

HUCTW Negotiations - 2007

Q. What was the outcome of the recent negotiations between the University and the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW)?

A. A new contract was ratified by a vote of HUCTW members on Tuesday, June 19, 2007. The three-year contract, which covers Harvard's 4,800 clerical and technical employees, includes an average annual wage increase of 4.5 percent from July 1, 2007 through July 1, 2010; significant expansion of career mobility and continuing education offerings; improved tax-advantaged childcare, transportation and vacation rollover benefits; and vehicles that will enhance our productive and positive labor-management partnership.

Q. What was different about how Harvard approached contract negotiations with HUCTW this year?

A. For this contract, the University employed an innovative and inclusive approach to negotiations, known as "interest-based bargaining." Harvard is one of the first institutions of higher education in the nation to use this method of bargaining for a union of this size. The HUCTW is the University's largest union with 4,800 employees in 130 job classifications.

Our relationship with the HUCTW is a model for constructive and respectful collaboration. We share a common purpose of advancing Harvard as a premier center of learning, research and teaching while making it a better place to work for all employees. Our goal in negotiations was to use this innovative bargaining method to provide the members of HUCTW with fair, competitive wages, comprehensive, high-quality benefits, and educational opportunities that improve our employees' quality of life and their long-term economic prospects.

Q. What is Interest-Based Bargaining?

A. Interest-based bargaining (IBB) is an innovative negotiation method that uses neutral facilitators and joint employer-union discussions to create a flexible alternative to traditional, "positional" bargaining. IBB's inclusive process fosters a climate of trust and cooperation to develop a more comprehensive and thoughtful contract that satisfies the mutual interests of both labor and management. Using the IBB model helps to lead to a better and more thoughtful contract by identifying interests that underlie each side's goals. With help from outside facilitators, negotiators are encouraged to communicate what is important about an issue, rather than arguing for a specific position or solution. This collaboration between labor and management produces creative results that satisfy the mutual interests of the parties and enhances their relationship for the future.

Q. Why did Harvard use Interest-Based Bargaining for HUCTW negotiations?

A. We chose to use Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) because it is a more inclusive and collaborative approach to contract negotiations that builds on the long-term relationship between the parties. The recent, successful IBB negotiations strengthened the relationship between the union and the University, while providing a fuller understanding of the contract to more community members than ever before. While the method is not substantially different from how the University and the union have worked together in the past, this negotiation ranks as one of the most far-ranging and structured uses of interest-based bargaining in this field and provides a model for other institutions of higher education.

Q. Who facilitated the HUCTW negotiations?

A. The negotiations were principally facilitated by Robert McKersie, Professor Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management, and a lecturer at the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation; and, Nancy Peace, a professional mediator and arbitrator, and president of the Association of Conflict Resolution and a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators.