



Teaching Support Staff Union

Marking For Education not Administration Detailed Instructions

June 17, 2015

The Background

On June 10th, TSSU delivered a message to President Andrew Petter and SFU Senior Administration with 4 items to create forward movement at the bargaining table. The June 16th deadline to respond passed with no response from SFU Administration. We require more pressure to make bargaining productive to reach a collective agreement.

Our elected Strike Committee voted unanimously to escalate our strike action to a measured grade withholding. We now need the power of our collective participation in strike action to get a fair agreement. During this strike action, we will continue teaching, and providing feedback to our students. All assignments submitted after 11:59 pm on June 19th will be subject to grade withholding. The goal of this action is to get SFU Administration to reach a Collective Agreement. We think the following four items would help to create a productive bargaining environment:

1. remove SFU proposals that take things away from our ELC/ITP members
2. add a member of Senior Administration to the Employer's Committee
3. add a person with recent teaching experience to the Employer's Committee
4. agree to bargain beyond the hours of 9:30am-4:00 pm

We asked the employer to agree to these process improvements in order to avoid escalating strike action. Unfortunately, we received no reply. We have now decided to escalate job action to create more pressure at the bargaining table by withholding grades. If they agree to our request, we will ask our members to submit withheld grades as a show of good faith, and we will return to the bargaining table.

If members have additional questions, members should immediately contact TSSU via:
TSSU office: 778-782-4735 TSSU Helpline: 604-652-6202 Email: tssu@tssu.ca

Why do we need to increase the pressure now?

TSSU has been without a collective agreement for over a year now. We know from bargaining the 2010-2014 collective agreement that SFU's Administration needs to feel pressure from the TSSU membership and the campus community to bargain in a meaningful way. In November 2012, once we had a member of SFU's Senior Administration with the authority to make changes in the room, we negotiated the



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majority of our agreement in 48 hours. At the onset of bargaining our committee was optimistic that negotiations would proceed differently this time. After 13 months at the table, we did try to avoid this by asking SFU to agree to some changes in the approach to bargaining, but they would not agree. It is now clear that we need to take further collective action to emphasize that we want a collective agreement that improves our working conditions sooner rather than later.

The TSSU is fighting for:

- Seniority for experienced Sessional Instructors
- Access to SFU's standard benefit package for Continuing Language Instructors in the ELC/ITP program
- Protection from overwork/underpay for TA/TMs and improved access to TA/TM work for graduate students
- A fix to the childcare bursary to get money into the hands of parents
- Compliance with BC law, on issues such as Health and Safety and payment of wages

Why is withholding the marks from Administration a good option?

Our greatest strength as workers is that our labour is essential to the operation of the University, and we have complete control of withdrawing that labour. Withholding marks provides pressure but limits the impact on students. If SFU Administration comes to the table with the requested commitments, grades will not be entered.

During the withholding of marks, teaching work will carry on, students will learn, feedback will be provided, and the student-teacher relationship can actually be strengthened due to increased interaction. Initially, the withholding of marks should not have a significant negative effect on students.

The Action:

All assignments due after June 19th, 2015, will be subject to the "Marking for Education" action outlined below. TSSU members will provide feedback and verbally inform students of progress if asked, but will not enter grades into any SFU system, record them in any electronic communication, retain a paper copy or provide them to



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anyone. TSSU members will provide feedback to their students while denying the “numbers” or “letters” that the University bureaucracy requires to function, until our conditions are met. If an assignment was due on or before June 19th but an extension had been granted to the student, that mark is to be provided and entered.

How will this work?

1. All marking results will be recorded on the spreadsheet attached, or another piece of paper. No mark will be recorded on the assignment, lab book, test question, etc. No mark will be recorded/saved on a computer accessible to other SFU employees besides the responsible TSSU member. If you do need to use an SFU computer for marking, we recommend you save the spreadsheet on a USB stick and delete any copies from the computer.
2. TSSU will provide envelopes in which the member will seal their marking results, available from your Steward, or the Union office, or you can email tssu@tssu.ca. The course number, section number, assignment description, and TA/TM/Sessional name (TMs that are not on campus – see attached document “Marking for Education not Administration; Specific Detailed Instructions for Tutor Markers”) will be on the outside of the envelope.
3. Envelopes will be stored in a safe and secure location by the individual TSSU member, and until the TSSU directs you to submit them.
4. In group marking, a cover sheet with marks will be used for each individual student assignment or test. After the group has completed marking, all of the cover sheets will be collected by the markers and placed into envelopes (use as few envelopes as reasonable). Further details see “Marking for Education not Administration; Specific Detailed Instructions for Group Marking.” If any member has concerns about a group marking scenario, please contact us immediately at 778-782-4735 or 604-652-6202.
5. The TSSU member will hold the grades, and the grades will not be given to your Course Supervisor or any other SFU Employee until TSSU Strike Committee officially instructs you to do so.
6. Each TSSU member will offer students verbal feedback as to their progress.
7. In the unlikely event that the withholding of grades proceeds beyond the end of the semester, and thus interferes with the furnishing of final grades for graduation, any student providing proof of their reason for requiring grades to be submitted (e.g. for graduate school application, or PDP entry) may request that the Union approve the release of their individual results. Results will be



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released to the University where the Union is satisfied that to do otherwise would place an unreasonable burden on such a student.

8. We know that there are many situations and complications on how marking is carried out and recorded. If you have any questions as to how to carry this out, please call us at 778-782-4735 or 604-652-6202. We will work through how you can participate in this job action in your particular circumstances.

The end goal of our job action is a fair and reasonable collective agreement. Thank you for contributing to our ability to reach that goal soon!

Your TSSU Strike Coordinating Committee & Contract Committee