

## 6 September 2016 – EA Bargaining Meeting

The following issues were discussed at the meeting on 6 September:

### **Indigenous matters**

Our previous discussions in late July around Indigenous matters were revisited, with the Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Professor Marion Kickett, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Professor Jill Downie, once again in attendance. There was general acknowledgement at the table that Curtin has been a leader in regard to advancing Indigenous issues in the higher education environment. A key part of Curtin's commitment to advancing Indigenous issues is the Curtin Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which incorporates, amongst other things, employment targets. As these are already included in our RAP, we do not support duplication of these targets in the enterprise agreement, as the NTEU has requested. As an alternative, Curtin has suggested including in the agreement our commitment to maintaining a RAP and having RAP outcomes measured and monitored by Curtin Council. This does not have NTEU support at this point in time.

There was also discussion around the NTEU's proposal for the introduction of a language allowance for Indigenous staff who use Indigenous language as part of their employment. This proposal is not supported by Curtin: it was pointed out that Indigenous staff recruited into Curtin's Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) may or may not have Indigenous language skills and providing a financial benefit to those who do, and choose to enrich their teaching programs by using them, could have a negative impact on other staff who don't possess these skills. A number of Indigenous staff at CAS have been denied access to cultural knowledge and language because of the Stolen Generations legacy and the language allowance could create inequities and tensions amongst CAS staff.

It was noted during discussions that the NTEU has no Indigenous employees in Western Australia. It was suggested that they might like to establish a 'sponsorship' to part-fund a position in CAS as a sign of commitment to Indigenous employment. As an alternative, the NTEU representatives suggested that Curtin might like to co-fund an Indigenous appointment within the NTEU. Both options were politely declined.

### **Superannuation**

Curtin is seeking the flexibility to allow staff to shape their own superannuation profile as products and legislation change. This is still a work in progress as potential changes by UniSuper and government around superannuation are worked through.

Further discussion about the NTEU's proposal to lift the superannuation contribution for all staff to 17 per cent again centred around the funding of this proposal. The annual cost of this initiative is around \$8 million and this would contribute to the ongoing shortfall between the rate of increases in employment costs and the indexation of Commonwealth student fees. Curtin continues to seek clarification from the NTEU as to how this shortfall could be funded without the significant job losses, reduction in services and increases in staff workload that would typically accompany a funding shortfall of this magnitude. There is still no agreement on this issue.

## **Job security issues**

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) is seeking a 'labour hire conversion' clause to grant outsourced maintenance trade staff the right to automatically convert to continuing status after six months of working in the same area at the University. This type of employment – where staff are employed by an entity other than Curtin – is used in particular circumstances and is not a common form of employment at the University. We have not agreed to the conversion clause as, from time to time, we need the flexibility to be able to engage this type of labour.