

Dear SFUFA Members:

The following bulletin contains information on:

- Collective Bargaining
- Academic Plan and Faculty Hiring
- Best Practices in Departmental Governance and Workload
- Reminder – alternate contacts

## **Collective Bargaining**

Bargaining is underway towards a new Collective Agreement. The SFUFA and administration teams have exchanged all non-monetary proposals and begun substantive discussion in a number of areas. While it is early in the process, meetings have been generally constructive so far, though in a few areas – most notably related to collegial governance and workload – we continue to find the administration shows little interest in addressing faculty priorities.

Members may recall that in BC, public sector employers – including universities - have generally been provided what is called the PSEC Mandate, a directive from government regarding what administrative bargaining teams are authorized to negotiate. Such a mandate has not yet been released. While initial monetary offers have been raised at some bargaining tables, then, it is unclear when or if anything more may be released, or what impact this might have on the admin's appetite for discussing issues of compensation.

Bargaining will continue through July, and then the teams will break for August, returning to the table in the Fall.

## **Academic Plan and Faculty Hiring**

SFU continues to develop its new academic plan, the latest draft of which (draft #3) is available [here](#). Without making comment on the details of this latest draft, SFUFA is encouraged to see that faculty growth is explicitly prioritized, and together with planned decreases in undergraduate enrollment offers some hope of improved faculty-student ratios. Of course, the workload implications are less clear, as cuts in other areas have already and are likely to continue to impact faculty; nonetheless, having seen many years of de-prioritization of faculty hiring, an explicit goal to increase faculty numbers and faculty share of operating venues is at least a welcome start.

Of course, these projected directions are only that, and the faculty hiring freeze has already made the existing challenges worse in many areas. Commitment to realization of these goals will require lifting of the hiring freeze, and greater attention to re-alignment of budgets with the real needs of academic units. This means more work must be done to ensure that Departmental staff resources are maintained if not increased, temporary instruction funding is restored, and any continuing cuts that are deemed necessary are focused on the administrative ranks and away from the student-facing and academic-unit based jobs that most directly impact the core teaching and research mission of the University.

There is much to be done, and after many years of neglect it will take investment of resources, careful attention to bloat and waste, and active engagement of faculty voices to make the University's budget better align with the goals of a research institution. There are, however, small indications that perhaps things are changing in the right direction. We hope soon to hear of the next critical step – the lifting of the faculty hiring freeze and renewed investment in the people – faculty and staff alike – whose work is directly focused on teaching, research, and front-facing student service.

### **Best Practices in Departmental Governance and Workload**

The Association Executive and the SFUFA Equity Committee are interested in identifying not only where challenges exist, but where policies and protocols have been effective in protecting and enhancing collegiality in general, and approaches to workload in particular.

We invite members to share with us any Departmental protocols that are working well to ensure Departmental autonomy and meaningful consideration of faculty needs. We hope to be able to share examples of best practices to assist units that are seeking to develop or renew their own internal guidelines.

### **Reminder – Alternate Contacts**

Given periodic disruption of SFU's internet and email systems, the Association is collecting alternate contacts (email or phone) for members, to be used only in the event that we need to reach you during a time that the University's communications systems are not functioning. Members can send alternate email addresses and/ or phone numbers to SFUFA Executive Director, Brian Green, at [bsgreen@sfu.ca](mailto:bsgreen@sfu.ca)