

BARGAINING ALERT!

QUFA Amalgamates

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Until 1 July 2007, QUFA's Members were split between two bargaining units--one for full-time faculty, two categories of Adjunct Faculty, Librarians, and Archivists (FLA); and the other for Sessional Adjunct Faculty (SA). They bargained separately and had separate Collective Agreements. Now that both the University and QUFA have ratified the Memorandum of Agreement (http://www.qufa.ca/files/pdf/ca/sabu_2006-2008/MOA_re_Amalgamation.pdf) regarding the composition of the bargaining units, they have been amalgamated into one bargaining unit (BU). We hope that this article answers the most important questions Members may have about this amalgamation.

We encourage faculty to submit questions that do not seem to be answered below, as we wish to keep this FAQ as helpful as possible by updating as necessary. Please contact QUFA by e-mail (amalgamation@qufa.ca) or by telephone (33270) if you have any contributions, comments, or questions about amalgamation.

Q Why did QUFA support amalgamation?

A Ease of negotiation and ongoing Administration of a Collective Agreement through a Joint Committee to Administer the Agreement (JCAA) is an obvious reason to amalgamate, but is certainly not the only reason. Indeed, were QUFA to believe that it would disadvantage any of the groups we represent, we would not have suggested or supported amalgamation at all.

Unions are amalgamating to make better use of their relative-to-management scarce resources, to gain greater clout through a larger and more diverse membership, to reduce the money and energy needed by cutting back on the number of bargaining rounds necessary, and to make less likely the playing off of one group against another (*whipsawing*).

Some discussions that may be eased by amalgamation are:

- Teaching at Queen's as a whole rather than by contract type
- Greater transparency regarding responsibilities and compensation among the different Adjunct groups
- Better distribution of Queen's service commitments among all Members
- Graduate supervision within a mandated expansion of graduate programmes

- Research agenda, taking into account all Members' contributions

With a more complete picture of all faculty, librarians, and archivists at Queen's, QUFA hopes that the University will open itself up to considering a multiplicity of possible variations in order to craft creative and collaborative solutions at both the bargaining table and the JCAA in the future.

Q What will QUFA be called after amalgamation?

A QUFA will still be called QUFA, as it will continue to represent the same faculty Members at Queen's University that it has done over the past several years.

Q Whom did QUFA represent before amalgamation?

A QUFA represented several types of faculty and librarians and archivists as described in the two Collective Agreements (<http://www.qufa.ca/ca/>). The Sessional Adjunct Collective Agreement (SA CA) refers only to one group, Sessional Adjuncts, while the Faculty, Librarian, and Archivist Collective Agreement (FLA CA) includes several. Here is a list of the various groups represented by QUFA with their 2006-2007 numbers as reported to us by the University:

- **786** Tenure-track Faculty
- **31** Non-renewable Faculty (full-time, full-responsibility, non-tenure track, including

- Spousal)
- **40** Librarian/Archivist continuing track
- **5** Librarian/Archivist non-renewable (full-time, full-responsibility, non-continuing track)
- **65** Term Adjunct Faculty
- **49** Continuing Adjunct Faculty
- **400-450** Sessional Adjuncts

Q Whom does QUFA represent after amalgamation?

A QUFA will continue to represent the same groups listed above, but it will represent them within one bargaining unit rather than two.

Q What are the work-related responsibilities of the various represented groups now?

A Each Member is assigned broad responsibilities governed by the person's appointment letter from the Principal and in compliance with the Collective Agreements. The responsibilities are further refined annually for continuing faculty, librarians, and archivists in the annual letter outlining workload assignments (FLA CA article 37.2.4).

Responsibilities vary from individual to individual among the various groups, and even within each group and/or department and faculty. The nature of academic work allows for this. The differing priorities of each faculty and department will determine the balance of research, service, and/or teaching.

Q Might the assigned responsibilities change after amalgamation?

A The appointment letter from the Principal and the annual letter outlining workload assignments (FLA CA Article 37.2.4) will continue to govern the range of responsibilities required of individual Members.

Having an amalgamated Agreement simply allows both the University and QUFA to review how Adjuncts are currently characterized and grouped, with a goal of determining whether there is a better way to do this for the future during bargaining for the new Collective Agreement.

Here are a couple of examples of questionable categorization. Right now, the difference between whether someone is a Term Adjunct or a Sessional Adjunct is determined by his or her teaching load in one academic year, Term Adjuncts being defined as those teaching a minimum 2.0 course load or the equivalent, and Sessional Adjuncts being defined as those teaching anything less than a 2.0 course load. Add to this the fact that some Term and Sessional Adjuncts have been working continuously at Queen's for many years, sometimes longer than some Continuing Adjuncts. Term and Continuing Adjuncts are currently within the fold of the FLA Collective Agreement and Sessional Adjuncts have their own CA.

Q Where did the idea for amalgamation come from?

A The formal consideration of amalgamation has been around since the first Sessional Adjunct Collective Agreement (SA CA) in 2004. A Joint Committee on the Amalgamation of the QUFA Bargaining Units was formed at the end of the last round of SA negotiations in 2006 to look more deeply into whether the two QUFA bargaining units (BUs) should amalgamate.

Q What was the administrative process leading up to amalgamation?

A The Joint Committee was composed of six members, three from each of QUFA and the University, and it met several times with essentially the same agenda:

QUFA favoured amalgamation and the University continued to consult. On 26 March 2007, both QUFA and the University agreed in principle to amalgamate and signed a Memorandum of Agreement to that effect (<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/RCharter.html>)

To achieve the next step, QUFA held a ratification vote of its Members, and the University sought formal approval by the Principal. The ratification vote held in favour of amalgamation and was based on a majority vote of those who voted from each bargaining unit. With the Principal's formal approval, amalgamation has been accomplished and QUFA and the University can negotiate one CA for the amalgamated bargaining unit.

Q What was QUFA's consultation process with Members prior to amalgamation?

A QUFA made the following efforts to disseminate information in advance of the vote in addition to responding to questions and comments on an individual basis:

- **1 December 2006:** Fall General Meeting discussion
- **January/February 2007:** *QUFA Voices* article by President
- **March/April 2007:** *QUFA Voices* dedicated article by President
- **4-5 April 2007:** E-mail message to Faculty
- **12 April 2007:** Meeting of Heads of Departments
- **13 April 2007:** E-mail message to Faculty
- **16 April 2007:** Open Council of Representatives Meeting highlighting amalgamation

For more details, please see the Communications section at the end of this page

(http://qufa.ca/publications/bu_merge_2007_clarification.php).

Q What were the results of the ratification vote?

A The anonymous ratification vote was held electronically from Tuesday 24 April 2007 at noon until Friday 27 April 2007 at noon, with several e-mail reminders to vote sent to Members during those days. The results of the vote were announced at the Spring General Meeting on Monday 30 April 2007, and the result of the ratification vote was:

- For FLABU: in favour 65.5%, opposed 32.7%, abstained 1.8%
- For SABU: in favour 92.9%, opposed 4.8%, abstained 2.3%

Of all the votes cast, 84% were cast by FLABU Members.

Q When will the current Collective Agreements no longer be in effect?

A Amalgamation has come into effect as of 1 July 2007 (as per the MoA), and any bargaining after that will be for a single Collective Agreement. In the meantime, the two separate existing Collective Agreements (FLABU's and SABU's (<http://qufa.ca/ca/>)) will remain in effect until their coincident expiry on 30 April 2008. QUFA and the University expect to commence negotiations for the single CA in the late fall 2007.

QUFA has already begun preparations for bargaining by actively soliciting Members to participate in various committees and caucuses. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Elaine Berman at qufa@queensu.ca.

Q How much difference exists between the FLABU and SABU Collective Agreements? What work is required to reconcile the two CAs?

A QUFA has been able to group Articles of the two Collective Agreements into three general categories: substantively similar, some change required, and substantively different.

Similar Articles:

At the last round of Sessional Adjunct collective bargaining, QUFA identified more than half of the Agreements' articles as being identical or very similar in substance to their counterparts in the FLABU CA. For example, it comes as no surprise that little difference exists in the articles that set out Management Rights or Grievance and Discipline processes. In total, over seventeen articles are included in this category.

Some Change Required:

Some provisions of the two Collective Agreements currently apply to different groups of bargaining unit Members in different ways. For example, internal benefits such as Child Care and the Fund for Scholarly and Professional development are administered differently across the two Agreements. Consultation with the Membership will be required to ensure these programs meet the needs of an amalgamated group.

Substantively Different Articles:

Where real and justifiable distinctions exist between the working conditions of different categories of Members, the new Collective Agreement will need unique language for various groups. For example, job security provisions will be different for tenure-stream Members than for contract academic faculty. Just as the Faculty Librarians and Archivists Collective Agreement currently has sub-

headings within numerous articles to differentiate processes for Librarians and Archivists, or Term or Continuing Adjuncts, sub-headings for a small number of unique provisions for Sessional Adjuncts are likely to be required.

Q What will an amalgamated Collective Agreement look like?

A We do not yet know what the amalgamated Agreement will look like, but at this point QUFA expects it to look similar to the current FLA Collective Agreement (<http://qufa.ca/ca/>). The FLA CA already has different types of appointments covered in one document, so that it is easy to conceive of an amalgamated document folding in similar provisions from the current Sessional Adjunct Collective Agreement (<http://qufa.ca/ca/>), such as non-discrimination, academic freedom, and grievance, and creating separate articles for those provisions that are particular to the Sessional Adjunct group. The hope is to make it as user friendly as possible.

Q Do the groups have any common concerns?

A The groups have many common concerns, such as manageable workload, academic freedom, grievance and discipline, health and safety, fairness and transparency in local and university-wide processes, working conditions, availability of support, and so on. While some of these concerns will be handled differently for different groups and in different faculties, such as whether a Sessional Adjunct has his or her own office or must share one, most of them overlap either completely or partially.

Q How will QUFA deal with differing priorities among the different groups it represents?

A QUFA has experience dealing with differing priorities already, both among the various groups represented in the FLA bargaining unit and within each of those groups as well. Including Sessional Adjunct issues at the same bargaining table will simply widen the range of issues discussed, but it will not dilute QUFA's continuing commitment to work for the betterment of all Members, regardless of which group they belong to within the bargaining unit.

Indeed, within a single group, such as tenure-track faculty, Members will have differing positions on provisions such as pension, maternity leave, etc., and consultation is necessary to find a position that has the widest support. QUFA is committed to negotiating provisions that protect the rights and promote the interests of all Members rather than playing one group off at the expense of another. Building consensus around future bargaining priorities will continue to involve widespread consultation.

Q What are the financial implications of amalgamation?

A There do not appear to be any financial implications of amalgamation for QUFA, except that there will likely be savings because there will be fewer rounds of negotiations and fewer meetings to maintain the Collective Agreement, meaning one JCAA, when there is only one bargaining unit. QUFA staff members will continue to assist the same people they have been supporting for the last few years, and the CAUT Defence Fund will remain the same as QUFA has been operating as one unit as far as CAUT is concerned. There is no expectation that the dues will change in the immediate future or as a direct result of amalgamating. (It should be noted that SA Members pay dues at the same rate as FLA Members, both prior to amalgamation and now.)

Q Will there be any impact on teaching? Research? Service?

A QUFA does not see amalgamation per se as having an impact on any of these areas. Priorities and assignments within units are determined by the units themselves (Heads, Deans, and so on), and any change to working conditions, availability of funds, etc. in connection with a Collective Agreement would be negotiated whether one or two bargaining units existed. QUFA expects that amalgamation would simply allow the discussions to be more inclusive of all considerations because they are within the purview of one Collective Agreement.

Q Have other universities gone through an amalgamation?

A Laurentian University amalgamated its full- and part-time bargaining units in 1995. Bishop's University also has one bargaining unit that includes all of its faculty, whether continuing or contractually limited. Neither has found that this has strained their ability to represent fairly the various groups found within their membership.

Further Reading:

- McKercher, Catherine. *Newsworkers Unite: Labor, Convergence and North American Newspapers*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.
- McKercher, Catherine and Vincent Mosco. "Divided They Stand: Hollywood Unions in the Information Age." *Work Organization, Labour and Globalisation* 1.1 (2007): 130-43.
- Mosco, Vincent. "Will Knowledge Workers of the World Unite?" *Academic Matters* Win. 2006: 16-17.
- Mosco, Vincent and Catherine

McKercher. "Convergence Bites Back: Labour Struggles in the Canadian Communications Industry." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 (2006): 733-51.

Mosco, Vincent. "Knowledge Workers in the Global Economy: Antinomies of Outsourcing." *Social Identities* 12.6 (2006): 771-90.

Dr. Vincent (Vinny) Mosco is Canada Research Chair in Communication and Society at Queen's and has spent a great deal of time studying union amalgamation. If you would like to learn more by contacting him directly, you may e-mail him at moscov@post.queensu.ca.

Bargaining Alerts are archived on the QUFA Web site (<http://qufa.ca/updates/>). If you have any questions or concerns, or you want to participate in making your voice heard to improve the terms and conditions of your working environment, please contact the QUFA Office in person (9 St Lawrence Avenue), by telephone (32151 or 33033), or by e-mail (qufa2@queensu.ca or qufa@queensu.ca).

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