

Despite reaching agreement on many issues by June 30, we are disappointed to report that negotiations have stalled over issues that Contract Faculty see as social justice and equity issues --- inadequate sick leave and benefits, poor access to the pension, inequitable wages and salary structure --- while the University Administration sees them as only monetary issues. These fairness and equity issues are intertwined because without improvements in these areas, they will exacerbate the lack of job security of CF, they will negatively impact the University as a whole, and they will have a negative effect on the student experience.

The Administration presented their monetary proposals on June 29 and 30. They were quite far apart from the proposals we presented on May 25.

- **They rejected** our proposal for extended sick leave once paid sick days are exhausted.
- **They rejected** our proposal for more CF to have access to health and dental benefits as well as our proposal that the University bear some of the costs.
- **They rejected** our proposal for more CF to gain access to the Laurier pension plan.
- **They rejected** our proposals for increased compensation for large classes and our proposals for special course fees that reflect the additional workload involved.
- **They rejected** our proposals for an experience grid.
- **And they rejected** our proposed fair wage offer, countering with a much lower offer that would not keep pace with inflation.

These are the major issues that have stalled negotiations:

- **sick leave:** CF stop earning income and can lose their course(s) if they are unable to teach due to illness for more days beyond the allotted sick days per term – **CF deserve options to cover longer illnesses without losing their jobs**
- **benefits:** CF must pay the full premium costs to access a meagre health and dental benefits package and not all CF are eligible – **CF deserve employer-paid benefits like the securely employed WLUSA staff, full-time faculty, and the senior administration have**
- **pension:** not all CF have access to the Laurier pension – **the eligibility threshold for CF to join the pension plan can be lowered to help CF retire with dignity**
- **inequitable workload:** CF are paid the same per course whether the enrolment is 10 students or 1000 students, whether the course is delivered in person or in a mixed mode, or if course delivery modes have to switch during a term – **CF are unable to determine the modes of teaching or to limit class sizes, they deserve to be compensated fairly for the work that they do**
- **inequitable salary structure:** CF wages do not increase with experience as do other campus employee groups' wages, CF are paid the same rate per course as a graduate student with no teaching experience – **CF deserve to earn more income as they gain experience, like staff and full-time faculty do**

- **inequitable wages:** CF wages have been consistently losing pace with the cost of living for many years, effectively acting as annual pay cuts. In the Administration's latest offer, CF rates of pay per course would not be equitable with full-time faculty wages for teaching the same course – **CF deserve higher, equitable wages**

While employee salaries and benefits make up around 74% of the annual operating expenses of the University, CF earnings comprise only about 5% of total operating expenses.

It's clear that Laurier is not interested in investing in teaching, contradicting part of the University's mission of "supporting and enhancing high-quality undergraduate, graduate and professional education" (<https://www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/values-vision-mission.html>).

As part of the 2019-2024 Laurier Strategy (<https://www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/laurier-strategy/>), "Laurier will excel at creating a thriving community where all members of our comprehensive university can reach their potential" – as long as they don't ask for too much. The way CF are treated at Laurier begs the question, *Are CF truly considered part of the Laurier community?*

Laurier should be leading in, not failing in, treating CF with dignity and providing equitable employment: providing paid extended sick leave, improving access to health and dental benefits while making them employer-paid, improving access to the pension plan, increasing CF wages to a fair and equitable amount, and introducing an experience grid.

We have made gains at the table, but we need your support to reach an agreement that meets the bargaining mandate you approved prior to the start of negotiations. We told the Administration that we were disappointed that they were unwilling to bring a reasonable compensation offer to the table by July 7. We remain committed to arriving at a fair and equitable settlement for our Members, and have asked the Administration to provide dates in September so that we can resume bargaining.

See "Bargaining 101" at <https://www.wlufa.ca/contract-faculty-negotiations/> for general information on bargaining procedures. We remain in Phase V.

In Solidarity,
The CF Negotiating Team

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Jim Gerlach (Co-Chief Negotiator), CF – Chemistry and Biochemistry
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