

11 October 2016 – EA Bargaining Meeting

The following issues were discussed at the bargaining meeting on 11 October 2016:

Financial update

An update on Curtin's financial position was provided to the bargaining representatives by the Chief Financial Officer, David Menarry. He indicated that both student revenue and research revenue are forecast to be below budget for 2016 and that this will have a negative impact on our underlying surplus for the year. To remain financially sustainable, Curtin Council sets a target of 5% for our underlying surplus, but this is forecast to be only 2% in 2016. In regards to our ongoing operational costs, this surplus equates to around eight days of wages.

Coverage of the agreement

Curtin has proposed creating a separate agreement for Curtin Stadium staff, given that their day-to-day activities and their broader operating environment are quite different to the rest of the University. The NTEU would prefer that a schedule be included at the back of the main agreement but will give further consideration to a separate agreement.

Career development fund

The NTEU has proposed setting up a \$250,000 central fund to provide further career development opportunities for general and professional staff. Curtin currently spends between \$7 and \$8 million per year on training and development of academic and professional staff and staff can also access up to five hours per week of study leave at full pay. We believe that establishing a small, special-purpose fund is not necessary and reiterated our concern that, in our constrained financial environment, proposals need to be cost neutral. Nevertheless, NTEU bargaining representatives believe that schools would support this proposal and would be prepared to jointly fund the initiative from equal contributions across the 27 school budgets.

Student evaluation of teaching clause

Clause 57 in the current agreement (Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning) prescribes that student feedback is not the sole source of evaluating teaching performance. A detailed description of how this feedback can be used and who can access the information is contained in the *Course Approval and Quality Manual*. While there is nothing inaccurate in the enterprise agreement clause, it only partially reflects the process and controls over the use of student evaluation information that is contained in this manual. We believe this should be the detailed source of information on this process rather than an incomplete process referred to in the enterprise agreement.

The NTEU have indicated support to remove the clause, so long as there is continuing reference in the agreement to student feedback not being the sole determinant of teaching performance. This reference could be included elsewhere in the agreement, such as the WPPR (Work Planning and Performance Review) clause.

Implementation Monitoring Consultative Committee (IMCC)

There has been in-principle agreement that a single clause be included in the agreement that brings together Curtin's commitments to consult with either the IMCC or staff on certain workplace matters.

Intellectual freedom

The NTEU is seeking an expansion of the current intellectual freedom clause. In contrast, we are seeking to remove the clause given that a more comprehensive intellectual freedom policy/procedure was released by Academic Board this year that extends coverage to students and professional staff.

We have indicated to the NTEU that we do not support the extension of the existing clause and are still evaluating the necessity to retain the existing clause given our recently expanded policy on intellectual freedom.

Individual flexibility agreements

The Fair Work Act provides for certain job flexibilities, including how a job is designed and when work is performed. We are proposing that staff be able to access all of the flexibility rights provided for in the Fair Work Act, as not all are included in the current agreement. This would be in accordance with our commitment to family-friendly practices and our support of lifestyle choices. We are moving closer to agreement on this issue, with Curtin considering the NTEU's request for certain flexibility provisions to be isolated to professional and general staff, given that academic staff already regulate their own hours.

Redundancy

The NTEU is seeking to change the definition of redundancy. The background has been covered in prior updates. Curtin does not support a change and the NTEU has proposed an alternative that will be presented at the next meeting.