

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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Agreement benefits newer faculty, brings stability

Students, faculty and university administrators will all benefit from the new three-year collective agreement ratified today by the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association and by the executive committee of the university's board of governors, chaired by Betty Sims, acting on behalf of the full board.

"The three-year contract offers a period of stability which can only benefit the whole Laurier community," said university president Lorna Marsden. "For three years, the academic community can commit itself to teaching, research and university service, avoiding the heavy time commitment and uncertainty of annual negotiations."

Luke Fusco, president of the Faculty Association and an associate professor in the faculty of social work, said the agreement is fair to all faculty members but particularly benefits those at the lower end of the salary scale, "who will receive percentage increases higher than those offered their senior colleagues as they progress through the academic ranks."

The three-year contract, which is unique among Ontario universities in terms of its length, "is at least as generous as those offered by most other Ontario universities to date, and yet entails manageable additional costs," Marsden said.

The university estimates the agreement, which does not include across-the-board increases, will add about two per cent annually to the university's costs for faculty salaries and benefits.

"These new costs will be accommodated in a revised budget to be worked out when the budget is updated this fall," Marsden said. "The university remains committed to a balanced budget, and that commitment is unaffected by the settlement, although budget adjustments will be necessary."

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An increase in the salary floors for faculty members at all ranks will especially benefit those most recently appointed to each rank, Fusco said. Some faculty members at the higher end of the pay scale will receive no salary increases at all, he added.

The agreement provides for an increase in faculty members' salary floors by three per cent in the first year and by one per cent in each of the next two years. With this year's three per cent increase, salary floors -- which have not changed for more than three years — are now set at \$30,854 for lecturers, \$38,945 for assistant professors, \$50,080 for associate professors, and \$61,537 for full professors.

In addition, up to 12 per cent of the university's faculty members could also qualify for merit pay increments.

"The principle of merit pay is one which WLUFAs insisted on, and is a provision of the Laurier agreement which distinguishes it from several others," Fusco said. "The administration," Marsden added, "heartily endorses that principle."

Numerous other clauses in the contract are designed to increase the efficiency of both faculty members and university administrators in their daily work and in the governance of the university.