

**Committee:** Salary & Benefits Committee

**Chair:** Kris Nordgren

**It's my pleasure to thank the Committee Members:**

<b>Jerome Francis</b>	<b>Tess Williams</b>
<b>Cindy Li</b>	<b>Ellen Yap</b>
<b>Jill Sutherland</b>	

**Report Date:** November 7, 2023

**Update:**

**Bargaining 2022-2025**

As a result of concerns APSA raised during the last round of negotiations (contract term 2019-2022), in early 2022 APSA initiated discussions with the University in an attempt to reach consensus on the scope of Article 8.1 in the APSA/SFU Basic Agreement, i.e., negotiations on compensation matters and the definition of “other generally available economic benefits”. After failing to reach consensus, in April 2022 APSA filed a Basic Agreement grievance and entered into binding mediation in early 2023.

Concurrent with the binding mediation hearings in January 2023, APSA notified the University of our intention to renegotiate the APSA/SFU Basic Agreement language, in conjunction with compensation negotiations for the 2022-2025 contract term. The University responded that the two negotiations should be separate, and so APSA informed the University of its intention to begin compensation negotiations following SFU’s convocation ceremonies in June 2023. The two parties met in late May 2023 to discuss the way forward.

On June 4, 2023, APSA served notice to the University to begin bargaining in early July. The University retained the services of Geoff Tierney, a contracted labour lawyer with experience negotiating similar contracts at other Canadian universities. The two parties agreed to meet starting July 18<sup>th</sup>, with seven dates confirmed and a commitment to add additional dates as required.

APSA’s negotiating team tabled its initial proposals on July 18<sup>th</sup>, which reflected the concerns and interests of its members identified through consultation and a survey conducted in late 2022, in addition to issues raised through advocacy and direct communication with the Association. In addition to seeking the full value of the PSEC mandate in wages, APSA sought improvements to: health & wellness benefits, including new gender affirming benefits; the rights and benefits of temporary staff; hours of work and leaves; and overtime provisions for managers and non-managers. The University’s initial proposals were tied to the future Basic Agreement negotiations (tentatively scheduled to begin in 2024), and packaged benefits improvements to concessions in other areas. APSA was firm on: removing managed formulary/generic drug pricing; ensuring proper timing of implementation of benefits; ensuring accounting for retroactivity to July 1, 2022.

Several counter proposals were tabled by both parties; however, the APSA bargaining team remained firm on its commitment to not concede on the issue of prescription drugs.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, APSA and the University reached a tentative memorandum of understanding, and the agreement was ratified by members on September 7<sup>th</sup>, with 99% in favour.

The final agreement is as follows:

### **1. General Wage Increases**

Effective July 1, 2022:

- salary scale increased by a flat amount of \$0.25/hour, followed by 3.24%

Effective July 1, 2023, as follows:

- The salary scale increased by 6.75%

Effective July 1, 2024, a minimum of 2.0% to a maximum of 3.0%, subject to Cost-of-Living Adjustments (based on the BC Consumer Price Index). This aligns with the General Wage Increases based on the PSEC mandate.

### **2. Benefits**

Establish an individual Health Spending Account (HSA) for each eligible APSA member in the amount of \$775 per calendar year.

- Eligibility based on current Extended Health/Dental eligibility.
- Prorated for 2023.
- New hires will receive a prorated amount in their first calendar year.
- Unused funds may be carried over for up to 12 months.

Other benefits include:

- Pay-direct card for drug prescriptions
- Increases psychological benefits to \$2000 per year, including coverage for clinical counsellors, social workers and online cognitive behavioural therapy combined.
- Adding EFAP access for Temporary Employees.
- Medical note for massage therapy referral extended from every 6 months to every 12 months.

### **3. Maternity/Parental Leave**

The changes to this benefit will begin on January 1, 2024.

- Biweekly payment option, rather than a lump sum, for EI top-up amount.
- First week waiting period payment

### **4. Temporary Employee Rights & Redress**

- Removing the waiting period for benefits between contracts and between temporary and promotion to continuing, for breaks of 60 days or less between positions.
- An extra 7% of salary will be paid in lieu of continuing benefits (e.g., pension and other benefits not received by temporary employees).
- Early termination payout of one month or the balance of the appointment, whichever is less.

#### **5. Continuing CUPE in a Temporary APSA position**

- Continuing CUPE staff hired in a temporary APSA position will receive step progressions and access to PD funding.

#### **6. Professional Development Reimbursement**

- Removing the limitation for APSA employees hired after October 1 – now eligible for reimbursement on January 1 following their start date.

#### **7. Leaves with Pay**

- Expanded definition for personal leave without loss of pay under AD 10.08, replacing 6.02 with new paragraph 11.01. Removing “domestic emergency or personal problem” with no limitation, e.g., can be used for any other purpose not covered under general holiday, vacation, court/jury duty, compassionate, sick, workers’ compensation, maternity/parental leaves.
- There will be two paid days of cultural leave for Indigenous employees.

#### **8. One-time allocations**

- Sustainable Transportation allowance of \$500 (prorated for part-time employees).
- Professional Development supplemental payment
  - \$500 supplement for continuing employees.
  - \$250 supplement for temporary employees.

#### **9. Commitment on Gender Affirming Benefits**

By the end of this fiscal year, the University will:

- Investigate options with benefits providers
- Inform the community of its options, with a schedule for implementation.

#### **Other Issues:**

Kris Nordgren is officially resigning as Chair and member of the Salary & Benefits Committee effective immediately.