Job Action FAQs for Students

Librarians, instructors, professors and Sessionals have no desire to strike. But they have been without a contract for two years as of July 1, 2019. We have worked hard to negotiate with University administrators, but they have been slow to bargain with little enthusiasm pushing bargaining and then mediation well into 2019. We want to negotiate a fair and reasonable contract. Our teaching environment is your learning environment.

What is the current status of bargaining between URFA and University Administration?
Many bargaining sessions over the last six months have yielded important agreements on a variety of issues. However, recent mediation to attempt to secure an agreement both parties were satisfied with was unsuccessful. There are two bargaining session remaining on March 25th and 26th in order to bridge the gap between both parties’ perspectives.

What are the outstanding issues?
We are working on three main issues during this round of bargaining: recognizing the value of teaching for Sessional Lecturers; compensation that keeps pace with the rate of inflation; and ensuring the continuance of the University’s research mission.

How do these issues affect students in general?
Your learning conditions are our working conditions, and we work daily to support - and take pride in - the quality of your education.

- Have you ever had trouble contacting a professor whose class you wished to take, or who you wanted to ask for a letter of reference?
- Have you noticed that some of the classes you sign up for do not have a faculty member’s name attached to them until the very last minute?

Almost 50% of teachers at University of Regina are paid per course, work on short-term contracts, and have no job security, benefits or pensions. Many of your instructors barely scrape by because University of Regina’s administration is addicted to an undervalued, just-in-time model of employment in order to maximize profits. Therefore, maintaining a strong line towards job security for Sessional Lecturers and fair compensation for all faculty members can only improve the quality of your education at the University of Regina.

Why not just settle for an agreement in order to prevent a legal strike situation?
URFA is alarmed that administration of the University of Regina has put its core mission of high-quality teaching and research at risk by failing to reinvest in its front line people - librarians,
professors, instructors and sessionals. In fact, Universities all across Canada are beginning to be run by a “business model” rather than a “public education” model where profits (e.g. the overuse of underpaid Sessional Lecturers) are emphasized over the accessibility and quality of education (e.g. overly large class sizes). We are fighting for actual adherence to the University’s core mission rather than just being a nice slogan to recruit students.

If no agreement is reached by March 28th, 2019....How will the legal strike affect me?
Classes will almost certainly be cancelled in the event of a strike, and your instructors will likely be prevented from accessing URCourses and email. Your instructors will not be coming on to campus for office hours. Although URFA regrets this very real disruption in your academic year that a strike may entail, all of this is done in the long-term interests of improving the quality of your education at the University of Regina.

What will strike action involve?
You will see picket lines at university main entrances. These picket lines will not prevent access to the university grounds. Please feel free to stop and chat with instructors and librarians on the picket lines. If you want, you can even join us! We appreciate your support.

How long will it last?
The length of the possible strike will be determined by progress at the bargaining table. This necessarily involves both the Employer and URFA.

How will the semester be impacted? How might students make up for lost course time?
URFA wants to reach a fair agreement with the employer and, if a strike is necessary, wants to minimize the impact on students. URFA and the Employer will negotiate a back-to-work agreement that will enable students to resume courses.

What will happen to spring Convocation?
Spring Convocation is in June. Historically the average length of a faculty strike in Canada has been four days. It is the responsibility of our Employer to ensure student grades have been submitted in a timely fashion.

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.

Who makes the decision about my exams and academic year?
All issues to do with academic accommodation for missed classes and exams will be determined by the administration of the University of Regina. Please contact the President and Provost directly at:
- the.president@uregina.ca
- Provost@uregina.ca
Graduate students will most certainly have other unanswered questions. We recommend they contact Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Regina. Several questions have been answered below.

**I’m a TA/Teaching Assistant – will I still receive my pay?**
Most likely, but please check with your union for clarification by emailing CUPE2419@uregina.ca.

**If there is a strike, will graduate classes and supervisions continue?**
No. Graduate classes will be cancelled and supervision of graduate students by faculty members will be interrupted.

**What happens if my thesis exam is postponed into the next semester?**
All issues to do with academic accommodation for exams will be determined by the administration of the University of Regina. Please contact the President and Provost directly at:

- [the.president@uregina.ca](mailto:the.president@uregina.ca)
- [Provost@uregina.ca](mailto:Provost@uregina.ca)

**Will I still receive my funding?**
Yes. Graduate students will continue to receive their funding during a strike.

**Will I still have access to my lab, office and the library?**
Yes.

**What about the deadlines for my thesis progression?**
Student accommodations have been made during strikes at other Canadian universities for such things as grant deadlines and other program milestones. However, these questions can only be answered by the senior UofR administration, including FGSR, Deans and Associate Deans. We recommend you ask them directly at:

- [grad.studies@uregina.ca](mailto:grad.studies@uregina.ca)
- [the.president@uregina.ca](mailto:the.president@uregina.ca)
- [Provost@uregina.ca](mailto:Provost@uregina.ca)

**Is there anything I can do?**
Tell the Administration that you are concerned about the erosion of quality of education at the University of Regina, and support URFA by sending an email to:

- President Vianne Timmons ([The.President@uregina.ca](mailto:The.President@uregina.ca))
- Chair of the Board of Governors Ms. Cathy Warner ([cwarner@deloitte.ca](mailto:cwarner@deloitte.ca))
- Provost Thomas Chase ([Provost@uregina.ca](mailto:Provost@uregina.ca))

**How can I stay updated on the status of contract negotiations?**
Check out URFA, and our Bargaining Bulletins: [https://www.urfa.ca](https://www.urfa.ca)

**Students with extenuating circumstances.**
URFA understands that some students face extenuating circumstances (e.g. international students with visa requirements, students requiring transcripts to attend/receive financial assistance from another institution). The university administration is responsible for handling such situations.