

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier and CUPE reach three-year agreement in six days**

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University and CUPE local 926 have approved a new collective agreement that was reached in six days using an interest-based approach to negotiations. The CUPE membership ratified the agreement on June 5 and the executive and governance committee of Laurier’s board of governors approved the agreement on June 18.

The two sides reached the three-year agreement using a mutual-gain or interest-based approach to the negotiations. Unlike the traditional adversarial approach, the university and union began from the position that both parties wanted the same thing – a contract that treated the workers fairly while ensuring the efficient operation of the university.

“The approach requires that both parties seek a win-win outcome,” said Phil Wong, assistant vice-president of human resources. “It is a reflection of the cooperative relationship enjoyed between the university and employees represented by CUPE.”

The approach also requires a degree of trust that both sides have been developing since before the last agreement, also reached in six days, was signed in 1998. The two parties have since developed a joint union-management strategic plan. Prior to the recent talks, they jointly researched the employment market and began the negotiations with a similar understanding of what would be fair.

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“There was no taking of positions. Instead we discussed things and came up with solutions that worked for both sides,” said Dan Graham, president of CUPE local 926. “The result was a contract that both sides are happy with and very little of the difficulty that normally goes with negotiations.”

The agreement gives Laurier’s 100 physical plant workers an across the board economic increase of three percent and adjustments to specific categories of work that reflect the market. It also includes improvements to safety footwear allowances, vacation entitlement and more flexible shift scheduling.

The university has gained increased flexibility in the scheduling of work hours, and changes to what employees pay for parking and use of athletic facilities.