

MEDIA RELEASE

SGEU abandons mediation to strike

September 6, 2011 – SIAST president and CEO Dr. Robert G. McCulloch today said he is very disappointed that SGEU has abandoned the mediation process and has chosen instead to go on strike.

“Mediation is an effective process, but it takes time, and you have to set aside job action while mediation is underway,” Dr. McCulloch said. “SGEU abandoned mediation in less than 24 hours. All the while they were negotiating, they continued to plan strike action. This demonstrates they were not interested in reaching an agreement. They were bound and determined to go on strike.”

Dr. McCulloch said SIAST has made a fair and competitive offer based on market averages, and there was room for further movement in key areas thorough the mediation process. As well, both sides were working with the mediator SGEU requested.

“But SGEU never gave mediation a chance to work and is now jeopardizing our students’ learning opportunities with their strike action,” Dr. McCulloch said. “We have held more than 40 bargaining meetings over the past two years in an attempt to negotiate a fair and competitive settlement. It is well past the time for union leadership to engage in meaningful discussions with respect to an agreement.”

SIAST will be open on Tuesday morning, but due to job action no classes are taking place, and no services are being offered.

SIAST’s unionized employees are represented by two bargaining units – Academic and Professional Services – of the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees’ Union (SGEU).

SIAST provides bargaining updates and related information on www.campusupdate.ca.

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Information about SIAST can be found at www.goSIAS.com.

CONTRACT TALKS BACKGROUNDER

September 6, 2011

SIAS's unionized employees are represented by the Professional Services bargaining unit (566 full-time equivalents – FTEs) and by the Academic bargaining unit (1,084 FTEs) of the Saskatchewan General Government Employees' Union (SGEU). Their most recent collective agreements expired in June 2009.

The parties started collective bargaining two years ago and, since then, used approximately 40 days of bargaining and four days of conciliation. Finally, SIAS and SGEU met for four days of voluntary mediation with a mutually-agreed-upon mediator in January. When SIAS presented a final offer, SGEU terminated mediation. Employees have yet to be given the opportunity to vote on SIAS's offer.

The latest offers proposed by the Academic and Professional Services bargaining units would result in increased costs to SIAS of approximately 14.5% and almost 12% respectively. The final offer made by SIAS – 5.5% over three years – would result in increased costs to SIAS of \$6 million, compared with \$15 million for the union's proposals.

SIAS is providing bargaining updates and information on www.campusupdate.ca. SIAS also records updates on its emergency message line – 1-866-878-8913 (Regina – 798-4500).

SIAS is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 15,000 students were enrolled in SIAS programs in the most recent academic year; additionally, the organization drew almost 25,000 individual course registrations. Through program and course registrations, SIAS served almost 26,000 distinct students with programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAS operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.