Job Action FAQs and Protocol for Members

What does it mean that URFA has set a legal strike deadline of March 28, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.?
It means that unless our negotiating team reaches a tentative settlement by this date and time, or a settlement seems imminent, unionized faculty at the University of Regina will go on strike.

What is Legal Strike Action?
Legal strike action is “...the cessation of work or a refusal to work or to continue working by employees in combination or in accordance with a common understanding for the purpose of compelling an employer to agree to terms or conditions of employment.... Legal strike action is a very serious matter. Legal strike action is not an end; it is a means to obtain a collective agreement.” (University of Regina Faculty Association Strike Manual, n.d.)

Strike Action Protocols
In the event of a legal strike, members will follow URFA protocols as described below. A primary caveat is that members will refrain from teaching and conducting administrative service. URFA solidarity is dependent upon all members participating in strike action. If some members choose not to participate then, bargaining leverage is weakened.

Access to University email and phones may be deactivated immediately by our Employer. It is essential that all members provide alternate email to URFA as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.

What concrete preparations has URFA made for a possible strike on March 28, 2019?
URFA has established its strike headquarters and arranged strike workshops (Monday March 25 at 10:00 a.m. (ED 230) and Tuesday March 26th at 1:15 p.m (Ed. Auditorium 106.1). Pickets, finances and all other aspects of strike preparation have also been arranged.

Where is the URFA Strike Headquarters?
The Q Nightclub and Lounge, 2030 Broad St, Regina, SK. Zoom Access will be provided for remote access.

What happens in the event of a strike?
You will be expected to withhold teaching and administrative service in order to support job action. URFA will not deny access that would result in irreparable damage to ongoing research
and/or materials for teaching such as damage to plant, human, and animal life, loss of life, loss of live and/or decomposable materials, damage to equipment or supplies, or loss of non-repeatable research/experiments in progress. See below for further examples of exceptional circumstances.

**My research requires that I be on campus**
URFA will not deny access that would result in irreparable damage to ongoing research and/or materials for teaching such as damage to plant, human, and animal life, loss of life, loss of live and/or decomposable materials, damage to equipment or supplies, or loss of non-repeatable research/experiments in progress. See below for further examples of exceptional circumstances. Facilities shall include but are not limited to any research centre, institute, or laboratory listed at [https://www.uregina.ca/research/research-expertise/centres-institutes.html](https://www.uregina.ca/research/research-expertise/centres-institutes.html)

**Can I attend a conference for which employer approval was given prior to strike action?**
URFA encourages all members to participate in events or travel requests submitted to the University prior to March 28, 2019.

**I am on sabbatical; am I on strike too?**
It is URFA’s position that the Collective Agreement remains in force until the negotiation of a new agreement. In the event that a strike is necessary, the URFA executive will argue that sabbaticants and those on approved leaves should not be considered on strike because they were not engaged in teaching, or involved in supervisory or administrative duties. This is conditional, of course, on our Employer’s position.

**What should I do if I’m on a non-research leave (e.g. family, general or medical leave)?**
It is URFA’s position that the Collective Agreement remains in force until the negotiation of a new agreement. In the event that a strike is necessary, the URFA executive will argue that sabbaticants and those on approved leaves should not be considered on strike because they were not engaged in teaching, or involved in supervisory or administrative duties. This is conditional, of course, on our Employer’s position.

URFA considers the following groups to be non-participants in the strike and should continue to receive salary and benefits from the university: sabbaticants, persons on approved sick leave, and pregnancy; parental or adoption leave; persons on pre-approved paid leave of absence (including compassionate leave), court leave, education leave, and exchange leave.

If you have questions about your status please email urfa@uregina.ca for clarification.

**What must I do to qualify for ‘strike pay’?**
Members on strike may not receive their university salary during a strike or lockout. However, members who participate in the strike do receive strike pay from URFA, which is augmented by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Defence Fund. Strike pay is compensation for members who are on strike. To be on strike means to honour the picket-line, to withdraw your labour from our Employer, remove yourself from campus and to engage in
strike duty. Striking members must cease teaching, including part-time teaching, student and staff supervision, library work, service, and administrative duties including on-line and off-campus classes.

URFA will not ask members to withdraw from research during a strike. However, if our Employer locks the doors to striking members URFA will ask that all members refrain from research to ensure fairness for all members, including those who require access to labs but are locked out of their labs.

Strike duty typically involves serving on the picket-line (normally one short shift daily - 4 hours), but it can also mean helping to run the strike headquarters, providing food, writing leaflets, assisting with communications and media relations, and serving on the Job Action Committee and its subcommittees (Finance Committee, Publicity Committee, Picket Line Committee). The URFA executive encourages its members to get involved in ways that are best suited to the abilities of members and the needs of the strike. Contact URFA to determine what activity you can participate in to receive strike pay.

**What about members at a distance?**
The most important thing in any strike is the withdrawal of labour power, or work duties. For URFA members, this means ceasing all of the teaching, and service tasks that make up their normal workload, for the duration of the strike. This is what disrupts business as usual and puts pressure on our Employer to settle. If you cannot picket, contact urfa@uregina.ca. There may be other jobs you can do at a distance. If URFA cannot provide you with any kind of distance alternative to strike duties, you are still qualified to receive strike pay so long as you are not working. Please contact urfa@uregina.ca to discuss your individual situation.

**What do I need to know about strike pay?**
Strike pay is $100.00 per day. It is non-taxable. Strike pay will be provided as lump sums. The strike fund will fully cover your pension contributions and your benefits (like dental care) while you are on strike. The first payment would be one week to 10 days after first day of strike and thereafter once a week. While CAUT rules stipulate that strike benefits start on the 4th calendar day of a strike or lockout, URFA will bridge this from its reserves, in part or in whole. Payments are made by URFA and will be available at the URFA office CM 122 or at strike headquarters at the Q Nightclub and Lounge, 2030 Broad St, Regina. Having contact with strike headquarters is essential for communicating information, boosting morale, and maintaining contact with colleagues during a strike.

I work part-time, but I am a Bargaining Unit Member. Am I eligible for the same strike pay as a full-time Member?
All members who engage in strike action duties receive the same strike pay.

**Will a strike affect application timelines?**
At this time the Collective Agreement and any timelines therein remain in effect.
What should I do if I have received funding from an external source to conduct research?  
Unless suspended by the University, all research funds from university, federal, provincial and any other external granting agency will continue to be available to researchers, and can be used for pre-approved research, travel and other approved research expenditures.

What if I get an email from a granting agency/journal editor/scholarly association during the strike? Can I even respond?  
Yes you can. But URFA recommends that you advise them that you are on strike, and, as a result, you will not do reviews or assessments during the period of the strike and will likely not be able to meet any deadline that falls within a period of work stoppage.

I have: a manuscript to finish/ a boatload of Tri-Council grants to review/ letters of recommendations to write... What am I supposed to do about all of that?  
Do what you can before the strike starts to minimize any lasting consequence of a strike action on others: write those letters of recommendation now; finish reviewing that MS; contact editors/grant administrators and explain what could be going on in the event of a strike. What you choose to do once a strike begins, however, is between you and your conscience.

What if my class is a shared program with Saskatchewan Polytechnic?  
Faculty from Saskatchewan Polytechnic have expressed their support of our strike action. They will not co-teach any joint course offerings with our Employer.

What happens to Faculty at federated colleges during the strike?  
Faculty at Campion and Luther Colleges and the First Nations University of Canada are covered under separate collective agreements. While faculty at those institutions may express solidarity with striking workers, their classes are expected to continue and they will be permitted to cross picket lines in order to gain entry to instruct their courses.

Can the provincial government legislate our return to work?  
We are not covered under essential services legislation. It is unlikely that the government will legislate us back to work.

If I have a moral objection to the strike and will not picket, do I get strike pay?  
Only those who participate in picketing and other strike activities as determined by the Job Action Committee will receive strike pay.

Am I eligible for EI during the strike?  
When a strike, lockout, or other type of labour dispute makes you lose your employment or stops you from working, you are usually not entitled to receive EI benefits. However, you may be entitled to receive benefits if:

- you are not participating in the labour dispute (e.g. sessionals who are no longer employed by the University);
- you are not directly financing the dispute;
• you are not directly affected by the dispute (that is, the conflict at issue will not change your pay or your working conditions); or
• you had already made arrangements to have a leave of absence approved before the work stoppage started (for example, you applied for sick leave, maternity leave, parental leave, compassionate care or family caregiver leave, or leave to take authorized training—in these cases, you may be entitled to receive benefits, as long as you qualify for them). Source: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/regular-benefits/eligibility.html.

Will I retain or lose benefits coverage and pension contributions by our employer?
Benefits coverage will continue during the strike. Our Employer is not legally obligated to continue with pension contributions during the strike. Our Employer MAY ensure that there is no discontinuation of benefits coverage [examples: medical, dental, and pension], and will invoice the Association for the cost of maintaining benefits for the duration of the strike. In the event that our employer ceases pension contributions, URFA will cover our employer’s contribution, which will be calculated and included in your strike pay.

How will information be sent to us?
URFA’s Bargaining Committee and Job Action Committee will draft updates as needed and the association will email you. In the event of a strike, the University may cut off all access to your uregina.ca email address. It is important that you submit your alternate email address to URFA at the following link: https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2hnBJSkZSPigCgd so that we can continue to contact you during the strike. Information will also be posted on the URFA website (https://www.urfa.ca) on a regular basis throughout the strike.

What should we do about exams and assignments if we are on strike?
It is up to you if you want to mark student work while on strike, but you cannot officially submit their marks to the Employer.

What about class time and course content after a strike?
In the event of a strike (or lockout), we will do our best to ensure that any Return to Work Protocol negotiated upon reaching a settlement would be communicated to our membership as quickly as possible. URFA will work diligently to mitigate the impact on students.

What if I want to continue teaching during the strike?
Performing teaching duties would undermine collective bargaining now and in the future.

What if I want to continue with service during the strike?
Performing service duties (volunteering on a professional association board or a committee) would undermine collective bargaining now and in the future.

How will it affect my strike pay if I am ill, must care for young children, be at home with a sick child, or must attend to a family emergency that will take me out of town during the strike?
As much as possible URFA wishes to accommodate the needs and circumstances of its members. Approved absences are those who are sick or have sick family members, those going to research-related conferences. Contact URFA to discuss options for receiving strike pay under these circumstances.

**What if I have some extraordinary financial commitments that I can’t meet, what can be done to help me?**
We will do everything we can to accommodate the needs and circumstances of members, on a case by case basis. There is an Emergency Fund to assist members facing difficult financial situations. Contact URFA for more information.

**TAs are part of a different union. Will they continue to work?**
TAs will continue to work, however, you cannot assign work to TAs while on strike.

**What about Faculty at the affiliated colleges and FNUNiv? Do they teach their classes? Are they permitted to cross our picket line?**
Yes. They are not under our contract and permitted to teach classes. As such they should be treated respectfully and allowed to cross the picket line.

**If we are on strike, are we supposed to delay marking, and then do that work after the strike is over?**
Marks are not to be submitted to DOME during a strike, but this does not mean that you must wait until the strike has concluded to mark student work.

**Are we allowed to cross picket lines for medical services or to use the gym or other on-campus facilities?**
Yes, provided no teaching of student or service for the university is involved.

**What if we are in the process of hiring new faculty while a strike is on?**
These candidates are potential future URFA members and we encourage hiring people. Requests for exceptions can be requested from URFA.

**Still have questions?**
Contact the URFA Office at urfa@uregina.ca and we will do our best to answer them.