

University of Manitoba Labour History Timeline

2016 – Spoiled Negotiations Lead to Strike, One Year Agreement Reached.

- The University of Manitoba and UMFA begin bargaining for a new collective agreement and find themselves at an impasse owing to the University pulling its proposal of salary increases.
- Though it was not known then, this was at the urging of the Provincial government.
- The provincial government mandated that the previous 4-year deal be replaced with a one-year agreement which stipulated wage freezes.
- Faculty strike for three weeks and subsequently a one-year agreement is reached; Faculty cedes salary issues for governance reform. The issue of wages is not settled.

2017 – Labour Board Complaint, New Collective Agreement, and Challenging Bill 28.

- UMFA brings allegations of unfair bargaining practices to the Labour Board, citing unlawful practices by the University caused by government involvement.
- Bill 28 – The Public Service Sustainability Act – receives Royal Assent but has not been proclaimed into law. This bill caps wage increases at 0% or below inflation for a four-year period for public sector workers.
- A collective agreement is reached between UMFA and UM, but due to Bill 28, wages for faculty remain the same.
- UMFA includes caveat in collective agreement which stipulates that if Bill 28 is found to be unconstitutional, salary negotiations can be reopened.
- UMFA, along with other public sector Unions, prepare to challenge the constitutionality of Bill 28. An injunction is filed – citing an infringement on the Charter rights of public sector workers.

2018 – Labour Board Rules in Favour of UMFA and Unions Go to Court against Bill 28

- Manitoba Labour Board rules in favour of UMFA, stating that the University engaged in unfair labour practice at the direction of the provincial government.
- University appeals this ruling, but the Labour board upholds its decision. The University of Manitoba issues an apology and pays \$2.4 Million in damages.
- Bill 28 still has not been proclaimed.
- Judge rules against an Injunction on Bill 28 which would have immediately struck down the Bill. UMFA and other Unions prepare to go to court.
- Wages for faculty remain the same.

2019 – Unions Go to Court against the Provincial Government

- UMFA, along with 28 other unions, challenge Bill 28 in court. A trial begins.
- Wages remain the same for Faculty.

2020 – Judge rules Bill 28 unconstitutional, Wage specific negotiations and Strike Averted

- In the summer of 2020, Bill 28 was deemed unconstitutional. The Government of Manitoba could still file an appeal to overturn the decision during negotiations.
- Bill 28, though never technically in effect and now struck down, remained influential. The Provincial Government directed the University to reduce labour costs earlier in the year.
- Since Bill 28 was found unconstitutional, the caveat included in the 2017 collective agreement allowed salary specific negotiations to take place. An article specific “re-opener” began.
- The University agreed to binding arbitration but did not budge from a 0% salary increase.
- A one-year agreement was drafted. Just over 50% of UMFA members voted in its favour, passing with a slim majority. The issue of wages was not resolved.
- Since a new collective agreement was to be negotiated in 2021, further salary bargaining was postponed for one year, averting a strike.

2021 – Bill 28 Reinstated, Negotiations Resume, and Strike Begins

- The Government of Manitoba filed its appeal to reinstate Bill 28. The appellate level judge found that the Bill did not infringe on the Charter rights of unionized workers, and thus its mandate of freezing wages resumed. Still, it has not been proclaimed.
- Bargaining between the University and UMFA resumes. This time, a new collective agreement is on the table as the last one has expired.
- After months of bargaining and later mediation, the University and UMFA could not reach agreement; Salary remained at the root of the problem.
- Seeing no other way to achieve wages which rose above inflation, UMFA legally mandated their strike to begin on Tuesday, November 2nd, 2021.