



TO: CAAT Academic Local Presidents  
FROM: The Faculty Negotiating Team  
DATE: June 12, 2009  
RE: Update on the Start of Talks

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The Union gave notice to bargain on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, which was the first date allowable under the new Colleges Collective Bargaining Act – 90 days prior to expiry. The team met with the employers' committee for three days this week. We had some general discussions regarding our overall approaches to bargaining this round, exchanged opening positions, and tabled some specific proposals. The parties also had some discussion about the report of the Workload Task Force.

We advised the management committee that we were aiming for an on-time settlement, that we believed this would be possible with hard work, and that an on-time settlement had been reached in the past when Barbara Taylor of Canadore College and I chaired the respective teams. Both sides agreed that workload would be a key focus in this round. While it is far too early to judge outcomes with any certainty, there is already a marked, positive, and refreshing contrast with the last round of bargaining.

As you might expect, the employer talked about economic pressures. They have not as yet offered any salary increase or benefit improvements, but it is too early for that. Bargaining always addresses some of the non-monetary issues first. Management's exchange document indicates they will be looking to negotiate a "responsible salary increase." As college faculty comparator groups have been established, and as their increases over the next two, three, or four years are matters of record, we agree that college faculty salary increases must be responsible to those established norms. [I will refrain from comment here about the "responsibility" of college president salary increases that have averaged just under 10% per annum.]

Overall, it was a positive beginning to negotiations. Still, any optimism should be cautious at best. There are and will be great gaps between the parties that will have to be closed. But we have made some progress already and there is a commitment, at least, to make the effort to reach a settlement.

Meetings will continue this month and through the summer. If you have any questions, please contact your team contact person.

For the Team,

Ted Montgomery, Chair