

At the May 15, 2024 UGFA Annual General Meeting, Part 1, the membership voted to approve the following bargaining principles for the current round of collective bargaining.

1. Protect the integrity of the Collective Agreement and the rights of our Members
2. Strengthen workload protections
3. Protect Academic Freedom
4. Ensure a reasonable increase in total compensation, given the repeal of Bill 124
5. Protect job security

The drafting of these high-level principles was informed by a list of issues and concerns arising from grievances and arbitrations, our past experience, our member survey, sector knowledge gained through external meetings and contacts, and the preparatory work of the bargaining team, including consultative meetings with members.

Expect an Attack on UGFA Member Rights

In this round of bargaining, we anticipate that the Administration will seek not just to gain new rights for themselves, but also to gain those new rights by taking away the existing rights of UGFA members.

One key example is our expectation that the Administration will seek the power to impose alternative modes of course delivery on faculty members, following the Administration's success in securing this power over sessional instructors in CUPE 3913. We should recall that, when bargaining the pandemic Letters of Understanding, the UGFA and the Administration established a clear and consistent agreement that the Administration does not have this power over UGFA members. When bargaining the current post-pandemic Collective Agreement, we enshrined this shared belief.

The Administration has told us that they want to impose an alternative mode of course delivery on faculty teaching in their planned "OVC North" initiative with Lakehead University. They want to impose online teaching on faculty and remote learning on students in the first two years of the vet program, which is one of the prized and defining programs, if not the most prized and defining one, of the University of Guelph, seemingly with complete disregard for the impact on the quality of education and reputation of the University.

The agreement with CUPE is dangerous, with implications for all faculty and their teaching. If the Administration acquires the right to impose an alternative mode of delivery on some UGFA members, starting with the OVC faculty, they will argue that they have the right to impose it on all faculty.

The existing rationale for alternative modes of delivery at the University of Guelph is that the faculty member's disciplinary expertise, their pedagogical considerations, their care for students, and their focus on educational quality determine the member's requested mode of delivery.

Member Survey Summary

Our member survey had a high response rate, also giving useful indicators when results are filtered by College or member type. There is reason to be worried: over 70% of respondents said their morale has continued to decline, more than 60% feel burned out, more than 60% said that their mental health suffers due to work, more than 70% feel that the Administration does not share their values and priorities for the University of Guelph, around 60% say that they cannot use their vacation without facing negative work repercussions (more than 70% of faculty members said this), and a strong majority struggle with work/life balance. We expect that these sad results will be reinforced by the Administration's Wellness@Work survey report. They have told us that the full, unedited report from the external consultants will be released to the community this month.

Some questions generated exceptionally strong results, meaning that even with non-full turnout, a majority of all UGFA members hold a particular view. These views include:

- UGFA member input in University decision-making should increase;
- The Administration should not have the right to impose an alternative mode of course delivery;
- Faculty members should have the right to decide the mode of delivery for their courses;
- The greatest workload increases are related to student accommodations, followed by forms and bureaucratic systems;
- UGFA members should hire UGFA members, based on the desires and plans of their Department; and
- Salary increases are expected, including Bill 124 restitution.

Bill 124 Restitution & Compensation

Following the ruling upholding the successful Charter challenge of Bill 124, we know that for three years our bargaining rights were impacted by government-imposed, unconstitutional constraints. As you know, along with a number of other University of Guelph employee group leaders, the UGFA President wrote to President Yates to ask about restitution. She responded by saying that she would leave such matters to collective bargaining. It is perhaps worth mentioning that in the Administration's budget road show and budget planning, they have planned for 3.5% salary increases for employee groups for the next few years, separate from any measures due to Bill 124.

Since then, the (non-unionized) PSA signed a deal with a 7.5% increase in year one and 2.0% in year two. And CUPE 3913 (sessional instructors) signed a deal with 6.75% in year one, 3.5% in year two, and 3% in year three. The first-year numbers in these deals include a 3% "market adjustment," with no formal recognition of Bill 124. Notionally, one supposes loosely that the 3% turns each 1% from the Bill 124 period into a 2%, but they have not made these notional changes retroactive. OSSTF is currently in bargaining, entering just a bit ahead of the UGFA.

There have been recent results at other (certified) faculty associations. At York University, YUFA very recently signed a deal that turned their Bill 124 "1,1,1" into a retroactive "2,3,4." And just days ago, at Carleton University, CUASA turned their "1,1,1" into a retroactive "2.25,3.25,3." In addition to the clear effect for current members, retroactivity also means that those who were members during the Bill 124 period who are now no longer members will receive a lump sum payment for the salary they lost due to the unconstitutional Bill 124.

Your Negotiating Team

Core Negotiating Team

Bill Cormack, History
 Mary DeCoste, SOLAL
 Jonathan Ferris, Membership Officer
 Steve Gismondi, Math & Stats
 Andrew Hathaway, Sociology & Anthropology
 Susan Hubers, Executive Officer
 Herb Kunze (Chief Negotiator), Math & Stats
 Pavneesh Madan, Biomedical Sciences
 Kirsten Sanderson, Assistant Executive Officer

Broader Negotiating Team

Andrew Brooks, OVC AHL
 Gregoy Bedecarrats, Animal Biosciences
 Shannon Gowland, OVC PHC
 Jacqueline Kreller-Vanderkooy, Library
 Ray Lu, Molecular and Cellular Biology
 Denise Sanderson, Assistant Executive Officer
 + The Core Negotiating Team

The Administration's Negotiating Team

At Part 1 of the UGFA AGM, we reported the membership of the Administration's Negotiating Team, which has changed a little bit since that time. Their revised team is:

Laurie Arnott, AVP FASR, Co-lead Negotiator	Amanda Etches, Interim Chief Librarian
Andrew Bailey, ADR of COA, Co-lead Negotiator	Uwafiokun Idemudia, Dean of CSAHS
Andrew Boaden, FASR	Tammy Oakley, OVC Dean's Office
Ben Bradshaw, AVP Graduate Studies	Sara Stephens, FASR
Geoff Tierney, Geoff Tierney Law Corporation, Hamilton	

Regarding the final name, this is the first time that the Administration has used an external lawyer on their team. Mr. Tierney worked in the McMaster administration, bargaining against trade unions, when Charlotte Yates was at Mac. It is curious that the Administration's budget roadshows say they have no money for your interests, but they apparently have money to fight your interests.

Mr. Tierney's track record is concerning, in particular his disgraceful actions as the chief negotiator for Laurentian University. Loosely, [Arbitrator Kevin Burkett ruled](#) that Mr. Tierney grossly violated the representations he made to the faculty association as chief negotiator, and the Laurentian administration, as a result, was ordered to pay out several hundred thousands of dollars to faculty association members. Since that time, several university administrations have mentioned using Mr. Tierney on their bargaining team, and, when informed of his record by their faculty association—"this is the guy you want to use?"—they dropped him from their team. The UGFA has notified our Administration of this character's record—"this is the guy you want to use?"—but they remain steadfast in their decision to use him.

Thank you for your support!

As always, please e-mail facassoc@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions.