

Acadia Faculty Declares Strike Deadline of February 1, 2022

Wolfville-- The Acadia University Faculty Association has set a strike deadline of February 1. Meetings with the provincially appointed conciliator in the first week of January failed to result in substantial progress. On Friday, January 14, the conciliator filed a report declaring an impasse in negotiations. This set in motion a 14-day cooling-off period, after which both AUFA and Acadia's Board of Governors are in a legal position to begin a strike or lockout.

AUFA President Andrew Biro expressed disappointment with the Board's approach to negotiations up to this point: "AUFA has a number of carefully crafted and reasonable proposals that will strengthen Acadia's academic sector and allow us to deliver on our promise of a personalised education for students. Unfortunately, the Board's Team has refused to respond to most of our proposals, other than to say 'no.'" Moreover, the Board refuses to back down from its own proposals which will erode many of the rights and benefits that existed under the previous collective agreement. Despite six straight years of budgetary surpluses, including a record \$6.5 Million in 2020-21, the Board has indicated through their proposals that they think investing in better working conditions for faculty is unsustainable. Instead, they are looking to strip part-time faculty of any job security, to remove commitments to hire a minimum number of tenure-track professors and librarians, to turn over decisions about medical leave to a consultant paid for by an insurance company, and to take away the faculty right to vote on changes to their own health benefits. "Investing in faculty is investing in a sustainable Acadia," asserted Biro.

Despite the impasse, AUFA remains committed to trying to reach a tentative agreement without a strike: "AUFA has been ready to engage in meaningful collective bargaining from the very beginning of this process," Biro stated, "but the Board's team hasn't responded to most of our proposals. If it's true that they value faculty, which they keep asserting in their communications, then it's time they start working with us to negotiate an acceptable contract." Unfortunately, by not working cooperatively with AUFA during the negotiations process, the Board is choosing to potentially disrupt the current semester and adding stress to an already stressful time. AUFA held a strike authorization vote between November 22-25, 2021 which delivered an overwhelming mandate. Ninety percent of members participated, with 94% of voters authorizing AUFA to strike, should it become necessary. In declaring the above strike deadline, AUFA is prepared to take job action to safeguard Acadia's high-quality post-secondary education, and is calling on the Board to avert a strike by committing to meaningful negotiations.

The Acadia University Faculty Association is the certified bargaining agent for 350 full-time and part-time professors, librarians, archivists, and instructors at Acadia University. Follow us on Twitter (@AcadiaFaculty) for further information and updates.

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