

# BARGAINING ALERT!

## Queen's School of Religion (QSR)

### Basic Bargaining Problems Persist between QSR Management and Bargaining Team



We have made some progress in bargaining and have signed off on eight articles. However, the process is still not going as quickly as we had hoped.

#### Basic Problems in Bargaining

We still have some basic problems in bargaining. Many of these problems seem to arise from a disconnect between the public claims of QSR Management that we are drawing ever closer to Queen's University and the stance of Management in bargaining that QSR is a separate institution that needs unique terms and conditions of employment.

One manifestation of this dualist position is the insistence of Management that, because Queen's School of Religion at Queen's University is a totally separate entity from Queen's University, we should not proceed from the existing Collective Agreement between QUFA and Queen's. This is in spite of the

fact that they have historically claimed to follow the Queen's University-QUFA Collective Agreement and that many of our existing policies are based on this Agreement.

Management has made dozens of proposals for change to the Collective Agreement between Queen's University and QUFA for reasons known to Management alone. *These suggested changes do not have anything to do with the unique circumstances of QSR.* Often, we are forced to start from scratch. This means that we have spent endless hours inventing new language for articles where, in our view, the QUFA-Queen's CA wording would have been preferable.

#### Management Rights

In discussing Management Rights, *Management has refused to include in the Article a clause stating that Management Rights would be exercised in a "fair and equitable" manner.* Our request for such a phrase was met by Management with the insistence that this was an "unnecessary, motherhood" clause. What "motherhood" means in this context is not at all clear. If the clause "fair and equitable" is not problematic, and if fair and equitable dealings are the intention of Management, we cannot fathom why they refuse to include it.

Management is unwilling to include several existing policies in the Collective Agreement, arguing that they want "flexibility" rather than being bound by negotiated rules that they would have to follow. This is particularly surprising since some of the current QSR policies in our Governance Manual are stated as coming directly from the QUFA collective agreement:

- Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure
- Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment
- Non-academic Leaves

We are unclear as to why these policies—which have served us well for at least the past decade or more—would now be deemed as too inflexible to be part of the QSR collective agreement. Thus, we are faced with the arduous task of spending time (and, in Management's case, money) in reinventing these policies with new language.

#### Term Adjuncts

*Management is claiming "uncertainty" about the future of QSR, and they are using this "uncertainty" as a reason to refuse to grant the rights to adjuncts that they would have in the rest of the University.*

In our discussion of what rights adjuncts would have, we were treated to a litany of woes about how uncertain the future of QSR really is. We were told the following:

- “Because QSR is new, it would have to chart a new course.”
- “The agreement with the University is *only* until 2012, and we have *no* idea what will happen after that.”
- “A new Principal or Head makes for uncertainty until that person is up to speed on operations.”
- “Low enrolments in Theology programs make the continued long-term existence of Theology uncertain.”
- “Collective Bargaining makes for a situation of uncertainty about the terms and conditions of faculty employment.”

All in all, we were given the clear message that QSR is in bad shape.

That this issue came up particularly in the context of adjuncts causes us concern. In short, a major portion of the problems of the school were laid

at the feet of the few adjuncts. Indeed, we were told that Management did not want binding policies for dealing with adjuncts so they would not “be tempted” to “game play” in order to avoid following negotiated rules.

In response, we raised the whole issue of justice for the weakest and least powerful members of faculty in a School that wanted to pride itself on justice through its UCC ties and in other ways. They responded that they define justice differently and make up for their treatment of adjuncts with generous financial compensation, even though such compensation is far less than the standards established for the rest of the University.

We were told that QSR’s first commitments were to the tenured and tenure-track faculty. We countered that, in an ideal world, we would have enough tenure-track and tenured faculty to do all the work required, but that this was not an ideal world and we saw no immediate signs of change on the horizon. We also argued that the University has an interest in seeing that all its teaching staff (whether employed by the University or by through QSR) are

fairly and equitably treated.

How different these woes are from the glowing public rhetoric that we have been hearing this last week or so! It is clear to us that Management’s rhetoric in bargaining is all a way to make us feel that we should not ask for too much.

We want to assure our Members that we are not asking for too much. We are building on the history of QTC and the fact that QSR can stake continued claim to important work at Queen’s University in the present and future. And it is good for us to be part of a larger organization like QUFA as we counter all the “uncertainties” put to us.



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