



May 17, 2007

A message from the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers about our negotiations for a new Agreement:

HUCTW Negotiations started out very well...

HUCTW and Harvard are negotiating a new Agreement, beginning in the fall of 2006 and continuing into early 2007. The resulting Agreement will take effect on July 1, 2007.

A contract negotiation is a great opportunity for our Union to press forward an agenda of positive change for the Harvard workplace. Many of the most important programs and policies currently in effect have grown out of previous rounds of negotiation, from 1989 to 2004.

The goals of our Union in these negotiations, as discussed among thousands of HUCTW members in meetings, surveys and informal conversations, continue with many of our longstanding interests, as well as exploring new areas:

- To support every member of the Harvard community in learning, professional development, and career mobility, on individualized paths and throughout our careers;
- To raise our economic standing, maintaining a strong salary increase program that recognizes skill development and longer service and gives us an opportunity for a dignified, middle-class living standard;
- To develop innovative benefit programs, finding new ways to address the basic needs of health care, housing, transportation, child care and retirement;
- To make our work environment kinder, more respectful and more democratic through training of managers and teams, and innovations in organizational design;
- To assure every union member of an ongoing place in our working community, through a Work Security program which places laid-off staff into new jobs without a loss of income;

- And, to carry out our important discussions with the University in a way that builds trust and respect among members of our community as much as possible.

The early Harvard-HUCTW discussions in this negotiating process have been very productive, making it clear that the goals above are achievable. More than 80 union members and managers from all parts of the University, working at 8 issue-specific “side tables” in January and February, developed dozens of creative and important ideas for stronger policies and new programs. Union and University negotiators agree that many of those ideas are beneficial, and many will almost certainly be implemented.

... recently the talks have been more difficult...

In April and May, the negotiating discussions have become more challenging. It is predictably difficult to agree on a whole package which provides as much progress as possible for the staff, balanced with the University’s institutional needs and priorities. Some of the hopeful and creative ideas from the early phase of negotiations have collided with the realities of budgets, calendars, and operational constraints. HUCTW and Harvard negotiators have struggled in recent weeks to find workable approaches on issues about which both sides care a great deal.

As the negotiations have become more complex and difficult, union and management representatives at a Central Coordinating Table have met more frequently (twice a week for a time, and most recently every day), and have arranged for assistance from mediators.

...and we are still expecting a great outcome.

Today is our Union’s birthday. HUCTW was created by a majority vote among Harvard staff on May 17, 1988. In the 19 years since, our 4,800 members have worked with the University’s administrative leadership to make amazing improvements in the Harvard environment. We have made our workplace more flexible, democratic and secure, advanced our economic standing, and built an exceptional benefits package.

The current contract negotiation is the seventh in our history. Our first six Agreements have all represented strong steps forward, making important changes that improve the lives of Harvard staff and support the University’s mission. We are confident that the outcome of the current talks will be just as impressive and beneficial. On our 19th birthday, HUCTW offers thanks to our members for their creativity and commitment, and to our Harvard friends and colleagues for their support.

For more information about HUCTW-Harvard negotiations, please visit our website at www.huctw.org and click on “Contract Negotiations.”

Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers 617-661-8289 www.huctw.org