



Message from Paul Kochan, Vice-President (Administration)

September 30, 2013

To: All Employees and All Students

The University of Manitoba began contract negotiations with the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA) in June, 2013. A new agreement has not yet been reached. The existing contract between the University of Manitoba and UMFA expired at the end of March, 2013. In 2010, the University and UMFA were able to reach a settlement in September without third party intervention.

The University of Manitoba is committed to achieving a timely settlement. On August 16, 2013 we presented an offer to UMFA that included a generous salary position. We have offered UMFA members an 8.9 per cent salary increase over a four-year contract (2.9 per cent in Year 1, and 2 per cent in each of Years 2, 3 and 4) – this in a time of wage restraint across the broader public sector and within the post-secondary sector in particular.

In addition to the 8.9 per cent increase, the University is proposing specific base salary adjustments for some ranks based on market comparisons, and structural revisions to the salary scales that result in higher maxima and increment values across all ranks. We want to attract and retain the best faculty and provide competitive salaries. We believe our monetary offer demonstrates our commitment to our faculty members, and to resolving this round of bargaining without a work stoppage.

A salary calculator that allows UMFA members to calculate their salary over the next four years in accordance with the University of Manitoba's monetary offer is available at the Current Bargaining Update web page off the University of Manitoba homepage (umanitoba.ca). Simply find "Bargaining Update – Sep. 30/13" under "Updates", click and you will be taken to a page that includes the salary calculator. The direct url is:
http://umanitoba.ca/admin/human_resources/staff_relations/bargaining/academic/current_bargaining.html.

The University of Manitoba has presented to UMFA its comprehensive position on all issues. UMFA has responded with only slight changes to its previous position, including holding to its proposal for a short-term agreement of one year or at most two years. UMFA has informed the University that it will be going to its members to call a strike vote. In these circumstances, the University felt it was important to share with its community the issues that stand in the way of an agreement.

We did not propose that any rights presently enjoyed by faculty members be changed. We did not propose the addition of any new language or the removal of existing language around academic freedom. We believe the current language which has been in place for 40 years has served and continues to serve the community well, and reflects our strong commitment to academic freedom. We have not proposed the addition of an article on performance management. The only proposals we have made on these issues have been in response to UMFA demands. For example, we have proposed under the sections addressing tenure and promotion criteria that "no prescribed list of journals or other venues for publication, and no dollar amounts for research funding may be established or taken into consideration without consultation with faculty council."

We have further added a clause under "Faculty Rights and Obligations" that explicitly states that faculty members have the right to comment on the University and on their Association.

We have listened to and understand UMFA's position on recent University of Manitoba administrative initiatives such as Concur and print management, though we do not agree these matters belong in a collective agreement. We continue to believe that these new programs and processes are in the best interests of the University community and we will continue to consult with faculty and other members of the University of Manitoba community, listening and acting on their constructive input to make these initiatives a success. The savings generated by the innovations have helped put the University in a position to make the scale of offer it has for salaries.

We are disappointed that UMFA has indicated our salary offer and our desire to keep the current language of the collective agreement with respect to academic freedom and other issues is not enough, and will seek a strike mandate from its membership. However, the University of Manitoba is committed to working to prevent any disruptions for our students, faculty and other staff and will continue to seek a settlement with UMFA through collegial and respectful negotiations. We are also committed to keeping all stakeholders informed as this process moves forward.

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