

# WHAT IS THIS “BARGAINING” BUSINESS?



CUPE 3903 workers are protected by a Collective Agreement.  
Our current CA expires August 31, 2011, therefore we must re-negotiate it with the employer.

In the spring, the membership elected a Bargaining Team (BT). It is composed of members from all three units, operates in keeping with the local's bylaws, and is tasked with the massive job of reviewing our three CAs (one each per unit) to determine what items (portions of each CA) they will bargain for improvement to with the employer.

## HOW ARE THEY DOING IT?

Consulting with the Local's staff, discussion with members at planned meetings and consultations, reviewing our past bargaining proposals, reviewing the surveys members completed in June, getting input from Committees and the Executive, considering the nature of recent grievances, looking at other Collective Agreements (e.g. CUPE 3902 at UofT), and considering employment equity guidelines.

## HOW ARE MEMBERS INVOLVED?

Members initially give input on PRIORITIES (the broad ideas/categories that we will bargain for). We have done / are doing this through surveys, consultations, and meetings. The BT then finalizes the PROPOSALS LANGUAGE, the very detailed (where every comma matters) nuts and bolts, the content that is in the Collective Agreement that needs reworking to address our priorities. “Language” is what goes into the PACKAGE that we give to the employer (they give us one too). The membership ratifies (votes on) the PACKAGE before it goes to Employer. This is a green-light for the BT to start bargaining. Throughout the process, there will be meetings. Lots of them. Come out when you can – there's a lot to know. The BT needs your support and input. Collectively we need to be in the loop.

## WHAT CAN MEMBERS EXPECT?

Not every draft proposal will make it into the final bargaining package and of those that do, not all will stay on the table until the end. Our three CAs are complex documents. The BT makes changes to language through considering how it will impact on other clauses. Sometimes a change in language in one place opens up too many risks elsewhere. That is why they seek input on proposals... both to know where to change language and to stick to their guns at the bargaining table. This is a fine balance – we need to give the BT room to craft the proposals and to bargain AND give the membership the chance to offer input and give direction.



Representing, Organizing, & Activating the Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants,  
Graduate Assistants & Research Assistants @ York University, Toronto, Canada

Canadian Union of Public Employees / Syndicat Canadien de la Fonction Publique Local / Section Locale 3903

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