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## **BUFA Bargaining Bulletin #12 – June 18, 2020**

The BUFA Negotiating Team and members of the Administration's Team met on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and exchanged comprehensive proposals to resolve all outstanding issues in bargaining.

Although your BUFA Negotiating Team was cautiously optimistic about the possibility of reaching a negotiated settlement this week, the Administration's Team unexpectedly derailed negotiations by declaring that it could not, under any circumstances, commit to upholding the existing collegial governance rights of faculty and professional librarians as they relate to search processes for senior academic positions.

This declaration was surprising given that the University's President had assured both the BUFA President and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Brock University Senate that he would not "die on that hill". His change of heart has gone unexplained and, as a result, has created uncertainty about the Administration's intentions moving forward.

BUFA has long insisted that securing transparency and participation of faculty and professional librarians in the process of selecting senior academic administrators is a key priority. Our proposal would guarantee that in the search for a senior academic administrator (with the exception of President), a curriculum vitae for each of the short-listed candidates would be made available for consultation and comment. Furthermore, we have proposed that short-listed candidates be invited to address members of the University community and that faculty and professional librarians be afforded an opportunity to express their views in writing on the suitability of the candidates to the selection committee. With these proposals, we are not proposing any "new" rights. We are simply asking that our existing rights be upheld by embedding them in the Collective Agreement.

Brock's current Chair of the Board of Trustees has made no secret of his preference to implement closed searches for a wider range of positions. Unless BUFA can secure continued faculty and professional librarian participation in senior academic administrator search processes as part of the Collective Agreement, the Administration will likely move towards a closed process for selecting Deans, Vice Provosts, the University Librarian, Provost, and Vice President Research in the future. In short, aside from those few serving as members of the search advisory committee, faculty and professional librarians would be stripped of their collegial governance rights and would be completely shut out of the process of making recommendations on the full suite of senior academic administrative positions. Moreover, members would be stripped of their rights to even comment or provide feedback on the suitability of short-listed candidates and would not even learn the identity of the successful candidate until announced by the University's public relations team.

In response to the University Administration's insistence that faculty and professional librarians simply give up their collegial governance rights, we have asked members to participate in a [poll](#) to gauge support for authorizing a strike vote to strengthen the Association's bargaining position going forward on this and a range of other outstanding issues.

For example, the Administration's Team has balked at BUFA's proposal for leave replacement for professional librarians. Moreover, despite its stated commitment to expanding research capacity, the Administration has inexplicably proposed eliminating the guaranteed minimum levels of funding for internal research grant competitions. The Administration's Team has also callously insisted on excluding long-serving LTA/ILTA members from the Health Care Spending Account established for retirees.

While the Parties are much closer to reaching agreement on BUFA's proposal for a guaranteed annual bank of half course releases to compensate for extraordinary levels of research output and unscheduled teaching, the Administration has made it clear that its agreement on this item is tied to other outstanding items.

On the question of compensation, there are no substantial differences between the Parties. However, the Administration's Team has proposed a number of concessions to the benefits package, including a demand for mandatory generic prescription drug substitution.

In an odd and unexpected twist, the Administration's Team completely withdrew its proposal for a teaching-intensive stream despite the Association's willingness to bargain on the issue.

The Parties are scheduled to reconvene on Friday June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020. At that meeting, we expect the Administration's Team will table a new counterproposal to address all outstanding issues. More than ever, your support is needed to ensure that the deal on offer addresses members' key concerns. BUFA may need to ask our members to authorize a strike vote in the days and weeks to come in order to strengthen the Union's bargaining position and force the Administration to back down from some of its more unreasonable demands.

Rest assured that we are working extremely hard to secure a negotiated settlement and will keep you posted as things progress. In the meantime, please log in to the "[Members](#)" section of the BUFA website to participate in the poll on member priorities. Your feedback, support, and participation in our earlier poll was invaluable in convincing the Administration to back down on Saturday teaching. We are confident that a strong and unified membership response may help to break the bargaining log jam once again.

In Solidarity,

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