

Overview

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Bargaining Bulletin #4 will soon follow. It outlines some of the discussions we've had at the table.

Bargaining Schedule

In November 2022, the DCFA and the Employer commenced bargaining a Collective Agreement. At that time, we signed a protocol agreement that permitted faculty members to observe the bargaining table and both parties worked through housekeeping items. *In the Protocol agreement, both parties also agreed to discuss financial items after non-financial items. This is standard in our sector.* It could take a while.

In 2023, both parties met at the table on January 16th, January 30th, and February 1st. We have canvassed most of the non-financial items tabled by the two parties.

We are scheduled to meet at the table on March 31st, May 2nd through 4th, and May 8th and 9th. Members who are interested in observing bargaining should contact VP Negotiations, Devin Shaw at [dcfa.devin.shaw\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dcfa.devin.shaw[at]gmail.com).

Timelines

March 31st marks a full year since the Collective Agreement expired. The expired agreement remains in force. The Post-Secondary Education sector often has drawn out bargaining processes. The DCFA and Douglas College are further along than a few of the institutions in our sector. I would estimate that we are in the middle of the pack. The DCFA, like many locals in FPSE, expects to be bargaining still in September.

Salary, Part 1: All Faculty

Our members are concerned about salary, inflation, and benefits. The Employer has brought a mandate they call “[The Shared Recovery Mandate](#).” It is a provincial mandate set by the wage increases agreed to by a larger union, such the civil servants represented by BCGEU (who ratified their agreement in Fall 2022). The Shared Recovery Mandate sets the term of the agreement and the salary. The proposed term of the agreement is three years. Over those three years, the mandate is:

- Year 1: 3.24% raise.
- Year 2: a raise between 5.5% and 6.75% depending on the Consumer Price Index.
- Year 3: a raise between 2% and 3% depending on the Consumer Price Index.

Benefits are also a priority for the DCFA at the table, but we have not yet exchanged detailed proposals on the topic.

Salary, Part Two: Contract Rates

One of the top concerns raised by Contract Instructors is how poorly Douglas College pays them. I also have anecdotal evidence from colleagues who teach at other institutions that the Contract rate here dissuades them from applying at Douglas. I worked as a Contract Instructor for nine years at other institutions before being hired at Douglas as Regular Faculty. It is very important to the DCFA to fight for better wages for our Contract members (around 100 members whose work makes up around 18% of Instructor FTE—which remains a good, i.e. *low*, ratio in our sector). We proposed a framework for boosting the salaries of contract instructors beyond the mandate, by “mining” already available (and unused) money within our Collective Agreement.

Raising Contract rates (what our agreement calls “Secondary Scales” in Article 15.09) is an important equity issue. The Employer has heard our proposal and they are costing it. We hope to have a meaningful discussion about the issue of Secondary Scales when we return to the table in March and May. Thus far Secondary Scales have been the only financial item we have discussed, and we raised the issue early because it will affect the discussion for some of our non-financial proposals.

Supplemental Professional Development Fund

We bargained the Supplemental Professional Development Fund (SPDF) during the negotiations for the 2019–2022 Collective Agreement. There have been numerous problems in administering the fund due to disagreements between the DCFA and the Employer during the life of the agreement.

The funds provided each year must be spent within two years, or the surplus is returned to the College. That means that between 2019–2020, \$237,932 (out of the allocated \$350,000) has been returned to the College. The 2021 allocation is still available to be spent (\$400,000), but it will

return to the College at the end of the academic year. We are seeking to prevent this from occurring in the next Collective Agreement. It's our money; we bargained for it.

Employer's Proposals

In this bulletin, I will not discuss the Employer's proposals. They have brought a small number that I would identify as odious. We have yet to see how committed they are to these proposals.

Conclusion

We have yet to really dive into the tough proposals on either side. The DCFA hopes that we will get a clearer picture of bargaining during the five scheduled days in early May.

In solidarity,

Devin Shaw, VP Negotiations