The Facts around Strike & Lock Out as I Know Them

Hello members,

I thought I would provide you with some information on the realities of the Alberta Post-Secondary landscape, based on the recent job actions we have seen.

## General Points

* Strike and Lock out is new to our sector. This only became an option in 2017.
* There have been only 2 strikes thus far: Concordia University (11 days) and University of Lethbridge (41 days)

## How Much Does a Strike Cost?

* In general, a strike is supported from the coffers of the Faculty Association either by general dues or by a dedicated strike fund (war chest).
* There is a day rate for participants (that actively picket) that is tax free.
* The Faculty Association also pays for benefits for the members while on job action.
* But there are also hidden costs to the Association:
  + Salaries for the Association employees must continue
  + Payroll service to process participants pay must be hired
  + Facilities, equipment, and materials for picketing must be purchased
  + Food, drink, and other supplies are needed

## What have We Learned Thus Far From the 2 Occurrences of Strike in Our Sector?

I was at the CAFA retreat/AGM 2 weeks ago and the Faculty Associations for University of Lethbridge and Concordia debriefed the group on costs.

Concordia University

The 11-day strike broke the Faculty Association at Concordia and they had to rely on donations from outside organizations and money from the CAUT defense fund (They are currently considering a dues increase to recoup costs of the strike and to replenish the small war chest they had). Approximately 80 members are there, so the potential temporary dues increase will be substantial.

University of Lethbridge

The 41-day strike at the U of L basically put that Faculty Association in financial strain as well so that they relied on donations from outside Labour groups as well as the CAUT defense fund. Knowing now that in approximately 18 months bargaining starts over, they are also contemplating an emergency dues increase to look after the members interests should they be forced back into a similar situation.

The biggest 3 employers of post-secondary faculty in our sector in Alberta are as follows, in order:

* The University of Alberta
* The University of Calgary
* SAIT

The first two Faculty Associations are supported by CAUT (The Canadian Association of University Teachers). The CAUT defense fund is approximately 34 million dollars. To put that in perspective for you – if the U of A (approximately 4500 members) were to go on a 15-week strike that included all the incidental costs as well as strike pay and benefits, it would deplete the 34 million dollar fund that CAUT currently has in reserves.

## What is the Impact of Lock Out?

Should any Faculty Association find themselves in a lock out position and not able to sustain that, they could be forced back to work either by legislation or lack of strike funds. Then they would return under the last collective proposed by the employer and not the current in force but expired collective agreement. Obviously, this would set back any gains the Faculty Association had made in bargaining.

Cheers

Blair