

Unam strike enters second week

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The countrywide University of Namibia (Unam) strike that includes thousands of workers will enter its second week today.

Employees went on strike last Monday after more than 60% of staff members voted in favour of the action, in order to demand a 6% salary increase, backdated to January.

Management have offered no increase, while the workers are ada-

mant they should receive a 6% pay hike.

The workers, represented by the Namibia Public Workers Union (Napwu) and the Namibia National Teachers Union (Nantu), have been negotiating with the university management throughout the week, but have been unable to resolve the matter. Nantu Unam branch chairperson Muree Tjiueza told *Namibian Sun* the strike will continue today and that they are still open to engaging with

management.

"They are still offering no increase and we have not been able to reach any agreement."

Tjiueza said employees are planning a march today from the university's Windhoek campus.

The unions have accused Unam of breaking the strike rules and Tjiueza said they intend to approach the labour commissioner's office.

He previously told *Namibian Sun* that the university failed to stick

to the rules, which include providing water and portable toilets to the striking staff. This was only delivered to the staff after the union brought it to the attention of management.

The unions have since last Monday not been allowed access to the main campus to verify whether the university was using scab labour, which is against the Labour Act.

Scab labour can include enlisting the services of students, some of its workers and hiring outsiders.

Rumours were doing the rounds that a student who is also a member of the Unam management was able to

obtain access to exam papers.

Unam has assured that exams will not be interrupted.

However, there have now been reports of some lectures that have refused to mark exam papers written during the strike period.

Unam staff said even if the university closes for the December holiday, they will continue with the strike again when it re-opens in January.

In 2008, Unam staff also voted to go on strike, but backed down at the eleventh hour. At that time Unam employees were seeking a 12% salary increase.