



QUFA ALERT!

Queen's University Faculty Association Bargaining Alert

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The Ratification Process Explained

Ratification of the proposed new collective agreement will take place online, 9-15 February 2019

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Introduction

In February, QUFA Members will be asked to vote on two important matters: the terms of a new collective agreement (2019-2022) (CA) and conversion to a new pension plan (the University Pension Plan (UPP)) in 2021. The nature of this ratification vote is determined by the fact of deciding these two separate but linked issues. This *QUFA Bargaining Alert!* explains how ratification will work and why it is scheduled as it is.

Pension Benefit Act Requirements

By law, if the sponsor of a pension, in our case Queen's University, wants to make material changes to the pension, it must consult with members of the pension plan. These are people who are actively contributing to the pension, or who have contributed in the past and expect to receive a pension in the future. At least two-thirds of these people must agree to the proposed change. Where those members are unionized, their union, as the sole

bargaining agent, must either consent or withhold consent on their behalf. As well, retirees who are taking their pension are given the opportunity to object to the change. If more than one-third of retirees object, the change is not permitted.

The sponsor must inform the people in each of these groups about the proposed change by sending them a detailed package of information. They must do this within one year of the last valuation of the pension plan. Non-unionized members of the plan and retirees receiving these packages have ninety days to send back their consent or their objection, as the case may be. Unionized members of the plan will receive packages at this time but will not have a ballot. Unions can determine how to vote on behalf of union members, which QUFA has done. You will be able to see a draft version of this package on the QUFA Web site.¹

Queen's University is planning to send these packages to Queen's employees, former employees, and retirees in late March 2019, and will close the consent vote in June 2019. Depending on your status in the pension plan (either contributing or taking a pension), you will either have already voted on this question in a QUFA ratification or you will have the retiree option of objecting.

QUFA Ratification

The full story of how QUFA came to participate in negotiating the terms of a new, university-sector, multi-employer, and jointly-sponsored pension plan (the UPP) was explained

at the December 2018 fall general meeting. You can find a link to the Webcast of that meeting on the QUFA Web site.² That Webcast also explains how we came to negotiate a new CA at the same time as we negotiated the terms under which we would recommend conversion of the pension to our Members. If you prefer to read about this, please see the January 2019 issue of *QUFA Voices*.³

The QUFA executive and the QUFA council agree that QUFA Members should have the right to vote on pension conversion. There is a policy governing how this vote is to be conducted, approved by both bodies, in the "Background Documents" section of the QUFA Web site, noted above.

The ratification vote will be electronic and will be open **from 9 February 2019 at 12.00 noon to 15 February 2019 at 12.00 noon**. The QUFA vote begins following the close of the faculty association votes at the University of Toronto and the University of Guelph (who are also recommending the new pension plan to their members). The QUFA vote will close on 15 February 2019 so that Queen's administration has six weeks to prepare the summary information documents for mailing in late March. The United Steelworkers (USW) on campus will also be voting in February. If both USW and QUFA get positive votes and agree to convert the pension to the UPP, Queen's University will proceed with the mailing of summary information documents in March. If QUFA and USW do not consent, it is likely that

