



Bargainer's Report

April 20, 2023

VIUFA AGM 2023

Becoming a first-time Bargainer in a bargaining year presented a steep learning curve and---to no one's surprise---a heavy workload. I'm grateful for the ongoing mentorship I've received from Gara (President and past Bargainer) and for the committed work of the rest of the Bargaining Team and the VIUFA staff: Bonnie Davidson, Clay Armstrong, Gara Pruesse, Jamie Wood, Neil McLeod and Laura Buechler. My tasks and accomplishments as Bargainer are described below, and it's important to keep in mind that the work of bargaining is very much a team effort and credit is shared among the team.

Work directly related to bargaining

1. During my time as Associate Bargainer in 2021-22 I began work on the **Bargaining Survey**, which is one of our main tools for gauging the needs and values of the membership as we prepare for bargaining. I continued that work after becoming Bargainer and developed a comprehensive survey, which received responses from over half of our members---thank you to all who participated.
2. After the survey closed, I analyzed the data and used the results to help develop our long list of **bargaining proposals**. The proposal package was reviewed and refined by both the Contract Negotiating Committee (CNC) and the Executive Committee before being presented to the general membership for ratification. (Thanks go to both committees for their thoughtful input, and to the members who voted at the ratification meeting.)
3. We served notice to begin bargaining in November and began meeting with the Employer in December. We negotiated a **Protocol Agreement** before the holiday break and resumed bargaining in January with the exchange of proposal packages. Since then, we have met with the Employer 24 times.

Cumulatively, these meetings represent about 100 hours in combined negotiations and caucus time, and that is only part of the work required to support bargaining. Outside of our scheduled bargaining times, we draft proposed Collective Agreement language, analyze data received through information requests, and consult with members on

specific issues to help inform and support our position at the bargaining table.

We have reached tentative agreements on all housekeeping proposals and on a handful of substantive proposals from both sides. The work of **substantive bargaining** continues. For a detailed update on the status of bargaining, refer to my recent [Bargaining Update](#).

Other work of the Bargainer

1. I was a member of the Executive Committee and the Table Officers Committee and participated in regular meetings of each. I also participated in the Community Engagement Awards Committee, an ad hoc subcommittee of the Executive, and liaised with the Job Action Coordination Committee (thank you to the members of the JACC!).
2. I represented VIUFA on FPSE's **Bargaining Coordination Committee (BCC)**, a committee of Bargainers from all FPSE unions. This group meets monthly to share information and strategy among sibling unions, who all share PSEA as the Employer's Bargaining Agent, even though we have 20 different employers. A consequential decision taken by BCC early in the Fall was not to have a Common Table or Template Table in this round of bargaining, which means there is no central bargaining of shared provisions. In many ways, this makes the collaboration and coordination work of the BCC more vital, as it is the only place to compare notes and make sure we're all keeping up with each other--- PSEA may be the common bargaining agent for the Employers, but that doesn't mean they make the same offers to all of the unions.

The BCC is also involved in guiding FPSE's work related to bargaining by making recommendations to the Executive and other committees of FPSE, and by bringing resolutions to the AGM. These recommendations and resolutions contribute to decisions about how FPSE supports bargaining in our sector. An important recommendation of this year's BCC is the continuation of the Bargaining Coordinator role that was introduced last year.

3. Until we started bargaining, the **Joint Labour Management Committee (JLMC)** met monthly to discuss issues arising between the Union and the Employer. Many of these issues are now being discussed at the bargaining table. As is the norm, JLMC meetings are suspended during bargaining.
4. We negotiated and signed two Letters of Agreement before bargaining began. The **Nursing LOA** leverages new government funding associated with the introduction of a new program (LPN-BSN Bridging) and an increase in cohort size for a second program (BSN) to reduce faculty workloads from 32 hours to 27.5 hours. This is a meaningful advancement in addressing the decades-old workload inequity problem for these

members. (Of course, we are committed to addressing the problem for all affected members in bargaining.)

The **IT Positional Based Pay LOA** clarifies the application of the Positional Based Pay model, which was introduced as a pilot in the last round of bargaining, to temporary reassignments.

We also continued work towards renewing the **MBA LOA**.

5. When members or member groups contact the Union about issues they are experiencing with their working conditions, the issues may arise from non-compliance with the Collective Agreement or they may expose a gap in the Collective Agreement provisions. There have been a few such cases this year. In those cases, I worked with the Chief Steward, Staff Rep and President, in consultation with the affected members, to find ways to support the members and address the problems in their working conditions. This includes identifying Collective Agreement provisions that can be improved or added (which is done in bargaining or in negotiations between bargaining rounds, such as Letters of Agreement). This means we are already looking ahead to conversations and negotiations we will have with the Employer after this contract is signed, since it's too late to add new proposals to address emerging issues.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Bargainer this year. I have learned a lot about the bargaining process, about our Collective Agreement, about our institution and about our sector. Having started the work of negotiating our next Collective Agreement, I would like the opportunity to finish the job by continuing in my role for another year. I am seeking re-election at this AGM.

Jane Wodlinger
Chair, Contract Negotiating Committee (Chief Bargainer)