

# UWOFA Librarians and Archivists Bargaining Bulletin

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## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

### Why a strike vote?

A strong strike mandate is the best way to secure a fair and equitable collective agreement. A strike vote is not a vote on whether or not to actually call a strike. Rather, it is a vote by the membership on whether to give the UWOFA Board the authority to call a strike if and when the Board concludes that such a step is necessary to reach an acceptable agreement. A majority vote is sufficient to pass a strike vote. *A strong strike vote alerts the Employer to the collective strength and resolve of our membership.*

### Why now?

As you will recall from the last General Meeting and [Bargaining Bulletin 3-2](#), there are several contentious issues where the Association and the Employer have not been able to reach agreement. At the General Meeting on August 17, UWOFA-LA Members voted unanimously that the Employer's proposed language was "absolutely unacceptable." On the strength of this support UWOFA applied for Conciliation on August 18. On September 9 the UWOFA Board of Directors unanimously authorized a strike vote for the Librarians and Archivists Bargaining Unit.

A successful strike vote now will reinforce the message sent at the August 17 General Meeting, and will give the Negotiating Team a strong mandate to continue with negotiations and the Conciliation process.

### If the strike vote passes do we go on strike?

Passing the strike vote sends a clear message to the Employer that we are determined to stand up for our rights.

An extensive process must occur before the union would be in a legal strike position.

- first, UWOFA, the Employer, or both would have to apply for Conciliation (this has happened);
- second, a Conciliator would be appointed and Conciliation dates agreed to (a Conciliator has been appointed and we are in the process of agreeing to dates);
- third, Conciliation meetings would occur in the attempt to reach an agreement;
- fourth, Conciliation would have to fail;
- fifth, the Conciliator would have to issue a "No-Board Report" (indicating that a Conciliation Board should not be appointed); and
- sixth, a 17-day waiting period would occur.

Throughout this process negotiations will continue. The UWOFA Board would call a strike if there seemed to be no other way to reach a collective agreement.

## What happens if we go on strike? Do we get paid? What about financial emergencies?

Our Strike Committee is working hard on strike preparations. The UWOFA Board unanimously agreed to provide financial support for the Strike Committee's preparations, for example authorizing payment to secure a strike headquarters near campus. The UWOFA Board is committed to engaging our faculty colleagues in support of a strike by the UWOFA-LA Membership, if it happens.

The CAUT Defense Fund trustees voted unanimously last week to extend strike benefits to UWOFA-LA, including daily strike benefits and financial support to UWOFA, and to arrange for flying pickets from across Canada to join the picket line in the event of a strike or lockout.

Members who perform strike duty will receive Strike Pay, which will be at least \$110/day. This amount is calculated to match the average take-home income. This strike income is not subject to income tax. For those concerned about their mortgages or other emergency financial needs, most banks have been willing to defer mortgage payments during strikes and UWOFA will provide emergency loans to eligible members. The same conditions of payment apply for a strike or lockout.

## What are we asking for?

We want fair and transparent criteria applied evenly to all Librarians and Archivists. The Employer is proposing an arbitrary approach to evaluating our work.

We are committed to ensuring that students and faculty continue to have access to the quality information and resources they need from a world-class research library system. That means we need to be treated with respect – respect for our profession and the important contribution Librarians and Archivists make to ensuring Western maintains its status as a premiere research-intensive institution that London and Canada can be proud of. What we don't want is a "big box" library system where our job security is compromised and our profession and expertise are devalued.

The Employer also wants an arbitrary approach to reassignment. They want to be able to reassign us, without notice, from one library to another, or face termination. This would be like ordering someone with years of experience working in a biology lab to relocate to the economics department or lose their job. This approach would ignore our expertise and eliminate our job security. A strong strike vote will enable the Negotiating Team to rebuff these proposals.

Librarians and Archivists at Western rank 91st out of 113 research libraries in North America when it comes to salaries and benefits. We deserve parity with our colleagues across Canada so that Western can continue to retain and attract the professional expertise essential to any world-class university library system.

### UWOFA-LA General Meeting

Friday, Sept. 25 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm  
University College, Room 85

Strike vote begins immediately following the meeting  
Bring your UWO ID card

This is your opportunity to ask questions of the Negotiating Team and other UWOFA and CAUT representatives.

### UWOFA-LA Strike Vote

Friday, Sept. 25 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm  
University College, Room 85

*Additional opportunity to vote if you are not able to attend Sept. 25*

Monday, Sept. 28 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
UWOFA, Elborn College, Room 2120