

STM Faculty Union

Newsletter

March 17, 2009

Greetings!

We hope that your term is progressing well. We wish to take this opportunity to provide you with some reminders and an update of union activities, issues and announcements. We would like to begin by announcing we are developing a new website. If you have any suggestions for additions or links for our new website, please contact Bryan Wiebe.

Reminders:

- Our Collective Agreement ends on June 30th of this year. We have already received some suggestions for changes or additions to our Collective Agreement, and any additional suggestions are always welcome and appreciated
- According to the MOA, Sessionals having seniority should have received a letter from the Dean stating their areas of teaching qualification by Dec. 1, 2008. If you disagreed with that letter you should have notified the Dean within two months of receiving that letter.
- Sessionals interested in applying for seniority should note the following:

Sessional Lecturers shall be responsible for arranging student evaluations for each of the courses they teach while in the probationary period. Failure on the part of the Sessional Lecturer to arrange for adequate student evaluations shall be grounds to withhold seniority. (from Article 5.1.10.8.2.3)

- Sessional Positions for next year will be advertised in June. In some departments, there may be significant changes in the number of courses available for sessional faculty due to new hirings and changes in the number of course offerings.
- We want to emphasize that all members of the Union have the right to consult with the Union about any matter concerning your employment with the college. Please feel free to contact a member of the Executive with any concerns you might have. The Union respects the confidentiality of our members.
- Since our last newsletter, we have been busy working behind the scenes on behalf of individual members regarding matters which must remain private. Some of these matters, with much effort and time on the part of members of the Executive, have been resolved satisfactorily; other matters have not yet been resolved. At times, the Executive has been meeting weekly (and sometimes many times per week) to deal with such matters. It is our hope that members feel that they are not alone in dealing with problems that may arise at the College.

Issues:

- The USFA has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the U. of S. extending their Collective Agreement for one year. Clearly, this is an option we should consider for our own Agreement. Jim Cheeseman has described the provisions of their MoA as follows:

The terms of the Agreement remain unchanged, except for the following:

- all members of the bargaining unit will receive a 5.25% scale increase to their salaries
- floors, ceilings, and CDIs will increase by 5.25% for all ranks
- the Accountable Professional Expense Allowance will be increased to \$2050 per annum
- the size of the merit pool at the College level will be increased by 40 CDIs.

<http://www.usaskfaculty.ca/news/read.php/298>

They have also agreed to enter into talks on a number of issues including: “alternative faculty appointments” and “retirement”. The actual MoA is available at the following link: (http://www.usask.ca/hrd/memos/docs/usfa_moa_ca_extension_feb_13_09.pdf) If you have any comments or concerns about this kind of option for us, please feel free to contact a member of our Executive.

- The negotiations regarding the future of the CSF are continuing. The Administration is determined to implement its plan to “reduce” the number of CSF positions to zero and increase tenured faculty to 40, and the Administration has reaffirmed its determination to implement this plan even in light of potential problems that may occur in the economy. It has become clear to us that the CSF are becoming more upset and discouraged as time moves forward without any resolution of the uncertainty attached to their employment futures. One strong sentiment that has been expressed to us is the feeling of betrayal. Most of the CSF have voluntarily contributed to the College in many ways above and beyond the

strict fulfillment of their duties, only to discover now that their commitment and dedication to the College seems to count for nothing but empty platitudes. This commitment has not been reciprocated. We think it is fair to say that for many CSF, the lack of recognition and respect for this commitment to the College over many years is the main source of bitterness. The Union Executive hopes that ongoing negotiations will result not only in a just settlement, but also in some acknowledgment on the part of Administration of the many years of dedication and some acknowledgement of the significant contributions which the CSF have made to the College and its students.

- In the January 12th report to the Board, the President of our College states regarding upcoming negotiations:

New Board members should be aware that we have been through a difficult period of labour relations in the last two years, which included a trip to the Labour Relations Board over an Unfair Labour Practice committed by our Union. The Labour Relations Board found strongly in favour of management and censored the Union. This did not improve relations. Our recent decision to eliminate 15 Continuing Sessional Faculty is also a source of great consternation from many within the Union. We will soon begin negotiations for a new Collective Agreement; the current Agreement concludes on June 30, 2009. Challenges will abound.

Although it is clear that the elimination of 15 Continuing Sessional Faculty is much more than a source of "consternation" for us, we must also take issue with the comments regarding the Labour Relations Board's decision. We want to remind our members that the issue in the Labour Relations Board hearing was whether there was undue influence in a ratification vote held by the Union. We believed that the ratification vote was valid and that our members were not unduly influenced

in their decision. It is true that the Labour Relations Board sided with management though hardly "strongly" and without "censor" or censure (the ruling is available in its entirety at <http://www.stmfu.ca/archives>). The Board found that a second ratification vote should be held. The fact that the second ratification vote had the same result as the first (and thus, brought us both back to exactly the same point where we were before the Labour Relations Board hearing) is hardly a victory for anyone besides the lawyers on both sides who, at least, received remuneration for their efforts. Although we acknowledge that improved relations were not a result of the Labour Relations Board hearing and decision, we also believe that improved relations are best achieved through direct discussion aimed at mutual understanding.

Announcements:

We want to congratulate Chris Foley who has been elected to a three-year term on the Executive of the Union. He was elected by acclamation, and his statement has been circulated. We also want to thank the members of the STMFU Elections Committee (David Peacock and Darrell McLaughlin) for conducting this election.

Quotable Quotes on Unions and Workers:

From *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II, 1981:

"Catholic social teaching does not hold that unions are no more than a reflection of the "class" structure of society and that they are a mouthpiece for a class struggle which inevitably governs social life. They are indeed *a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice*, for the just rights of working people in accordance with their individual professions." (See Part III, section 20 "Importance of Unions").

"But here it must be emphasized, in general terms, that the person who works desires *not only* due remuneration for his work; he also wishes that, within the production process, provision be made for him to be able to *know* that in his work, even on something that is owned in common, he is working "*for himself*". This awareness is extinguished within him in a system of excessive bureaucratic centralization, which makes the worker feel that he is just a cog in a huge machine moved from above, that he is for more reasons than one a mere production instrument rather than a true subject of work with an initiative of his own. The Church's teaching has always expressed the strong and deep conviction that man's work concerns not only the economy but also, and especially, personal values." (see Part III, section 15 "The Personalist Argument")

"It is always to be hoped that, thanks to the work of their unions, workers will not only *have* more, but above all *be* more; in other words, that they will realize their humanity more fully in every respect." (See Part III, section 20 "Importance of Unions").