



Chair, Contract Negotiations
Annual Report to the Members
April, 2019

This year my work has largely focused on preparations for bargaining. My report will include a number of thanks to those who have helped me in this process.

I represented VIUFA at various discussions around sectoral bargaining preparations at FPSE. Many of these discussions began last year. There have been extra meetings and conference calls of the FPSE Bargaining Coordination Committee (BCC). The overuse and underpaying of contract instructional faculty, or what FPSE has labelled “precarious labour” or “secondary scales”, is a focus for our sector in this round. FPSE continues to lobby the provincial government to try and get a separate table and budget to address secondary scale issues in this round, and VIUFA supports these efforts.

Over late summer and early fall, I worked closely with Kathleen Reed to develop the bargaining survey. Kathleen then took on the task of administering the survey and analyzing the results. My thanks to Kathleen for volunteering to add this work to her VIUFA VP portfolio. Thanks also to those members who filled out the survey.

In November, the Contract Negotiations Committee (CNC) was struck. This committee met several times to review proposals and discuss bargaining strategy. The CNC will also be consulted during the bargaining process. I extend my gratitude to the CNC members for their careful and thorough approach to proposal development and review: Clay Armstrong, Sylvie Lafreniere, Bonnie Davidson, Chris Burnley, Duane Weaver, Gara Pruesse, Dan Baker, Esam Mustafa, Lynda Patterson, Matt Kellow, Lemuel Mayona, and Ahmed Hoque.

In the lead up to proposal ratification I also met with individuals and groups who wanted to share their concerns or ideas around the VIUFA bargaining package.

After review and recommendation by the CNC and the VIUFA Executive, our proposal package was ratified at a general meeting in late February. Given the three levels of review, and given that we follow the VIUFA practice of putting the full package before the members, I am confident that the package we put forward for this round represents our membership.

With the signing of our protocol agreement last week, we are now officially at the bargaining table. Our team is: Kathleen Reed, Chris Jaeger, Colleen Price, Clay Armstrong, and our Labour Relations Advisor, Neil McLeod. The Employer’s Spokesperson is Patricia Elliott (HR Director, Labour Relations). The Employer’s team is: Mark Webster (HR Advisor), David Patterson (Dean of Education), Suzanne

Flannigan (Dean of Management), Dan Brydges (IT Manager, Enterprise Systems), and Ross MacKay (Acting Associate VP Academic).

As in the last round, we will pursue an interest-based model for bargaining. The conversation at the table has thus far been reasonable and productive, and while we are only in the very early stages, the hope is that the respectful conversation will continue as we move to the more difficult task of trying to negotiate divergent interests. Given that many locals in our sector and the Common Table have not yet begun formal bargaining, and given that FPSE is still trying to convene a secondary scales table, we do not expect that we will be able to conclude our negotiations until the fall.

In addition to bargaining preparations, my work over the year included the regular duties of my position: supporting labour relations work on issues related to contract interpretation, attending VIUFA Executive and Table Officers meetings, attending monthly Labour Management meetings, and attending ad hoc meetings related to contract or bargaining issues.

I am putting my name forward for reelection for the position of Contract Negotiations Chair. I will continue to work to strengthen our Collective Agreement and to fight for the gains outlined by our members in our bargaining survey and at our ratification meeting. I am supported by a diligent and experienced bargaining team, and by the CNC.

Thanks to the VIUFA Table Officers, and to the VIUFA Executive for their support of my work over this past year, and in particular, for offering feedback and strategies for addressing challenging contractual issues. Thanks to our amazing staff, Laura Buechler and Neil McLeod. A special thanks to Kathleen Reed as she moves on from her VIUFA position as VP. Our bargaining work is made easier by her skills in research, data collection and analysis, and she is a strong advocate for non-regular and non-instructional issues. She can always be relied upon for thoughtful and focused commentary at Executive and Table officers meetings, and in the various forums where she represents VIUFA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Suski