Published on *University of Toronto Faculty Association* (https://www.utfa.org)

President's Blog

History of Bargaining 1977 – 2005 and the Fourth Phase

December 14, 2016

For a readable and succinct history of bargaining at UTFA for the years 1977 to 2005, please see this document.

This history (items are numbered) appeared under Tab A in UTFA's book of documents in the 2005 – 2007 round of SBP negotiations. It outlines three phases in the development of negotiations between UTFA and the University Administration.

The first phase of "bargaining" was informal. Bill Nelson, in his well-known history of UTFA, titled *The Search for Faculty Power*, noted the following:

In 1973, the first year I was President of the Faculty Association, our salary and benefit "negotiations" took, so far as I can recall, about ten minutes of my time; they might have taken no time at all except that, by chance, I ran into Don Forster, the then Provost, and he told me what the administration had in mind as a salary increase. He wanted to know what I thought of the figure and regarded it as somewhat whimsical of me to refuse to discuss the matter until he had met with our salary and benefits chairman. He did, however, go through the motions of such a meeting, and told Wendy Potter, who was our salary chairman that year, what our settlement was to be. We dealt with some other benefits issues in a variety of casual and haphazard encounters.

In the second stage, mediation took on a central role:

The second, more formal, stage commenced in 1977-78 when, for the first time, salaries and benefits were negotiated under the new procedures spelled out in the Memorandum, which provided for mediation. The key aspect to this agreement, which ultimately led to its being utterly discredited, was the fact that the recommendation of the mediator was subject to rejection by a majority vote of the Governing Council of the University.

The third phase represented a crossroads for UTFA: binding arbitration or certification? See item #8 in Tab A:

8. Prolonged and complex negotiations took place in the Fall of 1981 under the threat of certification by the Association and amidst a crisis atmosphere on campus. Ultimately, an agreement was finally entered into between the Governing Council and the Association providing for binding arbitration within the Memorandum.

I believe that we are entering a *fourth* phase (created through the SJAC changes to the Memorandum of Agreement that took effect in 2016), in which UTFA is able to bring to the negotiation table policies previously "frozen." In the upcoming round, UTFA will bring forward the librarians' policy and the part-time appointments policy in our first test of the new Article 6 protocols.

We can find, in the detailed discussion of the history of bargaining, some very interesting references to the past. See, for example, in numbers 18 and 19, the effects of the Social Contract Act:

19. The agreement provided:

- no across-the-board increase through March 31, 1996;

- 2 unpaid days in each of the three years (a diminution in wages of 0.92% in each year);

- the usual merit increases in 1993 and 1994, but none in 1995.

See the gains in the 2003-2005 award. This was also the round that ended mandatory retirement. It is hard to believe that, until 2003, part-time members had no health and dental coverage.

36. Until this award, faculty and librarians who had retired prior to 1982 had not had any dental or extended health coverage from the University. (The current retiree coverage started in 1982 and was never made retroactive for earlier retirees). Under benefits, an expense account was initiated for pre-1981 retirees.

37. Part-time faculty and librarians were given health and dental coverage. Long Term Disability was made mandatory for all. Physiotherapy and chiropractic care were added to the $500 yearly maximum coverage for massage. A major improvement was made in Maternity Leave and Parental Leave. Librarians were given Professional Development Days for the first time.

Let's hope that UTFA can make gains for part-time faculty and librarians in the upcoming round. Please watch this blog for more information on policy bargaining as it unfolds next term.

Send comments to faculty@utfa.org.

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Source URL (modified on Feb 9 2017):https://www.utfa.org/content/history-bargaining-1977-%E2%80%93-2005-and-fourth-phase