



GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

November 6, 2009

Dr. Peter George, President
Office of the President
Gilmour Hall, Room 238
McMaster University
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 4L8

Re: High time for a fair contract for Local 3906's TAs and RAs

Dear Dr. George:

On behalf of the over 14,000 graduate students at the University of Toronto, the Graduate Students' Union would like to register its concern about McMaster University's failure to adequately address the reasonable and fair outstanding bargaining proposals of CUPE Local 3906. The university's intransigence at the bargaining table forced these precariously-employed academic workers (teaching assistants and research assistants) to go out on strike to protect the integrity of benefits won in earlier rounds of bargaining as well as to make realistic improvements on certain workplace benefits and working conditions (for example, smaller laboratory and tutorial sizes, work overload, etc.)

Further, your educational institution has prided itself on striving for good corporate citizenship and on being a promoter of "creativity, innovation, and excellence" in teaching, research and scholarship. Are you attempting to achieve these laudible objectives on the backs of your part-time academic workers? Creativity, innovation and excellence must be informed by progressive ethical values and this humanist orientation should be most pronounced in the manner in which your institution treats its workers. The social and academic initiatives with which McMaster University is associated should be principally about creating the conditions for the attainment of the just and good society. How can they be achieved when the very workers who are stakeholders in this enterprise must contend with working conditions that meet the criteria for the idea and reality of the alienation of labour?

Your institution is treating its part-time academic workers differently from its full-time academic and support workers. You should be pro-rating and offering to part-time academic workers the same benefits that your institution gives to full-time workers. McMaster is discriminating on the basis of job status; part-time versus full-time job status. As an educational leader, McMaster ought to be guided by moral principles on human rights that go further than legislative injunctions.

The Graduate Students' Union is calling upon you to settle this strike action by instructing your bargaining team to offer job security, improved working conditions, protection against escalating tuition increases, and enhancement of existing benefits to the striking members of Unit 1. We will be offering our full support to Local 3906.

Sincerely,

Sara Suliman, External Commissioner

Cc: Mark Haley, Assistant Vice President Human Resources
Irene Busch-Vishniac, University Provost
Mary Ellen Campbell, President, CUPE Local 3906
Peter Smith, Associate Vice President Academic

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