

**Response to Management's latest letter to our members.  
Questions being received will be answered below.  
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Question of the day!

**I received a letter in the mail yesterday from the university, it said it was "a final offer", what does this mean?**

The letter that CUPE members received in the mail Monday April 29<sup>th</sup>, was a letter outlining the University's previous offer. **There was nothing new in the offer**, everything written in the letter were items that had been offered previously. The 2% wage increase for 2019 and 2020 have been on the table and communicated to all of our members in our Special Membership meetings **by email, website, and social media**. It should be noted that **not all members will qualify for this increase**. If you reach the top of your phase or are at the top of your phase presently, you will not be eligible for any form of pay increase until the top of your phase is increased. As you recall in the last contract the top of the phases increased in 2014 and 2015, but they only increased in 2 of the six phases in 2013.

The \$3000 signing bonus was on the table before and is in place of any negotiated wage increase for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018. **This 'wage freeze' for those years will impact all of our members on a go forward basis but especially those of you that will continue working at the university for a number of years.**

**The \$400 flexible spending benefit was agreed to and signed off by both sides over a year ago to be included when we present the contract to membership and the board of governors.** Interesting enough, when we asked for the benefit to be increased to the same level as ASPA members receive, we were questioned as to why we wanted it as "CUPE members didn't access the money" available to them in the plan currently.

**The extra time off at Christmas was agreed to and signed off on by both sides over a year ago to take back to the members and the board of governors when a new contract is ratified. Nothing new here. Once again, the University is misleading some of you into thinking you will get more additional days off than you will.** The CUPE members working a 38-hour week will get one additional day off at Christmas, while those of you working the 35-hour week will get 3 additional days off at Christmas. Although the University is closed to the public during the holidays our CUPE members were the only bargaining unit on campus to have to provide days to cover those days that they weren't required to work and weren't able to come to work.

**The increase in vacation days were also agreed and signed over a year ago.** This benefit that we requested was the lowest costing addition to our collective agreement as costed out by the University.

**The proposed new salary model was removed** from the table after CUPE told the University that we had no interest in going to a new wage model that disadvantaged many of our members more than the current one does. After the last letter from the University came out it became very apparent how many of you would be impacted in a negative way. With the information they provided your negotiating team, we knew that **42% of our members would receive a 1% increment or less, in the first year of agreeing to it, and that number would increase every year afterwards as more people reach the mid point of their new phase.**

The pension is an interesting one as our researchers in Ottawa have discovered that although we have the only “open Defined Benefit” pension plan on campus, it is also the lowest costing per member plan on campus at a cost of \$5,600 on average per member in 2019 and which if they agreed to our proposal of a “joint cost and joint risk” defined benefit plan would actually see the average cost per member to the University decrease to approximately \$4,600 dollars. The arbitration panel ruled that the language currently in place in the pension text allowed for the University to make unilateral changes to the pension, even though when the faculty negotiated themselves the option to leave their Defined Benefit Plan, they were given 3 options to do so. Our members are being told what plan they will be in. This is unacceptable. I think we’d all love to be in a defined contribution plan if it was structured like senior management, where people are receiving tens of thousands of dollars deposited into their retirement pension plans each year.

**On a last note a true “Final offer” is one that is taken to the labour board for all union members involved to vote on.** The vote is conducted by the labour board and the results are binding. The employer through *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, is allowed to do this once in negotiations. This offer has not been taken to the labour board at this point.

Your negotiating team was commissioned to negotiate the best offer they could on your behalf at which time we will bring it back for you to vote on. We didn’t bring this offer back months ago when it was offered, and we communicated the offer and the reasons why we didn’t like it then. We presently still feel the same about it.

**Prior to the Saskatchewan Employment Act, composed by the current government, employers could not bargain directly with the members through mail outs, email and other forms of communication. Now they are allowed to. This is an attempt to undermine your bargaining team and weaken our union. Your union has your best interests in mind, where as your employer does not always share the same sentiment.**