Sessional Instructors at FNUUniv Vote to Join URFA!

Following an organizing campaign supported by the University of Regina Faculty Association (URFA), Sessional Instructors at First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv) have voted overwhelmingly to join URFA. On May 6, in the presence of representatives from both the Faculty Association and the FNUUniv administration, the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board counted ballots submitted during the 14-day voting period. A clear majority of participants voted in favour of attaining representation and collective bargaining rights through URFA, and the SLRB is expected to issue a certification order shortly. Results of the vote are available by visiting the URFA office (325 College West, University of Regina).

Collective Bargaining Preparations Begin

Under the Saskatchewan Employment Act, negotiations for a first collective agreement must commence within 20 days of certification, or at a time mutually agreed between the parties. While details are still being deliberated, during the coming weeks URFA will be working diligently to prepare for negotiations toward a first collective agreement. Sessional Instructors will be asked to share their experience and issues in the workplace, and volunteers from the membership will be sought to work with URFA representatives to identify concerns and develop solutions to be advocated for by negotiations over the coming months. URFA will be calling upon members of the new bargaining unit to become involved in their negotiating and advisory committees, and thanks everyone involved in supporting the campaign.
Background

On April 8, 2016, URFA filed a certification application with the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board, on behalf of Sessional Instructors at First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv). Sessional Instructors at FNUniv are among the remaining few communities of academic instructors in the province not already represented by a union or association. URFA also represents faculty and administrative, professional, and technical staff at First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina, and academic staff at Campion and Luther College.

Wages and working conditions for Sessional Instructors at FNUniv have fallen behind those of their colleagues at the University of Regina and across Canada. Though vital to the core mission and values of the university, these committed employees have not been afforded the same rights, benefits and protections negotiated by comparable groups across the province, and they face a greater degree of insecurity in their employment. Collective bargaining rights will empower FNUniv Sessionals to negotiate toward improvements to working conditions such as wages and benefits, transparent hiring procedures, job security protections, access to teaching resources, and fair dispute resolution mechanisms.

FNUniv’s current strategic plan calls on the entire community to strengthen and solidify its leadership role as a successful and sustainable model of Indigenous higher learning. On the eve of FNUniv’s 40th anniversary, representation and collective bargaining rights as members of URFA will provide a mechanism to help ensure that the contribution Sessional Instructors make to the success of the university is recognized.

Visit www.fncampaign and www.urfa.ca for more information.