February 4, 2022.

**Scheduling Bargaining Dates**

Your negotiating team has sent the University ten

dates when we are available for collective bargaining. We are waiting for the University’s negotiators to confirm their availability.

**The University’s Negotiating Committee**

The members of the University's negotiating committee are Ray deSouza, Joanne Evans, Mary Ann McConkey, Sarah Baello, Vikas Mehta alternating with Lyndon Nobre and Kelley Castle alternating with Yvette Ali, with Anthony Yeung and Jennifer McMann in attendance on an as needed basis.

**More Negotiations Membership Consultation Meetings – In Person, On Campus & Indoors**

Several membership consultation meetings were held online last week. The USW negotiating team received useful input from members who attended the meetings and there was lots of lively discussion.

The outdoor, on-campus meetings had to be postponed because of bad weather. They are being replaced by indoor meetings on Friday, February 4 and Saturday, February 5 that are now possible because of the recent loosening of public health restrictions. The details of the meetings are as follows:

Friday, February 4 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Goldring Centre, Room 148

Friday, February 4 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Goldring Centre, Room 148

Saturday, February 5 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Goldring Centre, Room 148

The meetings are scheduled so that members can participate while they are on their lunch break.

Following the last consultation meeting, the negotiating team will finalize its language proposal document in anticipation of exchanging bargaining proposals with the University.

**Bill 124 and the Damage Done**

In November 2019, the Conservative government’s Bill 124 became law. Bill 124 limits Ontario public service employees such as us to a maximum 1% across the board wage increase and to a maximum 1% increase to the total value of all other components of our overall compensation package. Our Local is working with the International Union’s Research Department to calculate the highest possible total value for the non-wage monetary components of our collective agreement so that our associated bargaining proposals can have the biggest, potential positive impact.

Movement through our USW paybands is not impacted by Bill 124. During the three years of wage restraint imposed on us by the Conservatives, USW members who are not at the top step of their payband move up through their payband steps as usual, leading them to receive a greater wage increase than the across the board wage increase negotiated by the Union within the limit imposed by Bill 124. Bill 124 also applies to university managers and professors. Like USW members, Vic managers who are not earning the top wage rate of their job class can receive a greater than 1% wage increase while Bill 124 is in effect with a move up their payband. The same is true for professors who have not reached the top wage rate as determined by their movement through their Progression Through the Ranks system.

Bill 124 is in effect for the first three years following our July1, 2017 to June 30, 2020 collective agreement. In the first year our unit came under the influence of the legislation, we were able to negotiate the maximum 1% allowable wage increase. There are now two more years in which the legislation blocks us from exercising our right to freely bargain with our employer.

With the current level of economic inflation, the damage being inflicted by Bill 124 is greatly magnified. Our union and the broader Ontario labour movement have been fighting the legislation since it was given royal assent, including joining other unions in a Supreme Court challenge. Of course there is the possibility of challenging Bill 124 at the ballot box this coming June.

In solidarity,

John Ankenman, Chris Greenwood, Wanda Hughes & Mary Lou Scott