



FAQ for Congress 2024 Participants

The Association of McGill Professors of Law (AMPL/ AMPD) is the first certified faculty association at McGill University. From that start of the unionization process, and especially after its accreditation in November 2022, AMPL/ AMPD and its members have been subjected to reprisals, delays, and bad-faith negotiation from the part of the McGill administration, including the Provost, the Deputy and Associate Provosts, and the Dean of the Faculty of Law.

In the wake of a relentless anti-union campaign which has lasted two and a half years, AMPL/ AMPD's members voted in favour of an unlimited strike mandate unlimited strike which began on April 24. Despite AMPL/ AMPD's repeated offers to meet with the employer to secure a collective agreement before graduation and before Congress, the McGill administration refused to meet at all between April 24 and June 7.

On AMPL/ AMPD, negotiations, and the current strike

Why did McGill Law professors unionize?

1. Meaningful participation in governance

In line with other faculties across Canada, we are asking that professors have a say in faculty & decanal appointments, merit pay determinations, and other crucial working conditions.

2. Transparency

From their inadequate response to Covid-19, to securing privileges through salary and pensions, to neglecting necessary infrastructural repairs and thinning and squeezing student & faculty support staff, McGill is making detrimental governance decisions behind closed doors, without transparency and fair process.

3. Teaching & learning conditions

McGill prides itself on the excellence of its program. However, recent faculty losses, a freeze on the hiring of staff, professors, and lecturers, and the possibility of a larger student cohort create the risk of a cumulative and detrimental effect on course diversity, class size, undergraduate and graduate supervision, responsiveness to student needs and requests, ability to provide detailed and meaningful feedback on student assignments, and the overall quality of education and research at McGill. We are therefore seeking a minimum core of staff and faculty in the agreement.

4. Equity (including salary)

There are vast inequities amongst our faculty members regarding salary and, in aggregate, salaries have not even kept up with inflation (while senior management has enhanced its own salaries and specially-protected pensions).

5. Stemming the tide of corporatized management

In a few short years, McGill has transformed our administrative governance from a collegial rotation of professor-to-admin into a managerial class with sky-high salaries who are beholden to each other rather than to their colleagues. With that shift has come the swath of opaque, counterproductive governance measures indicated above.

Why is the McGill Law Faculty Union (AMPL/ AMPD) on strike?

1. 500+ days of negotiations

The AMPL/AMPD was certified November 2022. Over 18 months/500 days later we still have no collective agreement. The average number of days to negotiate a collective agreement across Canadian universities is 265. McGill is pursuing a purposive strategy of delay to weaken our resolve and undermine our right to a collective agreement.

2. Bad faith bargaining

McGill schedules few negotiating sessions, they cancel last minute or shorten meetings with little notice, and they do not prepare their responses before the meetings. They often show up only to leave to do the prep work that should have been done before the meeting.

McGill has repeatedly failed to respond to the Union's substantive proposals, has failed to suggest alternatives and has even failed to agree to clauses that are standard in university collective agreements.

3. Union-busting tactics

McGill continues to contest the certification of the law faculty union in the courts, demonstrating its continuing efforts to undermine the right of professors to unionize. McGill is the only university in Quebec where professors are not unionized - a fundamental right that is protected in the Quebec Charter.

This basic refusal to accept the choice of professors to unionize plays out in its refusal to bargain in good faith, its retaliation against union supporters, and its continued litigation against the very existence of the union.

4. Misallocation of university & public money

McGill is throwing away money in the courts on a weak claim against their own faculty of lawyers. Contesting a fundamental right to collective bargaining is an unacceptable waste of university and public funds. McGill has a duty to get back to the negotiating table and bargain in good faith!

5. Waste of professors' time & faculty resources

Thousands of hours have been spent by professors in their efforts to secure what is legally guaranteed to them and to contest frivolous claims against them collectively and individually. This time could have been spent on what we would rather be doing – contributing to the faculty through teaching, research and service.

Which issues are left to negotiate?

We have made strides on a number of issues, but several key working conditions are outstanding. While AMPL/AMPD presented their proposals on these items months ago, McGill has yet to respond (apart from crossing out our proposals and sending back our documents without a counter proposal).

1. Conditions of employment & union recognition

The standard infrastructural and governance mechanisms that we are asking for are readily available in other Universities: a guarantee that minimum facilities be maintained (offices, health & safety guarantees); minimum core of administrative staff and faculty; reimbursement of work-related expenses; faculty research support (expanded research support, limited course releases for new hires); and basic recognition of Association (office, course releases).

2. Teaching credit & recognition

Again, what we are asking for is common across other universities. Our proposals here include credit for graduate student supervision and overload teaching.

3. Meaningful governance

The proposals here include establishing a committee to determine merit pay and a research committee, and a mechanism for faculty voice in Dean selection. Most universities would welcome faculty who want more committees and more meetings!

4. Equitable pay & benefits

We are asking for a parity catch-up with UBC, Toronto and Osgoode as benchmarks (adjusted for cost of living), and an adjustment indexed to inflation + 1.5% across-the-board + 1.5% merit and equity; and adjusted benefits (status quo + regularization of pension plans so that all faculty have the same structure).

On support from associations and scholars

What support has AMPL/ AMPD asked of scholarly associations?

1. Move Congress panels & events offsite – or online

Move as many panels offsite as you reasonably can, to other universities or institutions. Move your board meetings, special sessions, and social gatherings offsite as well.

Alternatively, move as many events online as you can, which may be possible to do without incurring penalties using the Congress Virtual Platform [more information here?].

We understand that moving events from McGill may be logistically or financially impossible to do completely. We will be grateful for a reasonable but sincere effort to minimize your presence on the McGill campus during Congress.

2. Cancel Congress-related contracts at McGill

Where possible, please consider ways to reduce your association's financial ties with McGill in connection with Congress. For instance, you could:

- cancel catering orders with McGill or its approved caterers
- cancel contracts for A/V & support services with McGill
- cancel any accommodations at McGill residences

We understand that cancelling McGill contracts connected with Congress may be logistically or financially impossible to do completely. We will be grateful for a reasonable but sincere effort to minimize your association's patronage of McGill vendors and services while attending Congress.

3. Write McGill administrators

Send a statement to McGill administrators expressing solidarity with AMPL/AMPD's strike action in pursuit of a collective agreement:

- President Deep Saini, deep.saini@mcgill.ca
- Provost Christopher Manfredi, christopher.manfredi@mcgill.ca
- Deputy Provost Fabrice Labeau, fabrice.labeau@mcgill.ca
- HR Director Francis Desjardins, francis.desjardins@mcgill.ca
- Dean of Law Robert Leckey, robert.leckey@mcgill.ca

Stress that it is your association's solidarity with our union's strike action that has motivated you to move your Congress-related events offsite or online.

4. Make a public statement

Make a statement to the public and to your members expressing solidarity with AMPL/AMPD in its strike action in pursuit of a collective agreement and explain that this is the reason you are taking steps to move your Congress events offsite or online.

Encourage association colleagues and members of the public to support AMPL/AMPD and to respect our union picket lines.

What can you do as a Congress participant to support AMPL/ AMPD?

1. Refrain from crossing AMPL/AMPD picket lines

AMPL/ AMPD consider that participation in Congress is crossing a picket line.

Nonetheless, we recognize that it is very difficult for some associations, especially in light of the obstinacy of the Federation, which seems to think that its financial relation with a single anti-labour educational institution is worth more than the ongoing scholarly relationship it has with its constituent bodies and with the Canadian professoriate at large.

If you must attend an event on the McGill campus during Congress, please use a picket pass. Picket passes will be available with priority for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and non-tenure-track contract academic staff. Members of scholarly associations who have expressed public solidarity with us and minimized their presence on the McGill campus will also be able to obtain picket passes.

Individuals who hold picket passes will be deemed not to be crossing picket lines. Attendees at events that are aligned with AMPL's equity objectives will be issued with picket passes upon request.

For more information, see heading below: "Where can I get a picket pass or union poster?"

2. Attend only essential activities at McGill

Where possible, attend Congress scholarly, administrative and social events at venues off McGill campus, or online. Encourage your scholarly associations to find other venues for Congress events.

3. Avoid patronizing McGill caterers or other vendors

For the duration of Congress, please refrain from patronizing vendors affiliated with McGill, including food vendors. There are many affordable and delicious off-campus options for you to choose from:

- <https://montreal.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-cafes-mcgill-university-ghetto-milton-parc>
- <https://montreal.eater.com/>
- <https://tastet.ca/>

- <https://www.restomontreal.ca/s/?restaurants=student-montreal&k=student&lang=en>
- <https://www.mtlblog.com/montreal/best-restaurants-downtown-montreal>

4. Wear a solidarity sticker! Put a poster on your window!

AMPL/ AMPD will be distributing solidarity stickers for Congress participants through scholarly associations and also at the main picketing locations at Redpath Hall, and at the three university gates (Roddick, Milton, and McTavish),

If you must stay at a McGill residence during Congress, put an AMPL/AMPD poster in your window. For more information, see heading below: “Where can I get a picket pass, solidarity sticker, or union poster?”

What can you do as an individual scholar to support AMPL/ AMPD?

1. Picket with us

Participate in our pickets (daily in front of Redpath Hall, and at the three university gates: Roddick, Milton, and McTavish), including our collaborative Days of Action (June 14 and 20), and invite others to join you. More up to date information will be provided in due course.

2. Write McGill administrators

Send a statement to McGill administrators expressing solidarity with AMPL/AMPD’s strike action in pursuit of a collective agreement:

- President Deep Saini, deep.saini@mcgill.ca
- Provost Christopher Manfredi, christopher.manfredi@mcgill.ca
- Deputy Provost Fabrice Labeau, fabrice.labeau@mcgill.ca
- HR Director Francis Desjardins, francis.desjardins@mcgill.ca
- Dean of Law Robert Leckey, robert.leckey@mcgill.ca

3. Write to your faculty union/association

Ask your faculty union or association to make a statement in support of our union and our strike action in pursuit of a collective agreement.

4. Write to your scholarly association

Ask your scholarly association to make a statement in support of our union and our strike action in pursuit of a collective agreement.

How can AMPL/AMPD help you to support us?

1. Indemnification for legal costs

We have examined several contracts between the Federation and various associations and (as law professors) believe that the Federation may be in breach of contract as it has not provided associations with an adequate meeting space because of our strike. In response, AMPL/AMPD has offered to indemnify any scholarly association up to \$15,000 (per association) for any legal costs incurred if the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and/or McGill were to pursue the association because of the association's decision to cancel its participation in Congress.

2. Information on off-campus venues

AMPL/ AMPD has offered logistical support to various associations by putting them in contact with colleagues at other Montreal universities and colleges. As a result, many associations have been able to find alternative venues for their conferences.

Should associations need additional support, they may contact AMPL/ AMPD at the dedicated Congress email address: congress@ampl-ampd.ca

Where can I get a picket pass, solidarity sticker, or union poster?

1. Picket passes

We are coordinating with associations directly for the distribution of picket passes, solidarity stickers, and posters for those staying in university residences.

AMPL/ AMPD will only distribute picket passes through associations. Please contact your association to obtain more information about picket passes.

2. Union posters

Union posters and solidarity stickers can be obtained by stopping by any AMPL/AMPD picket line at Redpath Hall, and at the three university gates (Roddick, Milton, and McTavish).

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