committed to the notion of social justice. The term describes “programmes of positive remedy for discrimination in the Canadian workplace” and is guaranteed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Employment equity is good for the university: it ensures we hire the best-qualified people from the largest possible pool of applicants; it ensures we reflect the diversity of our students, our community and our country; and it begins to address both specific and institutional discrimination. According to CAUT “The commitment to equity begins with the acknowledgment of inequity and demands a proactive approach to redress the effects of systemic discrimination. In the university environment, systemic discrimination has manifested itself in barriers to access, employment, inclusion, respect and acceptance....Realizing equity is both an individual and a collective responsibility. Academic staff associations must take a leadership role in its realization by negotiating equity provision in agreements respecting terms and conditions of employment.” **StFXAUT is committed to employment equity** and have asked the administration to implement various commitments to equity. We are still hopeful that some real progress can be achieved in this round of negotiations.

NEWS FLASH!

Another Strike Averted

Hours before the strike deadline, Nipissing University Faculty Association reached a tentative agreement with Nipissing University. This agreement was achieved with the help of a strongly supported strike authorization vote!

Illegal Lock Out at Lakehead

As a cost-cutting measure Lakehead University announced earlier this year that they will be shutting down the University for 4 days before Christmas and withholding pay for all employees. Lakehead Faculty Association’s grievance of this action is now in arbitration. However, it is doubtful that the case will be settled before the lock-out takes place. A protest is planned that will bring members from Associations across Canada to support LUFU.