



Collective Bargaining Survey

2021 CAUT Chief Negotiators Forum

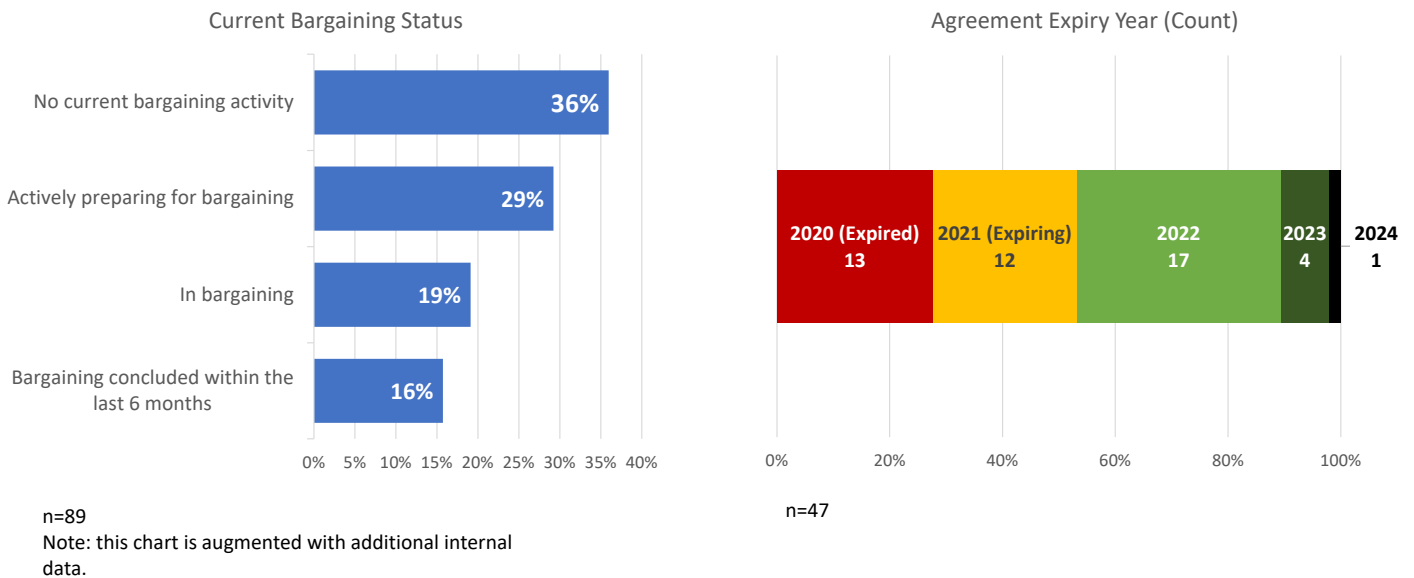
Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université



To provide participants of this year's Forum for Chief Negotiators and Bargaining Conference with an overview of negotiations across the country, CAUT asked member associations to complete its Annual Bargaining Survey.

This year, the responses rate was 32% (48 respondents).

Bargaining Status

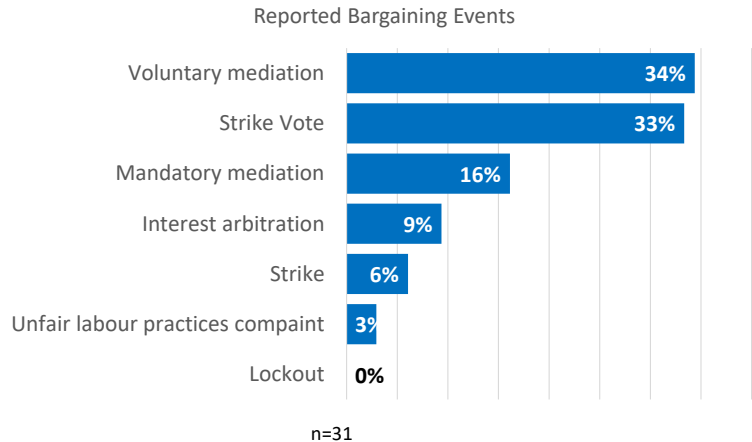
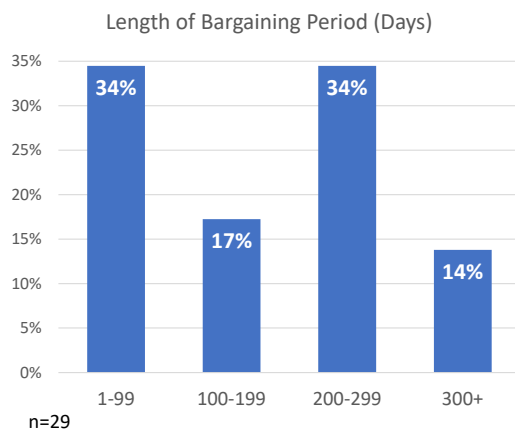


Currently, just over one third of CAUT’s member associations have no bargaining activity, 29% are actively preparing for bargaining, and 16% recently concluded bargaining within the last 6 months. Meanwhile, 19% are currently in bargaining.

This is reflected in respondents’ agreement expiry years, with just over half expiring in 2020 and 2021 (these associations would be bargaining or preparing to bargain), and 10.5% expiring in 2023 and 2024 (these associations would have concluded bargaining recently).

Outcomes of Recent Bargaining

On average, associations met with the employer on **13.7 days** over the course of a **156 day** period of bargaining.



Respondents met with the employer on an average of 13.7 days over the course of a 156 days period in the last round of bargaining.

During bargaining, 34% of respondents participated in voluntary mediation, 33% held a strike vote, 16% participated in mandatory mediation, 6% held a strike, 3% had an unfair labour practices complaint, and none reported a lockout.

Outcomes of Recent Bargaining

11

reported strike votes

- Average **88% turnout**
- Average **84% support** for strike

2

reported strikes

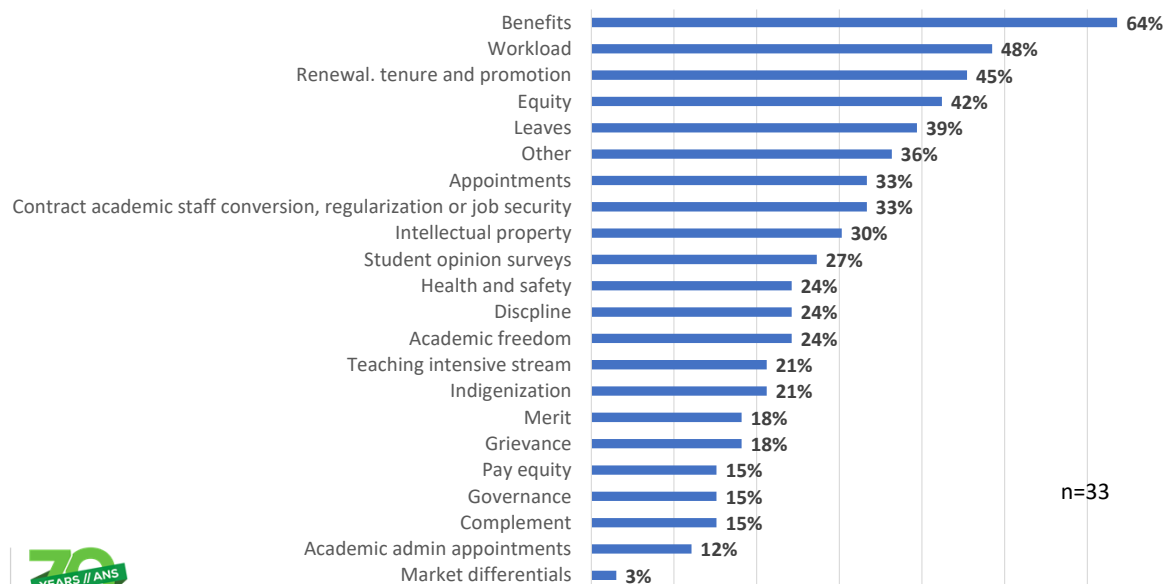
- **Mount Allison** RAS – 7 days
- **UNBC** – 25 days



There were 11 total reported strike votes, which had an average turnout of 88% with an average of 84% voting in favor of a strike. Only 2 of these 11 successful strike votes resulted in actual strikes.

The Mount Allison RAS were on strike for 7 days, and UNBC faculty were on strike for 25 days.

Outcomes of Recent Bargaining: New or revised language

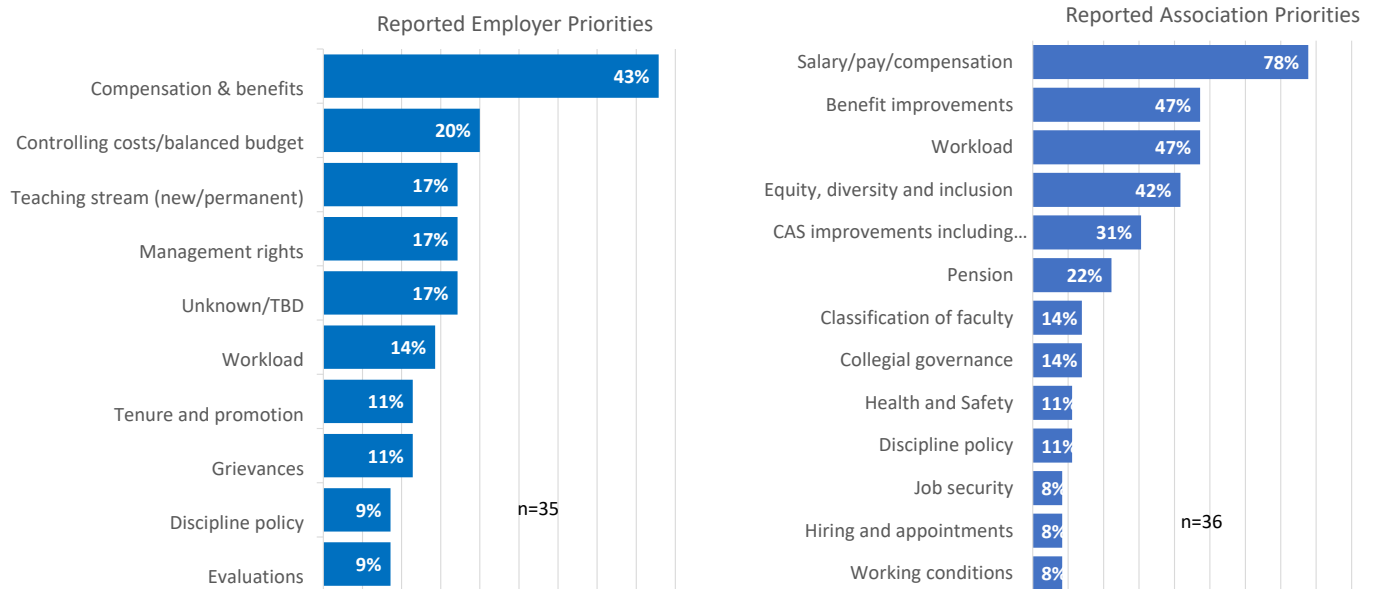


Respondents were asked to indicate which types of language were revised or added in their agreements during their most recent round of bargaining.

A majority (64%) of respondents bargained benefits language. Workload; renewal, tenure and promotion; equity; and leaves language were also frequently mentioned.

The 'Other' category (36%) included one mention each of Pension, CAS right of first refusal, Financial emergencies, and Salary.

Bargaining Priorities



Respondents were asked to report their associations and employers' respective priorities in the most recent round of bargaining.

For both employers and associations, Compensation was the most reported priority.

For employers, this was followed by:

- Controlling costs/balanced budget
- Introducing or amending a Teaching Stream of professors
- Management Rights

The 'Other' category for employers included single mentions of nonculpable termination language, expanding non-union administrative positions, removing class size limits, and intellectual property language.

For associations, Compensation was followed by:

- Benefits
- Workload (with frequent mentions of COVID-19, remote work issues)
- Equity

For associations, the 'Other' category included single mentions of the right to access campus facilities, librarian workloads, and mental health.

Impact of COVID-19 on Recent Bargaining

5

rollovers due to COVID-19

27

COVID-19 LOU/MOAs negotiated

64% say COVID-19 impacted ability to mobilize & engage members for bargaining, prepare for possible job actions:

- **30%** positive impact vs. **70%** negative impact



Impact of COVID-19 on mobilization n=28

5 respondents (18%) negotiated rollovers of their collective agreements due to COVID-19.

27 respondents (96%) negotiated specific COVID-19 LOUs or MOAs.

The majority (64%) of respondents indicated that COVID-19 has impacted their ability to mobilize and engage members for bargaining and to prepare for possible job actions. Of this group, 30% described the COVID-19 impact as positive, and 70% described it as negative.

Impact of COVID-19 on Recent Bargaining

Trend: higher reach and turnout, lower engagement quality and mobilizing capacity.

Positive

Online meetings helped turnout

Crisis demonstrated value of unionization

Easier to reach and engage members

Electronic surveys and voting increased participation

Switch to electronic pay system simplified strike pay

Negative

Low visibility (no posters, picketing, rallies)

Lower quality member engagement

Member concerns about optics, appearing 'greedy' in time of crisis

Burnout reducing rank-and-file capacity

Spread of misinformation harder to detect and correct

Undermined leverage for compensation

Lack of mobilizing capacity led to agreement rollover



In general, the impact of COVID-19 on engagement and mobilizing was closely tied to the move to remote and online work.

Some respondents noted that online meetings and voting resulting in greater member turnout, and the emphasis on digital communication made it easier to reach members. One respondent noted that their institution's switch to an electronic pay system due to COVID-19 made organizing strike pay easier. Another said that the COVID-19 crisis and wave of layoffs for non-unionized workers demonstrated the value of unionization to their members.

On the other hand, many respondents noted that remote meetings and communication result on poorer quality engagement. 'Zoom burnout' and general workload-related burnout among rank-and-file members has also reduced engagement and capacity. One respondent noted that the COVID-19 crisis had a chilling effect on members who did not want to appear 'greedy' during a time of crisis, and another said that the financial impacts of COVID-19 undermined their leverage for negotiating compensation (resulting in a wage freeze). Finally, the lack of in-person and on-site gathering has made regular job actions like postering and picketing difficult or impossible and has made it more difficult to informally disseminate and correct union-related information.

Factors Impacting Leverage in Recent Bargaining

1. Provincial legislation/government interference

"The employer had no fear of job action and this reduced union leverage. They were confident the provincial government would save them from a strike of damaging duration."

"[Bargaining] will be substantially impacted by provincial government mandates on the employer and budget cutbacks."

"The employer was told by the government to give no salary increases this round. They complied."

"Bargaining is proceeding slowly this year, due to the pandemic and to the AB gov'ts role in setting timetable for public sector bargaining through employers. [...] Government interference is, without question, the most important factor at the table for this round of bargaining."



In an open response format, respondents were asked to describe their most recent round of bargaining and the factors that most influenced their leverage at the table. While factors varied between associations, three general themes (in addition to COVID-19, addressed on pages 7-8) were especially present in the 32 responses: **Provincial legislation/government interference, make-or-break member engagement, and employers stubborn on compensation.**

1. Provincial legislation/government interference

Multiple respondents expressed that their leverage, especially related to compensation, was constrained by provincial mandates or interference. Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario's Bill 124 were specified. Respondents highlighted that specific government mandates as well as general uncertainty can negatively impact bargaining.

Factors Impacting Leverage in Recent Bargaining

2. Make-or-break member engagement

"No question that we were successful because had member engagement as well as full support from the student union."

"The level of engagement and the resolve of the membership to have its key priorities addressed emboldened the negotiating team to reject concessionary demands and insist on a settlement that members could be proud of."

"Our engagement of our membership via Zoom meetings enabled us to get them on side and facilitate the discussion of certification."

"Member engagement was reasonable but rallying behind the smaller groups [like lecturers and librarians] was a challenge."

"The Employer managed to adeptly generate fear and guilt among our members, and to reinforce divisions within our fledgling union."

2. Make-or-break member engagement

Many respondents spoke to the positive impact of strong membership engagement in often trying circumstances. Member support often led to strike votes that provided leverage at the table.

On the other hand, member engagement was a challenge from some associations. Some struggled to rally members as effectively as they might have in a pre-COVID context. A new association had difficulty educating its new base and working around a small pro-administration segment, which helped the employer scare membership away from stronger demands.

Factors Impacting Leverage in Recent Bargaining

3. Employers stubborn on compensation

"Our strike vote did not move them from this position [against salary increases], but saw the employer offer a one-time COVID-19 stipend of \$1,950."

"The Employer bargained to an impasse, which mobilized the members to strike; the strike influenced settling many outstanding articles, but not the compensation restructure."

"Employer predictions of catastrophic enrollment losses, shown to be wildly inaccurate. [...] Employer refusing to improve economic package when enrollment was shown to be up 4% rather than down 29%."

"Employer was unwilling to address pension until strike vote was held. Employer invoked impasse in order to force parties to mediated talks."

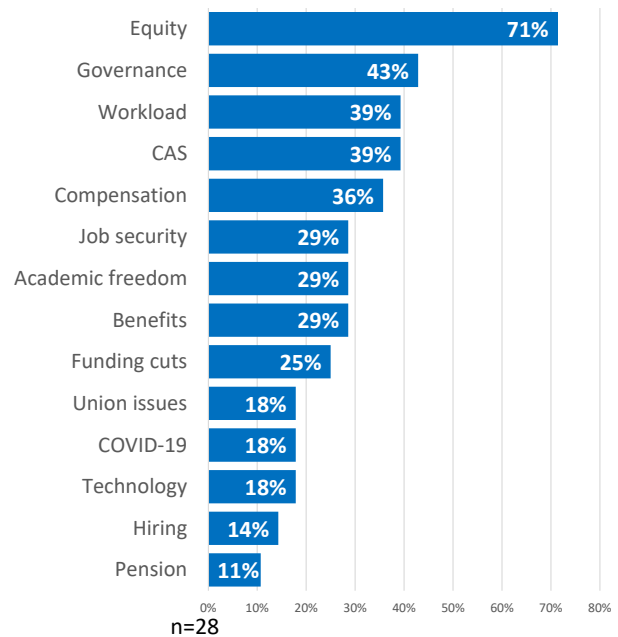


3. Employers stubborn on compensation

Between provincial wage legislation and the general threat of COVID-induced budget cuts, employers had multiple ways to 'dig in their heels' on compensation negotiations. This had an especially large impact on associations who struggled with member engagement; however, multiple respondents reported reaching the point of impasse and found strike votes (driven by strong member engagement) to fall short in efforts to improve compensation. In these cases, member engagement helped associations achieve alternate (if less desirable) gains.

National priority for CAUT and member associations should be...

1. **Equity** (emphasis on Indigenization)
2. **Governance** (decision-making, Laurentian)
3. **Workload** (WFH, scope creep)
4. **CAS** (pay equity, benefits, security)



Respondents were asked to provide the top 4 issues that they would like to see as national bargaining priorities for CAUT and member associations.

The majority (71%) of respondents said Equity, with a noted emphasis on Indigenization, support for BIPOC faculty, and disability accommodation. Second was Governance (43%) with specific mentions of faculty input in decisions like administrative hiring, and concerns about the possibility of a 'Laurentian situation.' 39% said Workload, often mentioning the additional challenges of working from home as well as administrative 'scope creep'. 39% said improvements for CAS should be a priority, with an emphasis on job security, pay equity, and equal access to benefits.



For more information about the 2021 Collective Bargaining Survey, contact ***research@caut.ca***.

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Thank you to everyone who participated.