February 5, 2019

**Statement by URFA President on emails sent by the employer**

URFA Members,

On October 15th and 29th, and November 11th 2018, as well as on January 31st and February 4th 2019, Provost Tom Chase sent e-mails about the current state of bargaining between the University of Regina and the U of R Academic bargaining team. URFA is deeply concerned about these messages.

Unfortunately, because Saskatchewan currently has labour legislation designed to weaken unions, the employer has the right to directly communicate with our members during bargaining, while such a broad latitude would not be allowed in most other Canadian jurisdictions. Here is the language from the Saskatchewan Employment Act:

6-62 (1) It is unfair labour practice for an employer, or any person acting on behalf of the employer, to do any of the following:

(a) subject to subsection (2), to interfere with, restrain, intimidate, threaten, or coerce an employee in the exercise of any right conferred by this Part;

(2) Clause (1)(a) does not prohibit an employer from communicating facts and its opinions to its employees.

The employer is not altering the facts in the messages, however the context is blatantly pro-employer because it presents the bargaining process as efficient and collaborative, while the truth is that our bargaining team has been struggling for 10 months against a stubborn employer and had to secure a strike vote before finally obtaining the meager gains described in the messages.

All URFA members already know that the employer speaks for the employer and expresses only the views of the employer. URFA is the only entity with the authority to speak for our members and our bargaining team is the only group that exactly represents our views and defends our best interests.
I am also appalled by the “information” e-mails sent by the employer to the students. URFA does not have access to the student mailing lists and therefore cannot reach every student. It will be up to our members to provide students with our perspective.

Given the legal context in Saskatchewan, asking for these messages to stop is a waste of time, because it is just too good of a tool for the employer!

However, we can express our displeasure by asking our names to be removed from the Provost’s mailing list. **On Feb. 6th, at exactly 12:00 pm, simply write “Please Unsubscribe [Your Name] from Provost’s List” in the “subject” line of an e-mail to provost@uregina.ca with Cc. to urfa@uregina.ca.**

In Solidarity,

Sylvain Rheault
URFA President