

WLUFA Info Pamphlet:

Collective

Bargaining

101

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Collective Bargaining: The Big Picture

What is collective bargaining?

Collective bargaining is the legal process where WLUF (your Association) and the Employer (Wilfrid Laurier University) negotiate a renewed Collective Agreement (CA). The CA sets terms like salaries, benefits, workload, evaluation, leaves, job security, and protections.

Who's involved – WLUF

- Chief Negotiator(s)** – appointed by the WLUF Executive Committee. Leads the team at the table; develops and coordinates proposals and strategy; manages caucuses; is primary contact with the Employer and any mediator/conciliator; ensures alignment with the Member-approved mandate; and reports regularly to the Executive and Members.
- WLUF Negotiating Team** – Selected faculty Members, along with the Chief Negotiator(s), tasked with first gathering input from the Membership to help set the mandate. The Team then develops proposals, strategies and takes part in all negotiations. Each team member may be provided training to help prepare for their role.
- WLUF Executive** – reviews and approves priorities (the mandate) developed by the Negotiating Team from Member input, and then refers the mandate to the Membership for approval.
- Membership Engagement & Communications Officer** – supports the Negotiating Team and relays information to and from Members; helps organize collective action and ensures transparency across the Association. May attend bargaining meetings as set out in the bargaining protocol.
- OCUFA & CAUT** – sector bodies that provide guidance, training, research/costing support, and counsel before, during, and after negotiations.

Who's involved – Employer

Employer Team – the University's negotiators are typically comprised of deans and/or vice-deans, Faculty Relations and senior administrative officers (SAOs).

How WLUF prepares to bargain (before proposals)

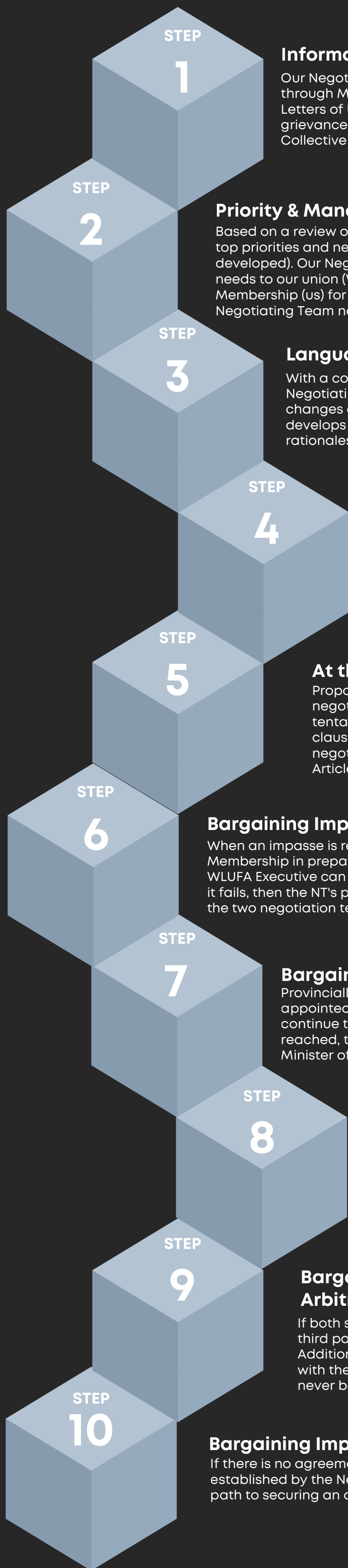
- Bargaining priorities survey** (Members rank issues; quantitative + qualitative input)
 - Bargaining Mandate (confidential to Bargaining Unit Members)** – formal proposal package guiding the team when developing proposals to guide them at the table.
 - Protocols** – mutually agreed ground rules (e.g., teams, meeting cadence, location, logistics of exchanging proposals, expectation of respect at the table, permitted guests, format, signing-off, media).
 - Strategy & analysis** – evidence-based approach; adjust tactics as talks evolve
 - MoS (Memorandum of Settlement)** – once items are settled, an MoS bridges to the finalized CA pending ratification by Members.
- Member input drives the mandate; priorities shared with WLUF stay within the Association.**



Your role at a glance

- Share your workplace priorities
- Stay informed through updates
- Participate in votes
- Show solidarity and volunteer

Check out the next page for a more detailed infographic and where the Negotiating Team goes after proposals are completed.



Information Gathering

Our Negotiating Team (NT) gathers information from us through Members' surveys and meetings, and reviews of Letters of Understanding, Joint Liaison Committee notes, grievance files, past negotiations files, and our current Collective Agreement (CA).

Priority & Mandate Development

Based on a review of information gathered, our Negotiating Team identifies our top priorities and needs (specific language around these has not yet been developed). Our Negotiating Team presents the identified top priorities and needs to our union (WLUFA) Executive for approval to take them to the Membership (us) for final approval. With approvals at both levels, the Negotiating Team now has a mandate.

Language Development

With a commitment to achieving their mandate, our Negotiating Team identifies Collective Agreement editorial changes and refinements to be made, creates proposals, develops specific language, and develops supportive rationales.

Protocol

Our Negotiating Team and Administration set out meeting frequency and dates, proposal exchange logistics, and who each team can communicate with.

At the Table

Proposals are exchanged followed by intense periods of negotiations. As the teams negotiate, Articles and clauses are tentatively agreed to and set aside. Sometimes Articles or clauses are 'parked' and revisited at a later point. If the negotiating teams can't reach an agreement on one or more Articles, then they have reached an impasse.

Bargaining Impasse

When an impasse is reached, WLUFA engages with and mobilizes the Membership in preparation for a strike enabling vote. If successful, the WLUFA Executive can call a strike if a deal isn't reached by a certain date. If it fails, then the NT's power is drastically reduced. Then the talks between the two negotiation teams often continue.

Bargaining Impasse: Conciliation

Provincially mandated, conciliation involves a provincially appointed conciliator who tries to assist both sides as they continue to work towards an agreement. If no agreement is reached, then the conciliator files a 'no-board' report to the Minister of Labour.

Bargaining Impasse: No-Board

Once the no-board is filed, then the strike clock starts to tick - 17 days from a no-board, WLUFA Members would be in a legal strike position and Administration in a legal lock-out position. Talks usually continue during this time but a job action (a strike) could take place at any time after the 17-day countdown.

Bargaining Impasse: Mediation & Arbitration

If both sides agree, then mediation with the assistance of a third party can happen - past NTs have found this helpful. Additionally, a paid, professional arbitrator can be brought in with the agreement of both parties. This 'hard bargaining' has never been used in WLUFA's previous negotiations.

Bargaining Impasse: Strike

If there is no agreement reached between the parties by the deadline established by the Negotiating Team, then a strike will be the clearest path to securing an agreement.

Bargaining Timeline Ontario's Legal Framework

Notice to Bargain

Within 90 days before CA expiry, either party gives notice.

Bargaining in Good Faith

Exchange proposals; attempt to reach agreement.

Conciliation

Mandatory in Ontario; Ministry officer assists if talks stall. Request a conciliation officer

No-Board Report Issued

If no deal, Minister issues report → starts a 16-day cooling-off period.

Strike Mandate Vote

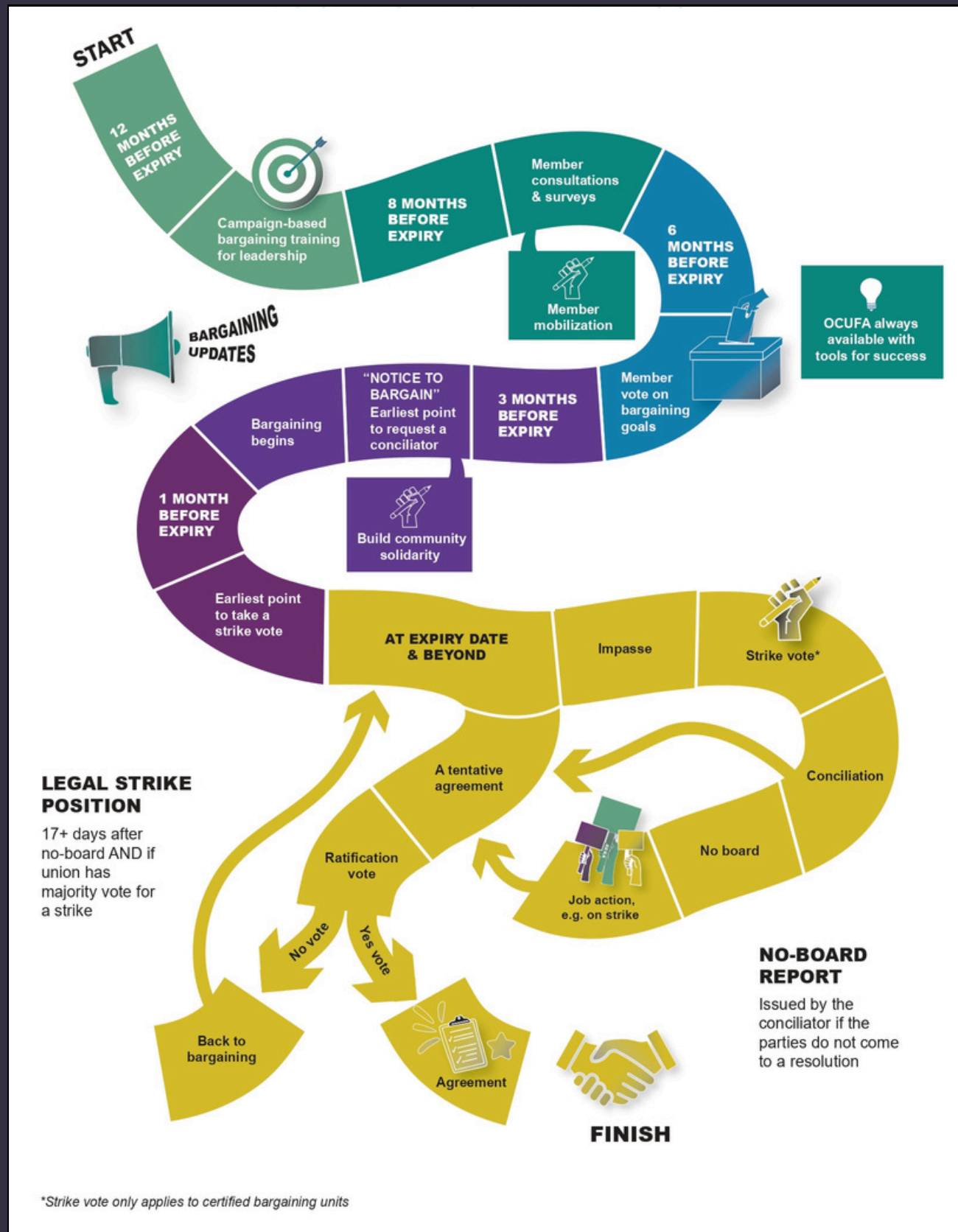
Members vote by secret ballot; majority of those voting must support.

Legal Job Action Possible (Day 17)

Strike or lockout only after expiry + conciliation + No-Board + mandate vote.

Tentative Agreement → Ratification

Members vote yes/no; majority support required for new CA.



Credit: OCUFA

Ontario Legal Framework (OLRA quick guide)

- Bargaining rights & unit scope:** Union certified as exclusive agent; CA covers all Members in the unit.
 - Duty to bargain:** Both sides must meet within 15 days of giving notice to bargain and bargain in good faith.
 - Statutory freeze:** Employer cannot unilaterally change terms after notice to bargain until legal strike/lockout.
 - Strikes & lockouts:** Legal only if CA expired, 16 days after No-Board, and majority mandate vote.
 - Mediation/arbitration:** May be used by consent; arbitration is binding.
 - Ratification:** Members must approve any tentative deal by majority secret-ballot vote.
 - Mandatory clauses:** 1-year minimum term, recognition, no strikes/lockouts during term, dues check-off, binding grievance arbitration.
- Replacement workers: Ontario has no ban. New federal ban (2025) applies only to federally regulated workplaces
- Authoritative references: [Ontario collective bargaining overview](#), [OLRA \(e-Laws\)](#), [ESA](#), [OHSA](#), [Human Rights Code](#), [OLRB](#).



Member Power, Strike Readiness & Resources

How you can help

- Complete surveys & attend Bargaining Unit meetings – your input shapes the mandate.
- Confirm personal contact info (email/phone) with WLUFA.
- Volunteer – help with communications, mobilization, research.
- Stay mobilized – WLUFA will provide protocols, picket/virtual duties, and accessibility options.
- Clarify and curb misinformation – share only official WLUFA updates.
- Vote – in strike-mandate and ratification votes.



Strike Readiness (if needed)

- Volunteers: Communications, Finance, Strike Services, Picket Captains, Engagement, Virtual Pickets, Drivers.
- Strike HQ: Off-campus coordination space.
- Supports: Signs, vests, food/water, portable toilets.
- Finance: WLUFA covers first 3 days; CAUT Defence Fund daily strike pay begin day 4.

CAUT Defence Fund – what it provides

- Daily strike pay (day 4+)
- Strike support loans
- Benefit premium loans
- Mediation/arbitration support
- Defence of bargaining rights
- Solidarity benefits

Learn more: [CAUT Defence Fund By-laws \(Feb 2025\)](#), [Standing Rules & Regulations](#)



Quick FAQs

- Does a strike mandate mean an automatic strike? No. It provides leverage while bargaining continues, but job action is a choice.
- What if I can't picket? WLUFA will assign alternate/virtual duties.
- How will I get updates? Through WLUFA bulletins and emails (make sure we have your personal contact information).

Glossary

- CA – Collective Agreement
- Conciliation – Ministry-assisted bargaining step
- No-Board Report – triggers countdown to legal strike/lockout
- Ratification Vote – Member approval of tentative agreement
- Bargaining Priorities Survey – Member poll that sets bargaining focus
- Bargaining Mandate– written, confidential proposal package used
- Protocols – agreed procedures for how bargaining sessions run
- MoS (Memorandum of Settlement) – signed summary of the tentative deal pending ratification





WLUF

Thank You

Thank you for reading WLUF's Collective Bargaining 101. Your interest in the process strengthens our ability to advocate for better working conditions, defend academic freedom, and protect the rights of our Members.

Whether you're new to collective bargaining or already active in the union, your engagement makes a difference.

**For questions or to get involved, contact
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WLUF's Official Website