

Press Release
For Immediate Release
Thursday, February 29, 2024

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY CONCILIATION TALKS FAIL - STRIKE IN 17TH DAY

KJIPUKTUK (HALIFAX) –

Mount Saint Vincent University's Board of Governors (BoG) and the MSVU Faculty Association (MSVUFA) bargaining teams were back at the table on Monday, February 26th. Despite the continued support of conciliators, talks failed.

Since bargaining commenced on May 12, 2023, very little progress has been made, largely due to a series of delay tactics on the part of the BoG. For example, the BoG refused to table any issues until September 13, 2023, severely limited the number of hours it agreed to bargain in Fall 2023, and did not agree to start negotiating any financial matters until January 9, 2024 during the first day of conciliation. Effectively, the BoG refused to engage in any substantial negotiations until normal bargaining broke down. Even though small progress has been made in virtue of conciliation, the BoG has continued to refuse negotiations concerning anything of substance and no future meetings are currently scheduled. The MSVUFA is waiting for the BoG bargaining team to agree to meet with the conciliator and discuss scheduled agenda items.

Since taking strike action on February 12, 2024, the MSVUFA of more than 160 full-time faculty, librarians, and lab instructors has been meeting weekly. Meanwhile, the MSVU Board of Governors' regular Board meeting, scheduled for March 7th, has been cancelled because of a "light agenda."

On February 24, the BoG proposed that all outstanding issues be determined by an external arbitrator. The speed at which this proposal has come is unprecedented, since arbitration is a last resort reserved for when there is no hope for continued negotiations. Arbitration is slow, adding up to 6-months or more to the overall process, and costly for both parties.

The MSVUFA is eager to negotiate a fair and equitable collective agreement with concrete commitments to decolonization and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), including compensation that ensures parity with other Nova Scotian and regional universities and working conditions that support student learning. "We want to get back to work teaching our students and supporting the Mount community through our research and professional and community service work," says Lead Negotiator Dr. Geneviève Boulet. "The Employer has been reluctant to put the Mount's commitment to decolonization and EDIA into action within our collective agreement. We want to hear from the Board of Governors with a package of proposals that meaningfully address these issues within its own community, specifically full-time faculty, librarian, and lab instructor employees."