

## **Talking-points for initiating a conversation with your students about the impending possibility of a strike vote if mediation fails:**

- 1) I am in a union of 3,800 academic staff at the UofA. Our contract expired in June 2020.
- 2) We're being pushed into a corner at the bargaining table. We have filed for mediation, which starts Feb. 18, but if mediation fails, we may have no other choice but to call a strike vote
- 3) Concordia University in Edmonton had a strike in January. The University of Lethbridge held a strike vote Feb. 2-3, and 90% of votes cast were in favour of taking strike action. Mount Royal University in Calgary is also on the verge of a strike. If we strike, it would be part of a larger pattern in the province.
- 4) A 'yes' on a strike vote does not mean that academic staff will necessarily go on strike. A 'yes' on a strike vote gives the bargaining team more leverage, and they can use this leverage to advance bargaining.
- 5) As an instructor, I care about your education, and I care about the education future students will receive. Many of the issues that we are trying to address through bargaining, like workload and precarious employment, relate to your learning experience. Our working conditions are your learning conditions.
- 6) There are lots of different issues that are being discussed in bargaining because our union includes professors, academic teaching staff, librarians, researchers, and professional staff. About 30% of these employees work on contract. Here is one-page that summarizes the issues with the employer's compensation proposals.
- 7) I know that you are stressed, with so many changes over the last two years. I am stressed as well. I wouldn't consider voting yes in a strike vote if I didn't think the future of our university, including our ability to recruit and retain amazing researchers/wonderful instructors/talented librarians, etc. was at stake.
- 8) You will likely have questions about what this means for you as a student. You need to know that it is the employer that has the power to determine what happens to the rest of the semester, since they control the academic calendar and have the ability to confer grades. If you have questions, they should be directed to the registrar's office.
- 9) I don't want to scare you by bringing up the possibility of a strike, but I thought you would appreciate being informed about something on campus that might impact your studies.

### **Notes for Members:**

- Be yourself: you can mix, match, and go off script
- Be honest about what is at stake for students (if you have less time to work on grant applications, which impacts your students' funding, say this!)
- Be open about your working conditions (if you are on contract, explain to your students how this precarity impacts them)
- Be prepared for questions you don't know how to answer: tell your students to regularly check AASUA's website, as more info will be posted in the coming weeks
- Remember that while this may be very stressful for students to hear, it will be even more stressful if students are blindsided later in the term