Bargaining Update: U of R Academic Staff

October 18, 2018
October 4 Bargaining Update

In recent bargaining sessions, University Management:
• Wants to eliminate peer review in tenure and promotion decisions
• Wants 20 mandatory letters from your former students to support your career progress
• Rejected standardized teaching hours
• Offered 0%, 0%, 0.5%, 0.5% in salary adjustments over four years
• Wants to eliminate merit
• Wants to eliminate Preference completely for sessionals
• Wants a lifetime cap on sessional teaching (30 courses and you are done forever)
The University’s October 15 Bargaining Update

“The University has guarded, and will continue to guard, the academic freedom of faculty. It values tenure as an essential concomitant of academic freedom, and of a vibrant university,”

- Written statement from Thomas Chase, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) at the U of R. (CBC, Oct 15 2008).
• April 17 – University proposes interest based bargaining on 17 and 18
• May 17 – 1st URFA rejection
• May 23 – 2nd URFA rejection
• Aug. 16 – 3rd URFA rejection
• Sept. 26 – 4th URFA rejection
• Oct. 3 – Bargaining – University insists 17 & 18 is their proposal
• Oct. 3 – 5th URFA rejection
• Oct. 4 – Bargaining update email
• Oct. 5 – OWL meet and greet
• Oct. 6 – Social media activity draws national attention
• Oct. 10 – New proposal from University on 17 & 18
• Oct. 12 – CBC story
• Oct. 15 – Email from Tom Chase to URFA membership and as a public statement
Sessionals
URFA’s position is that sessionals are valued and necessary members of the university community.

URFA’s goals are to increase the permanent, full-time opportunities sessionals have for employment, while decreasing precarity for those who continue to teach in a sessional capacity.
• April 17 – URFA proposes a sessional review process, an enhanced preference system, transparent hiring process, and equitable benefit access

• Aug. 16 – First discussion from University on sessionals

• Sept. 26 – University rejects:
  • enhanced preference
  • University rejected proposed hiring process
  • University rejected sessional access to parental leave salary top up

• Oct. 3 – University proposes lifetime teaching cap and elimination of preference.

• Oct. 10 – Latest discussion at the table
  • URFA rejects elimination of preference and lifetime teaching cap
  • University rejects equitable access to leaves and benefits
  • University proposes alternative to the current preference system
Sessional Preference Proposal

URFA’s latest proposal:

• URFA proposed a priority preference system in which eligible sessionals are considered for appointments in advance of postings in a department/faculty
• The current proposal is that after receiving 25 contracts in 5 years, sessionals will be considered for appointments in advance of postings
Outstanding Issues

• Instructor/Faculty ratio proposal
• Performance review and career progress
• New merit system
• Pension and benefits
• Compensation
Instructor/Faculty Ratio

• University proposals:
  
  • 1<sup>st</sup> University Position: eliminate instructor/faculty ratio
  • 2<sup>nd</sup> University Position: 25% instructor/faculty ratio
  • 3<sup>rd</sup> University Position: revert to original language of a 13% instructor/faculty ratio
  • The University has been in violation since at least 2015
  • The University is currently in violation of this ratio by 5-7 percentage points
Instructor/Faculty Ratio

URFA’s Proposal:
• 1st URFA Position: Create a faculty to student ratio calculated annually
• 2nd URFA Position: Faculty to student ratio based on four year moving average

“Based on the proposals brought to the table, URFA continues to focus on maintaining a ratio as a means of supporting research and investing in faculty positions. The University cannot accept any ratio that dictates staffing levels and funding commitments outside of the academic planning and budget processes.” (Human Resources Website Oct 15, 2018)
Performance Review and Career Progress

• URFA is committed to protecting the collegial and peer-based review process enshrined in the collective agreement
• URFA’s goals are to reduce the administrative burden of the review process and provide more time for tenured academics to develop research, service, and teaching between review cycles
• Create a review process to support mentorship and development
Performance Review and Career Progress

October 10 - The University submits a proposal that:

• Rejects the sessional review process as proposed by URFA
• Eliminates the tripartite system
• Introduces an optional career planning process for tenured members
New Merit System

• Membership survey strongly supports merit.
• URFA is committed to a system that:
  • awards meritorious performance
  • reduces administrative burden
New Merit System

October 10 - The University proposes the following:

• Centralize merit decisions
• Yearly cap of 50 merit awards university-wide
• Removing merit decisions from the appeal process
• Placing a merit ceiling on all Academic ranks
Pension and Benefits

URFAs goals are to:

• Increase sessional access to benefit provisions, including parental leave top up
• Achieve improvements to benefits comparable to other units on campus
• Provide adequate pension benefits
Pension and Benefits

October 10 - The University rejected:

- Improvements to parental leave
- Providing sessionals with education leave
- Including sessionals in full-time benefits
- Increasing the flexible spending account
- Maintaining liability insurance for members in the performance of their duties
- Providing sessionals with access to family tuition scholarships
- Increasing family tuition scholarships
- Enhancing pensions
Compensation

On October 10 - the University:

• Maintained its original position of 0%, 0%, 0.5% and 0.5% salary increases
• Withdrew their proposal to add three increments to ceilings, arguing that it was tied to their proposal to eliminate merit
• Rejected providing sessionals with an APEA account
The Road Ahead

Throughout bargaining, the University has demonstrated a willingness to undermine the core functions and mission of the university in pursuit of the bottom line and administrative power.

URFA is committed to the bargaining process. To date, the University’s proposals have been largely unworkable and frequently inconsistent.
Stay Informed and Show Your Support

• Read the regular URFA bargaining update emails
• Visit the bargaining team tabling on campus
• Show support by wearing a button
• Like and Follow URFA on Facebook and Twitter
• Contact the URFA Academic Bargaining team at any time if you have questions