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Union asks: Who's directing Carleton University's bargaining team?

Ottawa, Ont. — The lack of movement from management representatives at Carleton University is forcing the union representing 700 workers on strike since September 5 to wonder who is in charge of bargaining.

"It's time for the university president, Dr. Samy Mahmoud, to get directly involved to end this strike while his negotiators go back to study Collective Bargaining 101," said CUPE National Representative Susan Arab. "It doesn't take an advanced degree to know that bargaining involves give-and-take, but these negotiators have refused to budge from their most regressive proposals."

The strike by members of CUPE 2424 has suspended all office work, IT support, libraries and other technical and support functions at the university. The strike is about respect, said Arab, noting that the administration, which has offered far less than what was negotiated recently with faculty, has forced CUPE workers to a strike deadline in every round of bargaining for the last 10 years.

"Management also needs to learn that experiments belong in the science lab, not at the bargaining table," Arab said. "They are trying to do something no other Ontario university has attempted — to reduce sick leave provisions for workers over the age of 65. That kind of discrimination is just not on with our members."

The union is also trying to get the right for workers to have a representative present if they are called to a meeting with a supervisor that could lead to disciplinary action.

"We're not far apart on wages. Our bargaining team has moved on other issues," Arab said. "Now we need the highest level of administration to get involved to ensure there's some movement on the university's part. Let's reach a fair settlement in order to end this strike and get the campus back to normal for students and faculty."

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