

Members of CUPE 4207 Unit 3 met on March 4 to ratify our first collective agreement for Instructors in ESL Services. Having heard that the employer finally ratified the deal, our members were in a position to vote unanimously to accept the agreement.

Although the agreement did not include the specific language that the employer found objectionable, the language that was accepted provided exactly the same protection. In actuality, the collective agreement that was ratified was superior to the proposal that the employer made prior to the strike. The agreement that was reached this week included:

- Conversion of 12 limited term part-time positions (one year contracts) into permanent part-time positions. These positions include pro-rated benefits (80% of coverage enjoyed by full-time employees). This includes a tuition waiver for all members in these positions (something to which the employer had not previously agreed).
- The same language on contracting out as exists in our Unit 2 collective agreement (“No member of the Bargaining Unit shall be laid off, or have their hours of work or salary reduced, due to contracting out”).
- The employer will issue a letter indicating that there is no intention to contract out any work of the bargaining unit for the life of the collective agreement.
- Minutes taken at the mediation meeting held on Tuesday that confirm that part-time Instructors will not have their work contracted out during the weeks between terms when they do not hold a contract. These minutes can be used in grievances and arbitrations to confirm the intent of the language regarding contracting out, in the event that the employer tries to back out of its commitment.
- A \$500 signing bonus, which will help offset lost wages due to the strike.

As part of the settlement, the union has agreed to withdraw our complaint at the Labour Board.

All in all, the members of Unit 3 have engaged in a successful strike. At the end of the strike we were able to get the same job security that would have been possible with the “no contracting out” language, even if the specific wording is different.

One year ago, every member of Unit 3 only had limited term contracts. Full-time employees were on 2 or 3 year contracts. Part-time members had to apply for their jobs every term. After joining the union, and negotiating a first collective agreement, all 20 full-time employees are now permanent full-time. Twelve of the part-time employees are now permanent part-time (30 hours per week, 52 weeks per year) with benefits. We have gone from a situation in which there were no permanent employees, to one where there are 32 permanent positions.

Once the electronic copy of the new Collective Agreement has been completed we will post it on our website.