

UWOFA Librarians and Archivists Bargaining Bulletin

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Negotiations Update

As of publication of this bulletin, our Negotiating Team has sat in more than 50 hours of negotiation, addressed 29 articles of the Collective Agreement (and proposed 2 new ones), and consumed 2,136 cups of coffee!

What has all this hard work achieved so far? As was presented at the UWOFA-LA General Meeting on July 15, the articles that were opened can be divided into three categories:

- Articles that have been signed off
- Articles that are being negotiated
- Articles that have yet to be discussed

Let's look at each of these groupings in more detail.

Articles that have been signed off

These are: Alternative Workload, Association Rights, Exchange Leave, Income Security, Information, Joint Committee, Leave of Absence, Nominations and Elections (which has been agreed to as a Letter of Understanding), Official File, Professional Expense Reimbursement (which combines PER and TER), Reduced Responsibility, and Use of Facilities. Some of these articles required only minor changes or semantic revision to bring the language in line with the Faculty Collective Agreement.

Articles that are being negotiated

Not surprisingly, most articles fall into this category. On any given day, these articles may be with the Employer or with our Negotiating Team, as proposals and counter-proposals are presented. Among the articles still being discussed is the Association's proposal of a new article, Child and Family Care.

To date, there are three areas where significant changes have been proposed.

Annual Report and Review

This is one of the most problematic and contentious articles for many of our Members. Both the Association and the Employer proposed substantial changes to the ARR process, but there are significant areas where the proposals diverge:

Criteria

Currently, there are no criteria identified for the review – a significant gap in our Collective Agreement. The Association proposed that a committee of Members identify criteria for evaluation. The Employer proposed that the joint committee identify "evidence" based on the criteria for each Rank, as identified in the *Promotion & Continuing Appointment* article. A concern with the Employer's proposal is that it conflates the criteria for P&CA with those for ARR, and would require us to prove each year that we meet standards that are achieved after years of preparation.

Annual Report

The Association proposed that in the Annual Report, Members will provide a "record" of their Professional Practice, Academic Activity, and Service, while the Employer proposed retaining the "self-review." We are concerned about the implications of our Members being required to evaluate and assess their own performance.

Annual Review

The Association's proposal puts more emphasis on the supervisor's assessment of each Member – it would be the supervisor who conducts the review and assigns the categorization in each area of responsibility (to be approved by the University Librarian or Dean). The Annual Review Meeting would be eliminated, but the Member or the UL/Dean may request a meeting to discuss the review. The Employer's proposal would eliminate the supervisor's report and keep the Annual Review Meeting – meaning that a Member could go into a meeting with no forewarning of what issues would be discussed.

Which ARR process is in our best interests?

Role Descriptions

Our first Collective Agreement included numerous references to job descriptions. Three years later, most of us still do not have job descriptions, leading the Association to wonder just how useful they were, and to strike out all references to job descriptions in our proposed article language. Now, the Employer is proposing that we adopt role descriptions. Suggested roles are: Archivist, Knowledge Management Librarian, Library Director and Department Head, Research and Development Librarian, Research and Instructional Librarian. Provisions of the article *Reassignment* would come into effect when, because of the closure of a position or a Unit, a role change is proposed or a proposed transfer to another Unit is rejected by the concerned Member.

The concept of role descriptions raised the most questions at our General Meeting:

- How do the proposed role descriptions fit for non-Western Libraries Members?
- How would it work for someone who kept the same role but was moved from one library to another (e.g. from Taylor to Music)?
- Would Reassignment provisions come into effect for someone transitioning in or out of a Library Director or Department Head role?
- Currently, Research and Development Librarians each have very different areas of expertise, and it may not be practical for a Member to move from one area to another within that role. How would this be addressed?

What other questions or thoughts do you have about role descriptions?

Phased Retirement

Our Members do not have the option of a phased retirement process, so this would be an addition to the Collective Agreement. Our proposal so far has been categorically rejected by the Employer. In a nutshell, phased retirement would allow a Member to have a reduced workload commitment over a period of years, and receive a retirement allowance.

Why is the Employer unwilling to extend this benefit to Librarians and Archivists? They seem very willing to present it to faculty (a modified phased retirement plan was offered to faculty this year, on top of the phased retirement option in their Collective Agreement).

How important is phased retirement to you?

Articles that have yet to be discussed

These are potentially the articles where there will be the biggest gap between our proposal and the Employer's: Compensation and Benefits and Duration of the Agreement. Monetary matters that come up in other articles (e.g., PER amounts) will be discussed along with Compensation and Benefits.

You will recall from our January 2009 Bargaining Bulletin that Western's Librarians and Archivists have the lowest average salaries compared to the 13 other Canadian ARL institutions. We have a lot of ground to gain when it comes to salaries!

Your Negotiating Team

The team has been working hard and meeting frequently, and negotiations are scheduled throughout the summer. There are still many important issues to be resolved and a lot of hard work ahead. At the General Meeting, Members reinforced the concerns they have, in particular related to the ARR processes and the introduction of role descriptions, and the team will continue to work for our collective best interests. Please send any feedback or comments to:

Negotiating Team Members

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