

AT A GLANCE

Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin-Bulletin

As you are aware, we have entered Conciliation with the Employer. Conciliation is part of the collective bargaining process, and can be requested by either Party to assist in reaching a collective agreement. At this point, we have had an initial meeting (on February 28) with the Employer, and with the Conciliation Officer present. Further information was provided to you in a communication on March 1.

This Bulletin will briefly inform you about two of the issues yet to be resolved: Workload and Salary.

Language regarding changes in workload was included in the original package of proposals the Faculty Association tabled on August 3, 2010. The Association is pursuing three goals in this Section: first, to accurately capture and ensure recognition of the breadth of work our members do; second, to clarify norms and exceptions in workload and to provide mechanisms to calculate these; and finally, to ensure that the ratio of full-time faculty to students is maintained in the face of growing enrolments. This third issue of complement was discussed in the *Negotiations-At-A-Glance Bulletin #4*.

The Association has defined and offered calculations of credit for clinical teaching time by Faculty Members in the School of Nursing. This includes actual clinical instruction, coordination of the clinical teaching for a course, and preceptoral responsibility over students in the field. The Employer responded to this on February 7, at our last negotiating session. The Association is confident that the issue of clinical teaching will be resolved through our discussions in the conciliation process.

We have also attempted to recognize the rich variety of work performed by academic librarians and have proposed limiting student contact hours to 12 hours per week, and normalizing their working hours as normally occurring between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., weekdays, unless the Member agrees otherwise. The Employer has not yet responded to this issue in its counterproposals.

The issue of thesis supervision is one of immediate and growing concern for Faculty Members. The

Association has proposed that supervision of an honours or graduate student be assigned a concrete value in terms of contact hours. Currently, many Members perform this responsibility without *any* recognition, relief or recalculation of their workload. The urgency of this issue rests, at least in part, within the successful growth of graduate programs at UPEI. According to figures from MPHEC, supplied to them by the University Administration, the numbers of graduate students at our University have grown: 184 in 2005-06; 220 in 2006-07; 181, 2007-08; 216, 2008-09; and 267, 2009-10. The Employer's only response to our proposal on this came during the last negotiating session on February 7, when the Employer proposed to include reference to graduate thesis supervision in the long list of factors that can be taken into consideration in the assignment of a Member's workload (Article H1.2). How many of us have ever received a serious assessment of workload assignment? If the Employer intends to continue pursuing and growing graduate programs, it must realize that this cannot be done on the backs of faculty without recognition. We are not volunteers; we are professionals.

Additionally, the Association is seeking a course release for a Member serving as the Director of a Co-operative Education Program, and two releases for those directing programs with over 30 students enrolled. The Employer responded on February 7 with an offer of a single release, regardless of program size, recognizing existing practice for Science Co-operative Education. Here again, the Association is confident we can resolve this issue.

For new Faculty Members the Association seeks course reductions in their first two years of probationary employment. The Employer has not moved from the *status quo* of one reduction in the first year. We are hopeful that this, too, can be resolved at the Conciliation table.

Now, what about salary?

For a number of years, achieving and maintaining salary parity with our sister universities within the region has been a priority for the Membership. As our

Administration keeps communicating to the public-at-large, the work academic staff does here at UPEI is more than competitive. Our view is that our compensation should be as well. On your behalf, the Association has continued to pursue the objective of salary parity.

Let us not forget, it's more than a matter of fairness, it's a matter of necessity. If our scale falls below the norm, our ability to compete for, and retain, the kind of academic staff we want here at UPEI falls off as well.

In putting our compensation proposals together for this round of bargaining, we looked at the scales of ten other universities in the region, including the small undergraduate institutions we like to compare ourselves to, as well as a few larger places to get a mix that might capture the elements of our campus that are thought of as graduate/research intensive. The list of comparators includes Acadia, Cape Breton, Dalhousie, Memorial, Mount Allison, Mount Saint Vincent, Saint Francis Xavier, St. Mary's, UNB and Saint Thomas.

Using 2009-10 as the basis for comparison, we calculated the average and median floors and ceilings for each rank, as well as the average size and number of steps in each rank. In analyzing trends over the years since our last agreement, we had noted that, in addition to some small movement to close the "Atlantic discount"¹ on salary, changes to salary structures have emphasized a transition to larger and fewer career progress increments. This places more money in the hands of Members sooner, and enhances our career earnings.

What we found was that, despite our best efforts in the past set of negotiations, we are falling short of what we would describe as parity. The problem is most obvious at the lower end of our scales, which currently lag behind regional means by about 5 percent.

Adjusting the Assistant Professor floor (to which the scale as a whole is linked) upwards by five percent then puts us squarely in parity territory, both in terms of average and median comparisons, at the lower end of our scales. It also raises the high ends to the point where we can afford to consolidate and reduce the number of steps at most ranks, moving us to higher salaries more quickly. That is the gist of our proposal for year one of the contract for faculty.

To maintain parity, we have proposed a further three percent increase to scale in the second year of the contract. This gives us a modest 3 percent over two years of cost of living increases (the five percent only

gets *last year's* scale back to parity.) This approaches increases currently being negotiated in the other Maritime provinces, which have been subject to significant financial restraint by their governments.

We would like to see Librarians brought up to parity with Faculty, which is a goal being pursued with some success (St. FX regionally, for example) across the country. Our current proposal is to accomplish this over two years. Given that we have only seven Librarians, this is not a huge cost item.

Our objective on behalf of Sessional Instructors is again to seek parity on a regional basis. Increasingly across the country, and regionally, Sessional Instructors with experience and commitment are being recognized with the addition of a scale with step increases. Our proposal would implement a three-step system based on experience, as well as an increase to reflect comparability with others. Further information can be found in the *Negotiations-At-A-Glance Bulletin* #3.

Our Clinical Nursing Instructors compare themselves to the PEI nursing profession, and our proposal for their compensation reflects the feeling that parity with the PEI Nurses' Union is appropriate.

Last summer, the Employer insisted that both Parties table all language at the same time. We agreed, and came to the table on August 3 with language for all the Articles we opened. At that time, the Employer resisted in carrying through on their commitment to place Article D-1 (Salary) on the table -- an Article that they listed as one they would open (as did we). When pressed to carry through on their commitment to place all language on the table, they eventually (on August 5) presented us with a photocopy of pages 145, 150, 151 and 152 of the existing Collective Agreement -- a proposed 0% increase.

A counteroffer to ours is promised, but they have given no indication as to what that might look like. In the seven months that have elapsed since the initial language was tabled, and despite providing reasoned rationale for our proposal, we have been unable to get a sense of what they may be interested in offering in return.

The Employer routinely publicizes that the University is rapidly expanding. This significant growth is due in no small part to the efforts of academic staff. Despite this, we continue to be a low budgetary priority for the Administration.

Workload and Salary are only two of the issues which we continue to negotiate for you. We will expand on these and other issues in subsequent *Bulletins*. We will, of course, continue to work hard in this process to achieve a negotiated collective agreement.

¹ This is the tendency for salaries in the Atlantic Region to lag behind the rest of the country.