
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2007

CUPE 2424 calls on Carleton University's Board of Governors to intervene in strike talks after rejecting spurious management offer

OTTAWA, Ont. – Local 2424 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and its members on strike at Carleton University, voted overwhelmingly to reject the administration's latest settlement proposal today, one that union negotiators described as spurious and designed to divide the membership.

"We urge the board of governors to intervene in negotiations," said Wiz Long, CUPE 2424 spokesperson. "We proposed a settlement that we believe falls within the mandate of the board of governors over the weekend, but Carleton administration's negotiating team rejected it repeatedly, insisting on punitive measures in a return-to-work protocol, and refusing to allow union representation during disciplinary interviews, one of our key outstanding issues."

The employer's refusal to allow union representation during disciplinary interviews means that any employee could be hauled into a disciplinary interview with their manager, their department head and human resources, without any union representative.

Other contentious measures demanded by the administration's negotiating committee include:

- Automatic termination of any employee who fails to return to work and who is not on authorized leave. (This means if the strike ended Monday and the union were unable to reach a member who's away or ill, the employer could terminate them for not showing up for work the first day after the strike)
- A clause which attempts to silence Union comment for the next three years. (Unions have a legal obligation to represent the interests of members, and need to reserve the right to criticize the employer on other issues that may come up over the life of the collective agreement. This clause would mean the union risks being hauled into litigation every time they make a statement that is critical of Carleton)
- Carleton administration will not guarantee that the terms of the old agreement will continue until they ratify a new collective agreement. (This means employees would return to work with no protection of a collective agreement until the employer ratifies a new contract weeks later)
- The employer's signing bonus would be extended to scabs and strike violators who crossed their own picket line to work during the legal strike.

“We made considerable effort at the negotiating table to correct these issues with the employer, but to no avail,” said CUPE national representative Susan Arab. “We remain ready and willing to bargain with Carleton University, but we believe if a settlement is to be reached, the Carleton University Board of governors must intervene.”

CUPE represents 700 professional, office, technical and support staff at Carleton University, on strike since September 5th. A copy of CUPE’s letter to the Board of Governors is available at www.2424.cupe.ca . CUPE’s negotiating team will remain at the negotiating site today.

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Wiz Long, CUPE 2424 spokesperson: (613) 252-2394 (cell)

Susan Arab, CUPE national representative: (613) 237-0115, (613) 769-7553 (cell)

Robert Lamoureux, CUPE Communications: (416) 292-3999, (416) 727-9144 (cell)