



THE U OF A GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

A Productive Second Session in GSA Negotiations

The GSA Negotiating Team met with the University of Alberta team on May 24th and 26th for its second bargaining session, having exchanged non-monetary bargaining packages in January. This was the first opportunity for the two teams to engage in meaningful negotiations towards a new collective agreement. The GSA Team is pleased to report that the meetings were very productive.

The session began with both teams responding to the other's non-monetary packages. The University gave a comprehensive response to the GSA package, countering on some GSA proposals, rejecting many others, but also seeking more information and leaving the door open to discussion. The GSA Team had questions about the University's initial package that it needed addressed in order to provide counters. The University answered those questions, and the GSA Team committed to producing a comprehensive response by the morning of the May 26th.

After an intervening day for team caucusing, the GSA team presented its comprehensive response to the University, maintaining its position on many of the important GSA proposals the University had rejected, adjusting positions on others in response to the discussions and University's counterproposals, and providing responses on most of the University's proposals.

After some fruitful discussion of the GSA's comprehensive response, the two teams committed to working through the day on several discrete articles on which we appeared to be close to agreement. By the end of the day, we had reached agreement on seven articles:

- Performance Evaluation – a provision making it clear that if a member does not receive a written performance evaluation, their performance is deemed to be satisfactory, making them eligible for annual performance increases
- Term and Variation of the Agreement – language to protect the bargaining agency of the GSA
- Association Recognition – a revision lifting the restriction on the number of stewards allowed and new language providing GSA representatives 15 minutes to present at graduate assistant training or information sessions in departments
- Disciplinary Matters Related to Employment – a provision for the negation of disciplinary letters after a period of time
- Management Rights – a new article in which management accepts a positive obligation to exercise its rights fairly and reasonably.

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- Joint Labour/Management Committee – a new article establishing regular meetings to address matters that come up over the life of the agreement
- Department File – a new article providing members the right to review their files
- The teams also appear to be close to agreement on other articles.

Overall, the GSA Team felt the session was very productive. The tone of the exchanges was respectful and professional, even when the GSA and the University obviously had significantly different interests. While many difficult issues remain on the table, and while monetary issues have yet to be presented, the GSA team hopes that the productive nature of this first session can be maintained in future sessions.

Dates for the next bargaining session have yet to be established. We look forward to providing you with another update after that session.

Thank you for your continuing support and solidarity. You are our strength at the table!

In solidarity,
Your GSA Negotiating Team

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