

Memorandum

Re: Donald C. Savage Award Recommendation

Date: March 2018

To: CAUT Council

From: Robert Farmer, Acting Chair & Terri Van Steinburg, Chair

Nominations for the Donald C. Savage Award were reviewed by the CBEBC at the March 2018 meeting. The members of the Committee unanimously decided that Robert Chernomas would be recommended for the award.

Robert Chernomas has played a crucial leadership load in the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA) since the early 1990s. He served as chief negotiator for the 1995, 1998, 2013, and 2016 rounds of bargaining.

In the 1995 round of bargaining, Robert fought against his university administration's attempt to cut language on financial exigency and the layoff of tenured staff. As stated by one nominator, "at stake was nothing less than the survival of tenure itself." Following a mediated settlement that defended tenure successfully, Robert contended in 1998 with new legislation on mandatory retirement that threatened to divide the membership. He led his team to achieve a settlement that avoided an age 65 cutoff and permitted half-time appointments at age 69. In addition, he and his team achieved a settlement that forbade the use of performance reviews in comparing the merit of members' academic work.

In 2013, Robert and his team responded to Universities Canada's attack on academic freedom based protection for extramural speech and rights to criticize the employer. Then, in 2016, Robert led UMFA to fight for workload protections and restrictions on the use of performance metrics. In a 22-day strike Robert helped build solidarity among members and made an active effort to address their concerns. His engagement with rank-and-file members was impressive. During the strike "he walked every picket line to talk with picketers about bargaining process, to get a feel for the strength of the lines, and to hear from Members themselves about their priorities." During the oft-

contentious process of bargaining, one member reflected: "he held our ground, communicated our needs and positions clearly, and did not flinch, all the while hearing the subtext of their anxieties and searching for resolution that met our Members' needs." This level of engagement is to be celebrated and should serve as inspiration to negotiators everywhere.

Those supporting Robert's nominations noted his "ability to recognize and use the varied talents of the Members of our Collective Agreement Committee, and his knack for creative solutions and strategies." One key example was his idea to have Business School members analyze their university's financial statements, which led to UMFA's development of the 2016 *CAUT Guide to Analyzing University & College Financial Statements*. Robert has been commended by his colleagues for his willingness to engage with campus groups in innovative and energetic ways.

One of the members who nominated Robert concluded: "Robert's integrity, his energetic commitment to the Association's work, his respect for the place of the membership in the union's life, his remarkable creativity and shrewdness as a negotiator, his intense and wholehearted engagement in the process, and his capacity to keep the membership on side in difficulty circumstances have really made a superb contribution to the success of collective bargaining at the University of Manitoba." We wish to echo those sentiments and applaud Robert on these outstanding achievements.