

## Employer Team Rejects Voluntary Arbitration, Abandons Negotiations

Dear CAAT-A Members,

Today, your faculty bargaining team returned to the bargaining table, to resume negotiations with the assistance of a Conciliation Officer appointed by the Ministry of Labour. It was the first day that we have met with the College Employer Council (CEC) bargaining team in a week, despite our offer for additional days earlier this week.

We commenced the day by providing a new [Offer of Settlement](#) that features an attempt to move closer to agreement and which ensures that faculty's needs are addressed in concrete terms now in the key areas of Workload, Partial-Load, Equity and Indigeneity, and Protections of Faculty Instructional Materials.

Since our latest offer incorporates additional language proposed by the CEC team in their last offer, we believe that the two sides' are close on some areas. Indeed, even three of the CEC's recent publications claim that "CEC and CAAT-A proposals are very similar".

Noting how close the two sides are, and noting that there is very little room for the faculty team to compromise further, we made a formal offer to the CEC, to have both teams agree to voluntary binding arbitration to avoid escalation leading to labour disruption.

Unfortunately, we regret to inform you that our efforts to find common ground and achieve a settlement through negotiations or a mutually-agreed process were unsuccessful. Specifically:

- The CEC team **rejected** our latest Offer of Settlement;
- The CEC team **rejected** our offer to refer all outstanding issues to voluntary binding arbitration;
- The CEC team requested that the Conciliator file a "no board" report, which is a legally-required **step towards labour disruption**, including lockout, strike, or Imposed Terms & Conditions of Employment.

While the CEC's conduct is regrettable, it is nevertheless typical of their behaviour throughout the bargaining process, which has been marked by tactics that escalate towards labour conflict. These tactics include requesting conciliation—a first necessary step on the legal path to labour disruption—and filing legal complaints in the middle of the bargaining process.

The CEC team's request for the Conciliator to file a "no board report" is dismaying, as it indicates that the CEC team is unwilling to counter the faculty team's compromises with compromises of its own. We note that the CEC team's current Offer of Settlement fails to meet our members' needs and our students' needs in its current form, since;

- It fails to include *any* necessary increase in time attributed for evaluating student writing or projects
- It fails to include *any* necessary increase in time attributed for teaching classes with an online component
- It fails to provide necessary transparency for the Partial-Load faculty
- It creates new limits on which Partial-Load faculty are eligible for inclusion in the Partial-Load Registry

- It proposes three committee structures to address issues including workload; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Indigenization, Decolonization, and Truth & Reconciliation, but the lack of adequate dispute mechanisms in these structures means that the CEC will be able to effectively “veto” any effective change that might otherwise come out of them
- It proposes language that would permit greater contracting-out of Counsellors’ work.
- It prevents Union Locals from filing staffing grievances to create new full-time positions and replace retirees, for the next three years.

Since the CEC team has effectively turned its back on negotiations, and the faculty team has used every tool we can to avoid escalation, it is now up to all of us to stand together for our priorities. To demonstrate faculty power at the table, the team needs you to show your support - to show this Employer that faculty need change now and that faculty are willing to stand up for ourselves, for each other, and for our students.

The faculty team’s current Offer of Settlement includes concrete proposals to address the immediate needs of faculty and students related to online course delivery, additional time to evaluate student work, along with no-cost improvements to better the working conditions of partial-load faculty. These are balanced with other proposals for effective structures to address longer term needs in the areas of Workload (including Partial-Load workload); Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Indigeneity, Decolonization, and Truth & Reconciliation.

We believe that management’s current offer is designed to ensure that necessary change does *not* occur now or in the next three years. The faculty team’s offer is designed to ensure that necessary change begins now, and grows through the life of our next Collective Agreement.

Now that the CEC team has walked away from negotiations and rejected the faculty team’s offer for voluntary binding arbitration, they have left faculty with literally no choice than to organize in favour of the faculty offer. We ask that you prepare for this by ensuring that your Union Local can reach you at a non-College email address and phone number, and that you participate in upcoming solidarity actions, digital pickets, and local events. We will be in touch very soon with next steps.

Together we are strong; together we can demand that the Employer agree to reasonable improvements needed by faculty and students.

In solidarity,

Your CAAT-A Bargaining Team

JP, Jonathan, Katie, Michelle, Ravi, Rebecca, and Shawn