



Chair, Contract Negotiations • Annual Report to the Members April, 2021•

Our 2019-2022 collective agreement was fully ratified on July 3rd, 2020. The final 2% pay increment of the contract was effective on April 1, 2021. My work this year focused on implementing the new agreement, responding to contractual issues arising from COVID-19, participating in bargaining conversations at FPSE, attending monthly labour management meetings, and supporting labour relations and Executive work. I also led negotiations between VIUFA and our own staff (CUPE 1004) which concluded in a ratified agreement on August 18th, 2020.

The New Collective Agreement

The process of producing a final copy of the new VIUFA Collective Agreement is taking more time than both sides anticipated. We worked with the Employer to produce a copy of the edited the Collective Agreement. The final stage requires a review of all edits by PSEA. I expect the new copy will be produced in the summer. We will alert members when it is available.

Labour Relations Subcommittees

In the last round of negotiations, five subcommittees were established: Trimester System, Class Size, Indigenous Pedagogy and Evaluation, Workload Equity Across Faculties, and Field Schools. The committees have equal representation from VIUFA and the Employer. Each is co-chaired by a VIUFA member and a VIU Administrator. All of these committees are now active. Each committee has a slightly different mandate, but all were established to continue conversations of the bargaining round. The subcommittees also allow for broader analysis of the issues in that the committees are composed of interested and knowledgeable members from across VIUFA and the University.

Assisted Leaves

As members may know, our last agreement included several improvements to our Assisted Leaves package, including an increase to the compensation while on leave, and new language which ensures that any unused monies are redistributed through section release ("Time Awards"). All of these changes require more review work for the committee, as well as the additional work of updating Terms of Reference and committee information documents. Thanks to the members of this committee for their service to the VIUFA membership. Thanks also to past members of this committee who advocated for the achieved changes.

FPSE Committee Work

FPSE's Bargaining Coordination Committee (BCC) has been active since September. This committee brings together Chief Negotiators from all FPSE locals to discuss sectoral bargaining issues and strategy. I am also pleased to report that our own Amelia Horsburgh sits on BCC as the representative from FPSE's non-regular committee. Normally the BCC committee meets twice a year, with some intermittent group communication and reporting via email. This year the group is meeting at least monthly. The conversations have been more productive and useful than in the past. BCC is actively discussing challenges and risks of various models of coordinated bargaining for the next round. Given that several locals made very few gains in the last round, and given that our sector bargained later than other unions in the public sector, there is an eagerness to be in a good position when bargaining commences. In anticipation of the next round of bargaining, VIUFA members can expect to see our bargaining survey released in the next academic year.

Executive Work

It has been my privilege to serve the members in their commitment to delivering quality post-secondary education, the values of collegial governance, equity, fair compensation and workloads, and supporting each other and our students during times of hardship. I am grateful for the support and wisdom of all my colleagues in the VIUFA Executive. We have so many dedicated people with so many amazing skills working for VIUFA, and we have new folks who will be stepping up to union work this year. A heartfelt thanks to those who I worked most closely with at VIUFA over the years: Chris, Colleen, Neil, Johnny, Laura B., and Bob.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Suski

Thanks to the Contract Negotiating Committee for the 2019 round: Clay Armstrong, Sylvie Lafreniere, Bonnie Davidson, Chris Burnley, Duane Weaver, Gara Pruesse, Dan Baker, Esam Mustafa, Lynda Patterson, Matt Kellow, Lemuel Mayona, Ahmed Hoque, David Woodward.

Thanks to the Bargaining Team: Kathleen Reed (Kathleen had to step down from bargaining team when the demands of her research leave increased), Chris Jaeger, Colleen Price, Clay Armstrong, and our Labour Relations Advisor, Neil McLeod.

Thanks to all of the VIUFA members currently sitting on Labour Relations subcommittees:

Class Size: Clay Armstrong, Amber Hieb, Bonnie Davidson

Workload Equity: Gara Pruesse, Sarah Caruthers, Alexandra Weissfloch, Jasmine Janes, Colleen Price

Field schools: Aggie Weighill, Andres Enrich, Chris Jaeger

Indigenous Pedagogy: Sherry Mattice, Georgina Martin, Allyson Anderson

Trimester Model: Debbie Matheson, Paige Fisher, Martin Martens, Colleen Price, Chris Jaeger

And thanks to Johnny Blakeborough for joining me to negotiate the CUPE 1004 contract.