

Dear fellow Contract Faculty,

Issue #3:

You said 'Benefits, Pensions and Sick Leave' were important in this round of negotiations. Even those who receive these through other employment or through family coverage were still firmly committed to achieving equitable gains for all CF - Go us!

Unlike compensation and job security, 'Benefits, Pensions and Sick Leave' can be a bit more complex, so let's address them separately. We will cover Benefits here with information on Pension and Sick Leave to follow.

50% OF CF IDENTIFIED THE LACK OF BENEFITS AS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CONDITIONS OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

Benefits:

Currently we receive an extra 4.9% in compensation in lieu of being provided an **employer paid** extended health and dental benefits plan. Just for context, here is a list of groups covered in whole or in part by a **Laurier paid** benefits plan: FT Faculty, WLUSA, WLUSA PT, PAG, CPAG, Special Constables, Management, CUPE, FOG, IATSE, and UFCW hired pre-2015. Other

than CF, there are only a few small groups missing from this list of Laurier employee groups and those few pay-for-use plans are either more comprehensive or are less expensive than ours. Go figure – we are at the bottom again.

Only when we have taught at least 3 one-term courses (or equivalent) during the previous academic year, are we even eligible to join the **employee-paid** plan.

The combined insufficiency of inadequate compensation and lack of job security forces the few of us who do qualify to purchase benefits to frequently forgo even a modicum of self-funded health and dental care while we struggle to make ends meet. Instead, on a wing and a prayer, most of us must 'plan' (i.e., hope) to just stay healthy.

And if we do qualify and can afford to pay for the meagre plan the university has made available to CF, it is arguably the worst plan offered by Laurier. Even the Postdoctoral/Research Assistant plan -- which is less expensive -- is better, as are the plans for other groups who we actually have a great deal in common with.

MEDIAN CF COMPENSATION, 2021: \$24,999
SINGLE HEALTH & DENTAL COST: \$962.04
FAMILY HEALTH & DENTAL COST: \$1,927.56

MEDIAN FT COMPENSATION, 2021:
\$145,000
SINGLE HEALTH & DENTAL COST: \$0
FAMILY HEALTH AND DENTAL COST: \$0

For instance, in our own CF Collective Agreement, Librarian Members with Part-time Continuing Appointments (15 hrs per week minimum) are automatically members of our FT colleagues' Extended Health and Dental Care Plan (cost shared between the university and the member on a prorated basis). The key here is that the university defines 'Continuing' to purposely exclude CF even though many of us have been working continuously at Laurier for years or even decades. The university's commitment to equity is clearly only a promise made when convenient. Using the Part-time Continuing Librarian eligibility requirement, more than half of CF would be eligible for inclusion in an employer-paid benefits plan.

Even if we look at less generous Laurier plans, **we are still purposely excluded**. For example, the staff (WLUSA/OSSTF) health and benefits plan has provisions for those employed part-time (910-1249 hours per year). For these employees the university pays 100% of the costs for their choice of either the Extended Health Care Plan or the Dental Care Plan with the employee having the option of purchasing membership in the other plan. Using the WLUSA/OSSTF eligibility requirement, more than 40 percent of CF would be eligible for inclusion in this type of benefits arrangement.

What are we asking for in terms of benefits? The gold-plated plan of our FT faculty colleagues or Part-time Continuing Librarians? No. The silver-plated plan of FT and Part-time staff? No.

Our proposal is that a member pays:

- 0% if teaches 4+ courses
- 25% if teaches 3 courses
- 50% if teaches 2 courses
- 75% if teaches 1 course
- 100% if did not teach in the past year

We are simply asking for a reduction in the premiums that CF have to pay for the same substandard extended health and dental benefits, and that once in the benefits plan then CF stay in the plan unless there is a break in service of more than 24 months.

To this proposal, administration has answered with a resounding NO!

Despite Laurier's declaration of "... supporting and enhancing the well-being of our staff and

faculty with a comprehensive benefits package... We believe that a healthy, productive workforce is essential to our ability to provide quality service.", the fact is that, in practice, Laurier has only committed to the well-being and health of SOME of their faculty and staff. They have purposely excluded the faculty who teach roughly half of the courses and half of the students at Laurier.

No. We haven't been asking for the gold or silver benefits at the table. We've only been asking for enough to keep ourselves and our families healthy while we carry on a large share of the workload that keeps Laurier running as a university. We've asked and asked again.

Now we will demand.