

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



### **Contract academic staff at Laurier elect to strike**

*University remains committed to reaching a fair and responsible deal as quickly as possible*

**For Immediate Release**

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WATERLOO — The union representing contract academic staff at Wilfrid Laurier University has directed its members to go on strike as of 6:01 a.m. this morning.

The university remains open and operational. All staff and full-time faculty are expected to carry out their duties as normal. Students are urged to attend all classes to determine if any of their courses are affected by the strike and to complete and submit all assignments.

The university negotiating team has been trying to reach a fair and equitable collective agreement with the union since August 2007. However, negotiations reached an impasse early Wednesday morning over compensation and seniority.

“The university remains committed to reaching a fair and responsible agreement as quickly as possible,” said Dr. Max Blouw, president and vice-chancellor of Laurier. “I regret that labor disruption is occurring but I firmly believe the university’s final offer recognized the need for Laurier to be competitive with respect to the compensation of its contract academic staff members. It further reflects our commitment to ensuring academic quality and the viability of Laurier over the long-term.”

A comparison between the current Laurier contract faculty compensation and that at other universities is available at <http://www.wlu.ca/negotiations>

The university offered compensation increases of 3.5 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent over the three years of the agreement.

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The union's seniority expectations were of particular concern — the university's position ensured the most qualified contract academic staff members would be teaching courses, thereby protecting the quality of the student's academic experience.

"We are ready to return immediately to the bargaining table," Blouw said. "Our wish is to reach a fair and responsible settlement as quickly as possible."

Contract academic staff include course instructors and part-time librarians. Approximately 33 per cent of undergraduate courses at Laurier are taught by contract academic staff. Their numbers vary from term to term, but there are 365 contract academic staff in the current term. They are represented by the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association.