

SPSE-UPTE Bargaining Bulletin from 10/16/2019 Session

Dear Skilled Trades Colleagues—

We continued bargaining for your next Contract on October 16th.

Over 30 members turned out to support your team. We faced a team of seven LLNS bargainers led by Jennifer Szutu, the manager of Staff Relations. Reva Nickleson did not attend.

SPSE-UPTE president Jim Wolford took the other side to task for a unilateral change to working conditions in the Boiler Shop. On 10-15-19 management announced mandatory On-Call rotation for the shop effective early November. At first Jennifer Szutu claimed no knowledge of the change, and later said that though it had been announced, it has yet to be implemented. This leaves open a small window for finding an alternative. The Union repeated its message on the ways management--including Staff Relations--has made On-Call an undesirable assignment.

SPSE-UPTE passed management five article proposals and one side letter:

- Article 13: Health and Safety. (LLNS did not accept our proposed language on special approval for excess overtime, but agreed to propose alternate language back.)
- Article 20: Hours of Work. (LLNS did not accept our proposed language giving more flexibility to members in negotiating start and stop times, and establishing time limits for temporary schedule changes.)
- Article 28: Subcontracting. We began a discussion on ways to offer shops a "right of first refusal" under certain circumstances before Skilled Trades work is contracted out.
- Article 30: Arbitration. (LLNS has so far rejected our proposal to allow a second steward to be on paid status during arbitration.)
- Side Letter: On-Call Relief. We proposed using cross-trained volunteers in related crafts to avoid mandatory On-Call. (LLNS has so far rejected the approach we propose.)

- Article 21: Wages. (SPSE-UPTÉ proposed a one-time adjustment to bring all the shops up to prevailing wage for the most similar positions at outside companies governed by Union Contracts, and then 10% annual increases. Calling you "maintenance workers" and saying "we are too far apart", LLNS continued to insist on using its much lower market construct based on local municipalities and other public entities.)

The two sides agreed to add an "employee comments" section to the proposed performance appraisal form.

Big thanks to Matt Epperley, Mike Dulik and Kevin McKahn. Matt was instrumental in explaining the finer points of the Union's proposals, Mike shed light on the relationship between unit members and management, and Kevin spoke concerning employment turnover and critical skill shortage in the high voltage shop. He concluded by emphasizing the reason for the high turnover is LOW PAY!

--Skilled Trades Bargaining Team