FAQs: Seeking a Strike Mandate

1. **What does a strike mandate mean?**

   A strike mandate is achieved through a strike vote. A “strike vote” is a legal term defined in the Saskatchewan Employment Act (SEA). Voting “yes” in a strike vote signals to the University the level of displeasure with the current outcome of negotiations.

2. **Will a strike mandate automatically lead to picket lines or job action?**

   No. A strike vote does not necessarily mean there will be a strike or job action. In fact, the best way to avoid a strike is a strong strike mandate from the membership. This gives your bargaining committee the ability to return to the table with the clear support of the membership, and push the University toward bargaining a strong collective agreement and resolve outstanding issues.

3. **Why does the negotiating committee believe a strike mandate is necessary?**

   Your bargaining committee believes a strike mandate is essential to move bargaining forward at this time. Throughout bargaining, the University has undermined the core functions and mission of the University in pursuit of the bottom line and administrative power. To date, the University’s proposals have been largely unworkable and inconsistent. URFA is committed to the bargaining process and wants to go back to the table with the clear support of the membership.

4. **Can management lock us out after we take a strike mandate?**

   The management of the University would have to follow the same process that URFA has to follow under the Saskatchewan Employment Act (SEA): bargain until impasse, inform the Minister of the impasse, inform the Minister of Labour Relations of the impasse, resume mediated bargaining with a Ministry-appointed mediator, if mediation fails there is a two week cooling off period, and only then would management be in a position to lock us out or URFA in a position to withdraw services on 48 hours’ notice.

5. **What happens if I am out of the country on University business when the strike is called?**

   URFA would negotiate with the University a strike protocol in advance of any job action which would address this type of situation as well as others. While we can’t give you a definitive answer at this point in time, we would have that information in advance of calling the strike.

6. **How much will I be paid if we are on strike?**
The Compensation you will receive would be determined by the strike committee. You must participate to receive this payment (i.e. picket line, committee work, etc).

7. **What happens to my benefits during a strike?**

URFA will pay your benefits premiums on your behalf so there is no disruption to your benefits.

*In accordance with the SEA “no person shall cancel or threaten to cancel an employee’s membership in a benefit plan if the union tenders payment...”*

8. **How many hours need to be provided to the strike to obtain strike pay?**

This would be something determined by the Strike Action Committee.

9. **If a volunteer works on a strike committee, do they also need to picket?**

This would be a matter for the Strike Action Committee to determine.

10. **I am currently on maternity leave. Will my leave (including my top up) be affected by a strike?**

URFA would negotiate with management a strike protocol in advance of any job action which would address this type of situation as well as others. While we can’t give you a definitive answer at this point in time, we would have that information in advance of calling the strike. Members on approved leaves would not be required to work on picket lines/committee unless they chose to do so.

11. **What happens if I am on vacation when the strike starts?**

URFA would negotiate with management a strike protocol in advance of any job action which would address this type of situation as well as others. While we can’t give you a definitive answer at this point in time, we would have that information in advance of calling the strike. Members on approved leaves would not be required to work on picket lines/committee unless they chose to do so.

The Strike Action Committee would also make a decision regarding strike pay for those members on approved leaves.

12. **Can the parties (URFA and Management) agree to take outstanding issues to arbitration for a decision rather than going on strike?**

This can only happen with the agreement of all parties. However, this means you put the decision into the hands of a 3rd party and have to accept those findings as final and binding.

13. **What happens to my pay in the event of rotating job action?**

This would be something determined by the Strike Action Committee.
14. **I am a sessional. What happens if the strike occurs during my appointment?**

   If a strike occurs during your appointment, you would be able to receive strike pay the same as any other U of R Academic member. As with full time faculty, any benefits and pension contributions would also be covered by URFA as well. It is also illegal for the University to discipline or reprimand any members who participate in a lawful strike.

15. **What happens if some or all of my duties are deemed an essential service?**

   If it is deemed by the parties that you provide an essential service, URFA and management would agree to a protocol for the hours that you would be required to work and duties that you would be required to perform. You would be compensated and receive benefits for the hours worked. You have a legal obligation to perform these duties and would not be able to refuse.

16. **What happens if I need to go on sick leave during the strike?**

   The employer cannot withhold benefits if the union is tendering payment of premiums. This would be an issue that URFA would address in a strike protocol.