

**From:** [FAFA](#) on behalf of [FA President](#)  
**To:** [Faculty Association](#)  
**Subject:** [Fafa] Bargaining Update and July 1st 2022 Salary Adjustments  
**Date:** June 2, 2022 10:22:01 AM  
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Dear Members,

I hope that all is well with you. We're writing to update you on what your Negotiating Team has been doing on your behalf. As I noted in our earlier bargaining update, our bargaining progress has been constrained by the fact that the government of BC does not allow the University to negotiate with us about monetary matters until the Public Sector Employer's Council (PSEC) has approved a government mandate.

### **The PSEC Mandate and the BCGEU**

Since all employees at UVic are considered public employees, our Collective Bargaining is overseen, and ultimately controlled, by PSEC. PSEC is a body of the BC Government that is empowered to set limits on the total compensation packages of public sector employers, which include (but are not limited to) salary or wage increases and benefits. These limits are generally referred to as the "PSEC Mandate."

The PSEC Mandate is ultimately determined in large part via what the large public sector Unions are willing to accept in their Collective Agreements. You may have heard that the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU), the largest public sector union in BC, has so far been insisting on cost of living increases, or something close to it, during their current round of negotiations. Because the government has not been willing to offer wage increases that come anywhere close to reflecting the current cost of living, negotiations have broken down, and the BCGEU is currently holding a strike authorization vote among its 30,000 members. Until these negotiations are finalized, there will not be a clear PSEC Mandate available to public sector employers.

It is important to recognize that these efforts by the BCGEU and its members have the potential to significantly increase PSEC's proposed mandate, bringing this mandate, which impacts us all, closer to supporting wage increases that reflect the rapidly rising cost of living. If the BCGEU is successful in gaining increases closer to the cost of living, this would be of significant benefit to all of us. The Association thus encourages all of our members to support the BCGEU in any way that they feel comfortable.

At the same time, it is true that the government's low wage offers to the BCGEU and the BCGEU's resultant move to possible labour action have delayed our ability to bargain financial compensation matters with the University, and thus finalize a new collective agreement. The University's negotiating team has communicated to the Association that is not authorized at this time to

negotiate monetary matters. The Association has accepted this rationale for the time being, as we believe that the University is legitimately constrained by PSEC and the current bargaining environment for public sector employees in British Columbia, and that they are therefore bargaining in good faith. It is important to keep in mind that the government's delay in establishing a public sector bargaining mandate is fairly unusual and that it is having an outsized impact on the ability of all smaller public sector unions in BC (including UVic FA) to negotiate and ratify their new collective agreements.

### **Delays to Salary Increases**

The delay in setting a PSEC mandate has meant that thus far in bargaining, we have only been able to bargain on non-monetary matters (discussed below). Unfortunately because of these delays to our negotiations, we are unlikely to be in a position to bring a tentative agreement for your ratification until the Fall at the earliest. For various reasons, outlined below, this means that salary increases scheduled for July (including across the board increases, CPI, PPI and OPR) will be delayed until after we have ratified a new Collective Agreement. The University's communication on this matter can be found [here](#).

One reason for this is that the salary increases listed above are tied to specific dates in the current Collective Agreement (see 50.8, 50.14 and 50.18 in the [Collective Agreement](#)), and so are not in force beyond the end of the agreement, which expires June 30, 2022. The other reason is that the value of salary increases are determined by each Collective Agreement, and when we are able to do so (with an approved PSEC mandate) we will be bargaining to improve the current salary system. In addition to trying to ensure a fairer, more transparent salary policy that reflects the rapidly rising cost of living and addresses CPI drop-offs, **a top priority in our bargaining will be to ensure that all salary improvements that are bargained will be retroactive to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.**

We are aware that this delay will be disappointing news for many of you, as you struggle with the rising cost of living. You should be assured that we have consulted widely, with other Faculty Associations and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and this is unfortunately the norm in cases where bargaining goes beyond the end of the current Collective Agreement. We were fortunate that the last round of bargaining was completed before the end of the last Collective Agreement, so we did not have to deal with this issue in 2019. But as noted above, PSEC mandate delays make this impossible this time around. We have also consulted with the Association's lawyer to see if there was any way around this delay in salary increases, but have been told that any legal efforts on this front are unlikely to succeed.

Some financial entitlements are not linked to specific dates in the current collective agreement and so will continue past July 1<sup>st</sup>. These include the tuition benefit fund, and a call for applications to this fund will go out over the summer, as normal. Pro D accounts will also be replenished at current amounts in July. Promotion recognition awards (for those promoted this year) will also be paid this July. The University had originally declared its intention to not pay out these awards until a new Collective Agreement is ratified, as will be the case with CPI, PPI and OPR. Since the promotion recognition awards are not tied to specific dates in the Collective Agreement, we argued strongly (with the support of the Association's lawyer) that they should be awarded in the July pay period, and the University has now agreed to this.

### **Current Bargaining Regarding Non-Monetary Issues**

Both Negotiating Teams are at the table this week to continue bargaining. At this time, as I noted above, we are only able to bargain regarding non-monetary issues. This does, however, include a fair number of important matters. As you know, we started bargaining informally in March. Since late April, when we have been bargaining more formally, your Negotiating Team has worked diligently to finalize and present proposals that focus primarily on three of the five pillars that make up the Association's Bargaining Mandate, ratified by our members in January. These pillars focus primarily on non-monetary issues, and are:

- Sustainable and Equitable Workload Language;
- Enhancements to policies related to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the Collective Agreement; and
- Full Inclusion, recognition and valuing of the work of Indigenous Faculty

In addressing these aspects of the Association's mandate, your Negotiating Team has put forward proposals on 25 Articles, including proposed revisions to processes governing the assignment and evaluation of workloads, ARPT procedures, Librarian governance, and study leaves, as well as targeted revisions of equity and inclusion language and articles that address greater recognition and support for Teaching Stream Faculty Members.

The two remaining pillars of our Bargaining Mandate are:

- Fair compensation; and
- Targeted improvements to benefits

Both Negotiating Teams have participated in consultations/information sharing around options for targeted improvements to benefits. However, any further discussion of these issues is on hold until the PSEC Mandate is settled, as discussed above. Since this is very unlikely to happen until September at the earliest, we have agreed to continue bargaining on non-monetary issues until the end of June, and then to take a break from bargaining until September. We hope to have some positive developments regarding non-monetary language to share with you by the end of June.

Thus far, the University has not yet responded to the majority of our proposals, but we hope to make more progress over the next month. We want to thank you for your continued support, and look forward to sharing more updates with you as they become available. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Wishing you a productive summer, with time set aside for some serious relaxation.

All the very best,

Lynne

Lynne Marks

President and Chief Negotiator, University of Victoria Faculty Association <http://www.uvicfa.ca/>

Professor, Department of History

<https://www.uvic.ca/humanities/history/people/faculty/markslynne.php>

University of Victoria

Victoria, B.C.

We recognize with respect the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), Wyomilth (Esquimalt), and Lkwungen (Songhees) peoples on whose territories the University of Victoria stands, and whose relationships with this land remain profound today.

We acknowledge the devastation that government-created residential schools and Indian hospitals has inflicted on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and the ongoing effects of concentric trauma that continue to this day.