

Negotiation Update

Your collective bargaining team has had five face-to-face meetings with Management's bargaining committee, totalling twenty hours at the table, as of September 14, 2017. For every hour at the table, your team meets for about three hours to prepare its proposals and to review Management's proposals. While the parties have already resolved a number of non-contentious matters, two issues have emerged that reveal enormous differences between the positions of the UGFA and Management. These issues are of critical importance for all Members.

1. INCREASING WORKLOAD:

The UGFA has heard from Members across campus that their workload is increasing, mainly as a result of a decreasing Faculty, Librarian, and Veterinarian complement relative to student numbers, an ever-increasing pressure to do more, and an increased amount of administrative work being imposed upon Members. Management has done nothing to address Members' concerns about workload beyond promising to talk about it, and indeed, they have made proposals that would continue to increase Members' workload.

FACULTY, LIBRARIAN, AND VETERINARIAN COMPLEMENT:

The UGFA wants Management to hire more Faculty, Librarians, and Veterinarians. When Ed Carter, our Chief Negotiator, started working at the University of Guelph in 1975, there were approximately 11,000 students and 730 Members. There are now approximately 27,000 students, while the number of Members has remained more or less the same. The UGFA collective bargaining team has proposed a number of possible remedies, including:

1. that the student-faculty ratio at the end date of the next Collective Agreement be no higher than the ratio was at the start date, and that Management attempt to reduce the ratio; and
2. that Management offer a voluntary buyout to UGFA Members as a way of controlling salary costs while moving to an overall increase in Faculty, Librarian, and Veterinarian complement.

Management has rejected the UGFA bargaining team's proposals and has shown no interest whatsoever in addressing the issue of Faculty complement. We note that there

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is language addressing student-faculty ratio in the collective agreements of a number of Guelph's comparator universities, where faculty associations had suffered similar Faculty complement issues. Management's negotiating committee is aware of this, of course, and has said that they do not want to follow the path that Wilfrid Laurier (and other Universities) have taken.

DOWNLOADING OF ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS:

Member workload has steadily increased due to the downloading of tasks that were previously performed by staff members (e.g. data entry of receipt information for expense claims arising from scholarly activities) and the imposition of an ever-growing number of increasingly detailed forms (e.g. graduate student progress reports) and cumbersome bureaucratic systems (e.g. eCV, WebNOW, ECS, SAS).

The time and effort spent on such administrative work has had a strongly negative effect on Members' ability to focus on their primary missions of Teaching and Scholarship, as well as on Members' morale and level of frustration. This Service workload increase has not been meaningfully recognized as part of the performance assessment process (instead, Management has made repeated statements about "unlocking" extra Teaching and Scholarship capacity from over-allocated Service DOE components). We have heard from Members that they are frustrated with the downloading of administrative tasks, and that they want to focus on Teaching and Scholarship, not forms and bureaucratic systems.

We have proposed a Letter of Understanding asking that the data entry of receipts for expense claims, in particular, be shifted away from UGFA Members during the lifetime of the next Agreement, that Management strive to decrease this sort of imposed service work, and for recognition of the increase in Service work that will result if instead Management chooses to impose even more of this sort of service work on UGFA Members. **Management has rejected this proposal and will only go as far as proposing a discussion of the issue of workload after the ratification of the collective agreement.**

2. LOSS OF FACULTY AUTONOMY:

Faculty hires determine not only who our colleagues are, but also the shape of our programs and the direction of our curricula. The existing hiring process ensures that Faculty in the home Department of the prospective new appointment have a determinative voice.

The UGFA negotiating team is gravely concerned about Management's proposal to hire Faculty without determining the home department before the initiation of a search.

Management claims it requires this “latitude” and “flexibility” in order to respond to large targeted donations or new government funding initiatives. Such latitude, however, would have devastating consequences for Faculty autonomy.

HIRING WHEN THE HOME DEPARTMENT IS UNKNOWN:

Under our current collective agreement, the following hiring process is followed:

1. The Department asks to hire in an identified area of need, specifying the education, skills, and qualifications required for the duties to be undertaken;
2. If the University grants permission to hire, the Department creates the search committee. It normally consists of: the Chair; three Members from and elected by the Department; and up to two persons appointed by the Chair. At least two thirds of the committee members are from the home Department;
3. The Department committee makes a short list of prospective colleagues, from which the Dean can decide whom to interview;
4. The Department committee supplies a ranked list of acceptable candidates after the interviews; and
5. The Dean makes a recommendation to the Provost from the department committee’s list. The Dean and the Provost might also choose not to hire or to continue the search.

Under the existing hiring process, a Department can ensure that its present direction is maintained, or that changes in its direction made through hiring are based on the will of the Department. For Joint Appointments, the process is similar, with at least two thirds of the committee members being from the major (home) Department.

Management has said they need the ability to hire in broadly described research areas such that the home Department of the successful candidate would not be known in advance. As such, they have proposed:

1. The Deans of the Colleges into which the prospective hires may be placed establish a Joint Search Committee (JSC);
2. The Deans establish a list of Departments into which prospective hires may be placed;
3. The Deans shall name the chair of the JSC, who shall be the Chair of one of the Departments into which the prospective hire may be placed. The membership of the JSC must be approved by the Provost;
4. There shall be a minimum of four Members on the JSC; and
5. The Deans and the Chair of the JSC shall consult with the Department into which the prospective candidate may be placed.

In short, Management has proposed a hiring process that includes **nothing beyond** consultation with Departments, thereby jeopardizing Departments' autonomy. Whereas under the current collective agreement, Members must make up a large majority of a hiring committee, under Management's proposed language, Members must make up only at least 51% of a hiring committee. Management has said that they want to give candidates more say in where they go, in order to maximize their success. They say that they need latitude and flexibility and don't want language that restricts their right to hire as they see fit. Indeed, if they decide to go ahead with a hire that a Department does not support, we are told they would have good reasons.

Their proposed language mirrors **nothing** currently in existence at comparable Canadian universities.

The impact of these hires on the direction of our curricula, on our graduate and undergraduate programs, and on our research programs would be substantial.

This issue has been of great concern to the UGFA for some time. Just in case you think that Management's proposed search process will be rarely used, you should be aware that running non-standard searches—"College-level hires," with odd committee structures—has become their new standard mode of operation. The UGFA has launched grievances over multiple open searches of this type. Make no mistake: **Management is already trying to implement what they are seeking to obtain in negotiations.**

These proposals reveal not only Management's desire to control the hiring of Faculty centrally, but to impose changes to curriculum and program development arbitrarily; this represents a direct challenge to Faculty's role in determining the University's academic direction.

We have proposed an "exceptional search process" that keeps the search committee at a manageable size but necessarily allows each potential home Department to provide a list of acceptable candidates for appointment in that Department.

CONCLUSION:

The UGFA is deeply disturbed by Management's refusal to address increasing Faculty workload even as it seeks to further minimize Faculty's ability to determine the academic direction of the University of Guelph.

We have many meetings scheduled in the coming weeks and we intend to begin a discussion of compensation. Given that Management has not provided us with the data we have requested, we will be working with the data currently available to us.

In this round of collective bargaining, the UGFA will be posting both its and Management's written proposals in the secure area of the UGFA website. You will be notified shortly in a separate e-mail when the first such posting occurs.