
Two Paths: Strike or Settlement

STRIKE POTENTIAL IS A GROWING CONCERN

The colleges and the union have reached a critical juncture in bargaining with two clear and very different paths ahead of us. One leads to a settlement; the other to a potential work stoppage. A strike would be a terrible and unnecessary outcome for our students and our communities.

UNION'S PROPOSALS ARE NOT THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT

The union's main positions focus on changing the control and structure of colleges.

The colleges have estimated that implementing the union's demands would cost the system more than \$400 million every year. This diversion in existing funding would require program cuts.

The colleges have asked the union to withdraw these proposals so that the parties can continue to bargain and reach a negotiated settlement.

UNION'S STAFFING PROPOSAL - MILLIONS IN NEW ANNUAL COSTS

The union has demanded that staffing ratios be implemented across the college system. Ratios would not be responsive to individual programming needs. The proposal would add millions in annual costs to colleges. The colleges have explained that this proposal is not practical. It does not allow colleges to staff courses appropriately. There are thousands of courses across our colleges – it is not realistic to suggest that an arbitrary ratio can manage that level of complexity.

UNION'S SENATE PROPOSAL IS NOT A BARGAINING ISSUE

Legislation makes college boards of governors responsible for governance of the colleges. The colleges' bargaining team has explained it is not in a position to change the governance structure of colleges. Collective bargaining addresses terms and conditions of employment – not governance issues.

UNION DEMANDS EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OVER ACADEMIC DELIVERY

Faculty are critical to academic decision making. Faculty, however, are not the exclusive voice. Colleges seek input from a variety of stakeholders, including external accreditation bodies, program advisory committees, employers, students, and support staff.

The union's demands are about academic control, not academic freedom. The colleges are not in a position to abdicate the responsibility to oversee academic quality, program integrity and outcome consistency.

Colleges support academic freedom. Colleges have established their own academic freedom policies based on their distinct cultures. A single policy on academic freedom in a central collective agreement cannot be responsive to differences among colleges.

COLLEGES' OFFER EXTENDED TO SEPTEMBER 29

As a sign of good faith to avoid a strike, the colleges have extended the offer of settlement to September 29 so that we can reach a settlement before the contract expires on September 30. Please see the complete colleges' offer [here](#).

The offer of settlement provides:

- a 7.5% salary increase (1.5%, 2.0%, 2.0%, 2.0%)
- new maximum salary of \$115,094 will be in place by October 1, 2020
- the 1.5% retroactive increase on April 1, 2017 is six months prior to the expiry of the current agreement resulting in a retroactive payment of up to \$800
- a further lump sum payment of \$500 for full-time faculty and \$250 for partial-load paid on October 1, 2017
- expanded catastrophic drug coverage
- positive changes to pregnancy and parental leave
- no concessions

The offer also provides that the parties will meet after the announced labour law changes (Bill 148) are implemented to determine how they affect the collective agreement and allows for third-party arbitration if the parties cannot resolve any issues that arise.

If a strike occurs, faculty would lose the opportunity for retroactive wage increases and a signing bonus that are contained in the colleges' offer for an early settlement. Every week that a strike continues costs a faculty member 2% of their annual wages.

SEPTEMBER 14: STRIKE VOTE

The strike vote is important because the union has refused to let the faculty vote on the colleges' offer of settlement.

A "yes" to the strike vote sets the faculty on a path toward a strike. If a strike vote mandate is received, the union can take its members out on strike without a further vote by the members.

The colleges have explained that whether the faculty vote in favour of striking or not, the outcome won't change the colleges' view on these key issues or the colleges' ability to accept the radical changes being proposed.

A "no" vote means that the parties can negotiate a settlement without recourse to a strike. The colleges' offer of settlement will remain in place until September 29, 2017.

EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE ON SEPTEMBER 14

It is important for all faculty to vote and let their voices be heard.

The strike vote outcome will be decided by a 50% + 1 majority of those who show up and cast their vote. If only a few people vote, they will decide this question for everyone across the province.

Please take the time to learn more about the issues. The colleges' offer of settlement is available for review [here](#). The union's demands have also been posted.

Academic Bargaining Update is a newsletter from the Colleges' Bargaining Team to keep you informed on progress made or when significant events occur during collective bargaining. The English and French versions of this newsletter are also posted on the College Employer Council's website at <http://www.thecouncil.on.ca/>

We welcome your opinion

We are interested in what you have to say and welcome your opinion. Please feel free to contact any member of the Colleges' Bargaining Team or send your views in writing to: peter.mckeracher@thecouncil.ca