

BARGAINING UPDATE

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

**LETHBRIDGE
COLLEGE**

LOCAL: 071
CHAPTER: 001

NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

Both sides seek informal mediation

Employer removes some concessions, but no agreement on employment security, salary

Despite making progress in the last round of bargaining, your negotiating team and Lethbridge College were unable to resolve all outstanding issues.

As a result, both sides have agreed to make a joint application to go to informal mediation to see if that will help achieve an agreement. We hope to have informal mediation begin in March, but it depends on the availability of a mediator.

How did we get to this point?

On May 7, 2021, your negotiating team and the employer reached an impasse because the college would not remove several rollback proposals from the table, including the four-per-cent cut to salaries and three years of no increases.

The Essential Service Agreement (ESA) process was initiated to allow the parties to move forward with formal mediation. Negotiations to create an ESA are still in progress. Those negotiations happen separately to the bargaining for a new collective agreement.

On Nov. 17, 2021, the employer reached out to advise us that there was a change in their mandate and asked if we would return to the bargaining table. A new date for bargaining was set for Jan. 21, 2022.

At that meeting, the college presented a revised monetary proposal.

The employer withdrew concessions it had been seeking in:

- Article 16, Hours of Work;
- Article 35, Health Plan Benefits; and
- Its salary proposal of minus four per cent and three years of zero increases.

The college's new salary proposal was four years of zero increases. The employer did not address other issues important to us including workload, contracting out and employment security.

The two sides met again on Feb. 3, 2022, when your negotiating team tabled a full counter proposal on all outstanding issues.

Our proposal included:

- Improvements to Article 24, Special Leave;
- Inclusion of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Article 26;
- Improvements to Article 28, Layoff and Recall;
- New articles on workload and contracting out and a letter of understanding (LOU) on employment security;

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- On salary, for the period of July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022, we were seeking a lump-sum payment of \$1,500 for all full-time employees, prorated for all other employee types based on hours worked during the time period. We also sought salary increases of 1.75 per cent on July 1, 2022, and two per cent on July 1, 2023.

The negotiating teams for both sides worked hard for two days to narrow the gap on the outstanding items. This included the college making an improved salary offer, with zero increases until March 31, 2023, followed by raises of 1.25 per cent on April 1, 2023, and 1.5 per cent on Dec. 1, 2023.

By the afternoon of Feb. 4, they were down primarily to employment security and salary issues.

At this point, it became evident the employer's team has reached its mandate and had no further flexibility.

This was frustrating to your negotiating team, because the cost to the employer to make the final improvements we sought was small.

With the inability to move further at this time, the two sides agreed to jointly seek informal mediation.

We will keep you informed of any developments. In the meantime, please reach out to your negotiating team if you have questions.

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