

# BARGAINING UPDATE

JUNE 4, 2021

**NORQUEST  
COLLEGE**

LOCAL: 071  
CHAPTER: 010

**NON-ACADEMIC STAFF**

## EMPLOYER SEEKS WAGE ROLLBACKS WHILE IT SITS ON A SURPLUS

Since bargaining commenced on March 11, 2021, your negotiating team has met with the Employer six times.

It is very clear the government is, once again, mandating the bargaining positions of post-secondary employers and that members in the education sector need to decide what they are prepared to do to stop further devastating cutbacks.

Unlike past negotiations, the Employer presented their complete monetary proposals within their in-going bargaining proposal. While we expected to see monetary rollbacks proposed, the enormity of them is staggering. They include:

- Wage rollbacks to June 30, 2019 **despite the independent arbitrators's ruling in March rejecting wage rollbacks for the same period**
- Wage rollback of 3% to all salary grids in first year of new contract (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) and 0% for second and third year
- Only 70% of salary paid for all days of general illness leave (anything beyond three consecutive days of illness)
- No paid Casual Illness for Temporary or Term Employees
- Reduction of holiday pay for casual employees from 5.2% to 5.0%
- Benefits to commence only after three month waiting period
- Reduction of Health Spending Account from \$747 to \$500
- Elimination of the WCB supplement
- Reduction of the Employer-paid benefits on maternity leave to only medically related portion
- Elimination of Long Service Increment

The Employer is pleading poverty. And, while it is true that - for the year ending June 30, 2020 - Norquest had an operating deficit of \$2.66 million, they were also sitting on a \$35,487,000 accumulated surplus. We recognize that their 2021 budget might take a hit due to COVID-19, but Norquest needs to start to value its workforce just as much as it values its shiny new buildings and highly paid executives. And members need to recognize just how much of a threat to their livelihoods these negotiations hold.

We have not yet started negotiating monetary items, given how obviously contentious they are, but have found the Employer is presenting an intransigent attitude concerning any Union bargaining proposals, even those which are just including those which the Union considers "housekeeping" in nature.

After six days of bargaining, we agreed to only nine amended Articles that the Parties mutually agreed to be non-contentious or, what is commonly termed during bargaining as, "low hanging fruit." Another 12 Articles did not have any proposals from either the Union or the Employer and we accepted as "current." And, in the interest of keeping positive momentum, we agreed to another four with "current" language.

You told us through your Bargaining Survey that wages, benefits, and job security were your priorities. Your negotiating team is, unfortunately, dealing with deficiencies in your collective bargaining agreement that do not exist in other contracts in the post-secondary sector. For instance, the concept of Seniority is absent and there are no provisions relating to Job Opportunities. With your Employer taking marching orders from a government committed to austerity, we face significant challenges to improve this.

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Attempts by the Union to introduce language around contracting-out were summarily dismissed by the Employer. As you know, the college's security, parking, food services, and janitorial services are already contracted-out.

It is more important than ever that members get behind their negotiating team who are working as hard as they can to get you the best possible collective agreement and stop the cuts to your jobs, wages, and benefits. We have a government determined to decimate continuing education in this province. You can help stop them before it's too late.

Please share this update with your co-workers (do not use the Employer's e-mail but do use the Union's bulletin board) and encourage them to **create an AUPE member account** so that they receive timely reports when bargaining is scheduled to resume at the end of September.

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