RAAS Bargaining Update #3: August 4, 2023

"Progress so far and what is a strike vote?"

Progress so far

- We have been negotiating changes to 21 articles or sub-articles of the Collective Agreement, not including articles on compensation.
- Only 9 of the 21 items were introduced by the RAAS team.
- We have agreement on 13 articles so far.
- 8 articles have been exchanged back-and-forth across the table 5 times or more; the article on Tenure & Promotion Committees was exchanged 14 times before we reached tentative agreement.
- We have had 20 half-day sessions totalling 60 hours (+ research and team meeting time)

When might a strike vote come into this? Would that mean we are going on strike?

- We hope to reach an agreement at the table, without any need for a strike vote.
- A strike vote *can* be called any time after the expiry of a CA (ours expired on April 30, 2023).
- A strike vote *must* be taken before a union can legally strike, but a strike vote does not automatically trigger a strike; negotiations (and conciliation) can continue after a strike vote.
- The RAAS executive might call a secret-ballot strike vote if negotiations come to an impasse or no longer seem to be progressing.
- A strike vote, and the process leading up to it, is an opportunity for RAAS members to get details and give direction to the Negotiating Team.
- Ultimately, a strike vote formalizes our collective bottom-lines – what we are not willing to compromise in our negotiations – and makes job action a legal possibility.
- A positive strike vote empowers the Negotiating Team and sends the message to the admin team (and a conciliator) that the Negotiating Team truly represents the will of our faculty.
- A negative strike vote one that receives minimal support for job action – undermines the Negotiating Team's influence at the table.
- Tentative Agreements are often concluded at the negotiating table after a successful strike vote.

Bargaining Basics for RAAS Members

Information Gathering

Our Negotiating Team gathered information through members' surveys and meetings in Fall 2022. We reviewed Memoranda of Understanding, past negotiations files, notes and queries from RAAS members, and our current Collective Agreement.

Priority & Mandate Development

Based on a review of information gathered, our Negotiating Team identified our top priorities and needs, and we took them to you for your approval. With positive feedback and a strong majority affirmative vote from RAAS members, the Negotiating Team now a mandate.

Language Development

With a commitment to achieving their mandate, our Negotiating Team identified Collective Agreement editorial changes and refinements to be made, and has been creating proposals, developing specific language, and developing supportive rationales.

Protocol

Our Negotiating Team and Administration set out meeting frequency and dates, proposal exchange logistics, and who each team can communicate with and what can and cannot be shared.

At the Table

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We are here

Strike Vote (if needed) We have been exchanging proposals and counterproposals on various items. As we negotiate, Articles and clauses are tentatively agreed to and set aside. If we can reach agreement on everything in this step, the Negotiating Team will bring the agreement for your approval ("ratification").

Bargaining ImpSreasse

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If we cannot agree to everything at the table and impasse is reached, we will need to start talking about the possibility a strike enabling vote (aka "strike vote"). If successful, the RAAS executive can call a strike if a deal isn't reached by a certain date. If it fails, our Negotiating Team's power is drastically reduced. Talks between the two negotiation teams can continue regardless.

Bargaining Impasse: Conciliation

Conciliation involves a provincially appointed conciliator who tries to assist both sides to work towards an agreement. Job action (strike or lockout) cannot happen until conciliation has been tried. If an agreement is reached through conciliation, the Negotiating Team will bring the agreement for your approval ("ratification"). If no agreement is reached, the conciliator files a 'noboard' report to the Minister of Labour.

Bargaining Impasse: No-Board

Once the no-board is filed, the strike clock starts to tick - 17 days from a noboard, we would be in a legal strike position and Administration in a legal lock-out position. Talks usually continue during this time but a job action (a strike) could take place at any time after the 17 day countdown.

Bargaining Impasse: Voluntary Arbitration

If both sides agree, a paid, professional arbitrator can be brought in with the agreement of both parties. The decision of the arbitrator is final and is binding on both parties. We may not get all that we want.

Bargaining Impasse: Strike

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If there is no agreement reached between the parties by the deadline established by our Negotiating Team, a strike will be our clearest path to securing an agreement.



RENISON ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC STAFF