



Teaching Support Staff Union

September 27, 2012

“Today at 3:00 p.m. we served seventy-two hours strike notice at Simon Fraser University,” said Derek Sahota, spokesperson for the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU). “After twenty-six months at the table with negligible progress, it is now clear that the Employer at SFU will not bargain with us unless we take action.”

“Our goal is not a picket line, but a collective agreement,” said Sahota. “We will do everything we can to limit the impact on students, while doing what is necessary to get our employer to address critical issues facing the University.”

The TSSU represents Teaching Assistants, distance course teachers, continuing instructors, and Sessional Instructors. TSSU members deliver the majority of face time teaching to undergraduate students at SFU. The majority of TSSU members are graduate students, whose average income from all sources is \$18,000/year. After paying tuition, these members have an income of \$12,000 per year.

“On average each student has twenty-two percent of their courses delivered by TSSU Sessional Instructors. These Adjunct Faculty, although highly qualified, have no seniority rights, minimal benefits, and are paid less than 1/2 of what a Lecturer is paid for the same work,” said Sahota. “Many of our members are denied access to work opportunities due to antiquated posting and awarding rules that fail to support the interdisciplinary nature of SFU’s programs. Our distance teachers are covered by language and pay formulas that arose prior to the use of email and other web tools. Our full time continuing Instructors at Harbour Centre are denied the basic benefits that SFU provides to all other continuing employees.”

After 37 days of meeting, the parties have signed one small alteration to the agreement which brings it into line with the law on the right to refuse unsafe work, and one housekeeping change. The Union received a 90% strike mandate from its members. The parties have been in mediation since the strike vote. The mediator has booked out.

“We need equity. Our members need their problems addressed.”

The Union has declared a ban on overtime commencing at the expiry of the seventy-two hour notice period, as the first step in job action. Further action will follow.

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