

December 2007

CTA NEWS

President's Message

Your negotiating team declared impasse at the table in late November. We have filed the necessary paperwork and in January we hope to have a mediator appointed who will try to break the deadlock we are currently in with the District. If mediation fails, then the bargaining teams go to fact-finding, where a panel will receive reports from both sides and make a ruling about a settlement of the issues. Since we don't have binding arbitration, at this point the District could accept the settlement or impose their "last, best and final offer" which for salary is currently 0, up to COLA, up to COLA. It is at this point we can call a strike.

What got us to this point? We are charging the District in a separate unfair labor practice (ULP) that they have been engaged in 'surface bargaining.' During negotiations, both teams are required to engage in "good faith bargaining" – meeting at reasonable times and hours and displaying a willingness to come to terms on issues like wages, working conditions, benefits, etc. Negotiators are engaging in surface bargaining when

- they are just 'going through the motions'
- they engage in stalling tactics
- they make unreasonable offers and then don't budge from original position
- they refuse to make counterproposals
- they engage in tactical delays or other actions that indicate insincere efforts to reach an agreement.

As reported in earlier negotiation updates, the conversations at the table have been heated but more disturbing has been the utter lack of progress on most issues. Just to name a few of the specific examples of bad faith bargaining that are in our ULP –

- District started bargaining in September with Dr. Myers and Dr. Jennings. The team now at the table is Vince Brown, Jan Truscott, Marc Bromme and sometimes Rich Peralta. The only District team member who has consistently attended negotiations is Sherry Matthews, the recording secretary.
- District claimed our health benefits costs for this year were 13.3% so District was justified in not giving us a salary increase (the 'total compensation' argument.) When asked to verify that amount, Vince Brown said he was given that amount by previous negotiators and wasn't sure where it came from. Later he said it wasn't 13.3% and he would present his evidence in a later session. He never did.



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- District continued to bring up the topic of 'arrears,' claiming regardless of the health benefits agreement in place from earlier this year, that CTA members 'owed' the District \$900,000 plus in premiums. After several discussions, Dr. Myers agreed on October 2nd to refrain from bringing up the subject. When Vince Brown took over as District negotiator, he argued we 'owed arrears' to the District and that's why we weren't getting a raise.
- District has appointed head negotiators who are not familiar with instruction. CTA team has had to explain a variety of issues to the other team – how census works, how bonus units are computed, how many sick days we get a year, etc. Valuable negotiation time is taken up educating the District team.
- District has also failed to have anyone from the Budget office at the table. Kim Myers and Vince Brown present numbers with no documentation nor is there anyone at the table who can answer our financial questions. This also slows down negotiations as we have to ask for evidence to back up their numbers. For example, several times Vince Brown claimed our salary proposal would cost the District over 32% over three years yet at no time did he have any reports to back up his numbers nor did he have anyone with financial information attend the negotiations.

We contend that these and other examples from the table constitute surface bargaining and that the District is not bargaining in good faith. If you read "Mr. Brown and the AI President" written by the Crisis Committee, then you are aware that the appointment of Vince Brown as head negotiator for the District is a disturbing sign to say the least. Certainly his demeanor at the table has not been encouraging.

What do we do now?

We need to stay informed about negotiations – check your emails, your mailboxes and attend meetings! Contact Steve Schermerhorn with your personal email address so he can add you to our listserv!

The union wants members to go to Board meetings to tell the Board of Trustees how disappointed we are in the negotiations process and how much we want a fair contract now!

The union wants members to write letters to Board members (they don't check their emails – their home addresses are on the campus website) and tell them to instruct their bargaining team to negotiate in good faith! Send them a holiday card and let them know we want a better New Year here on campus!

By working together and continuing to pressure the Administration and the Board, hopefully we can get some positive results at the table.

A happy holiday break to you all and hopefully a better New Year,

Matt Wetstein
CTA President