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MUNACA threatens strike over contract Latest offer rejected in GA vote

THEO MEYER

The McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association still hasn't reached a collective bargaining agreement with the McGill administration despite months of negotiations and is threatening to strike. MUNACA members voted on the administration's latest proposal at a General Assembly on December 4.

"We called a General Assembly to present the last offer that McGill made, and our recommendation to the General Assembly was to reject it and give us a strike mandate so that we can apply pressure tactics up to and including a strike," MUNACA President Maria Ruocco said.

According to Ruocco, all areas of dispute between MUNACA and the university have been resolved except for salary increases. In September, the MUNACA membership rejected the university's offer for a 12 per cent salary increase over four years. The offer the membership rejected in December proposed an 8.5 per cent increase over three years, though the increase would have been weighted more beneficially.

Ruocco argued that the proposed increases are less than what similar Quebec universities' employees are paid.

"Our support staff is getting paid less than

our counterparts at other Quebec universities for the same work. Other Quebec universities are getting on average, over four years, 20 per cent [salary increases]," Ruocco said.

After MUNACA's rejection of the university's offer, the McGill administration issued a statement on December 5 predicting possible "labour disruptions of some sort in the near future." The statement attempted to assure members of the McGill community that a strike would not disrupt the operation of the university. Associate Vice-Principal (Human Resources) Lynne Gervais declined to comment on negotiation specifics, however.

"McGill cannot comment on the substance of negotiations with its labour union," Gervais said in an email to the Tribune. "We are continuing to work toward finding a settlement and naturally hope we will succeed sooner rather than later. We have, nonetheless, developed contingency plans to ensure the continued operation of the university in the event [that] the union decides to follow through with its mandate."

MUNACA's previous contract with McGill, which expired on November 30, 2007, was a hard-won bargain. The union's membership approved the previous contract at a General Assembly in December of 2003, after almost 14

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A protestor rallies against Israel's recent actions in the Gaza Strip on Sunday on St. Catherine Street.

Montrealers protest Israeli actions in Gaza Demonstration also aimed at Canadian government's position

JAMES GILMAN

Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in Montreal last Sunday to protest the conflict in the Gaza Strip, calling on Israel to stop its military campaign against Hamas, the group which currently controls the territory.

According to some media estimates, as many as 5,000 protestors marched down St. Catherine Street to the Israeli consulate, many of them waving Palestinian flags and placards and shouting anti-Israeli slogans, including "Israel terrorist" and "intifada."

The demonstrators called on the Canadian government to put pressure on Israel to bring an end to military operations in Gaza. They also called on the Egyptian government to ease

border-crossing restrictions.

"The demonstration this Sunday was aimed at the Canadian government, but also at the Israeli government, and the Egyptian government," said Laith Marouf, the chapter coordinator of the non-profit Montreal group Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights.

SPHR was one of the demonstration organizers, along with Tadamoni, whose name is Arabic for solidarity, a Montreal-based activist collective.

"The turnout was very impressive—this was probably the largest demonstration for Palestine [in Montreal] in the last ten years," said Marouf. "[Demonstrators] showed up and voiced their opposition to Israeli war crimes happening now in Gaza, and to the Canadian government's shameful position support-

ing Israeli government policies."

The protest remained largely peaceful. However, at least one Israeli flag was burned and stamped on outside the Israeli consulate, and there were complaints of violent slogans being shouted.

Members of the Quebec-Israel Committee, which had observers at the protest, expressed concern at some of the slogans being chanted.

"We witnessed a burning and stampeding of the Israeli flag in front of the Consulate-General of Israel in Montreal," said David Ouellette, the director of research at the QIC. "More worryingly, we heard jihadi, radical Islamic slogans shouted in

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Friday January 9th - Basketball - UQAM vs. Martlets 18h00

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Friday January 9th - Redmen Hockey - York vs. McGill 19h00

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