



**Open Letter to The University of Toronto in Solidarity and Support of The CUPE 3902 Unit 1 Bargaining Team and Bargaining Platform**

Dear Professor Kelly Hannah-Moffatt:

We, the Executive Committee of The University of Toronto's Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU), are writing in support of CUPE 3902 Unit 1's Bargaining Team. On December 4, 2017 at our Annual General Membership meeting, the Members of The UTGSU overwhelmingly voted 'In Favour' to a solidarity motion supporting the bargaining team's demands for a more equitable Collective Agreement for CUPE 3902, Unit 1, which represents Teaching Assistants, Course Instructors, Chief Presiding Officers, Invigilators, Assistant Invigilators, Tutors, Markers, and Teaching Laboratory Assistants. Many of our Members are also members of CUPE 3902, and we stand with CUPE 3902 in solidarity.

The priorities for a new Collective Agreement speak to the will of the Unit 1 membership, which unanimously adopted the current bargaining platform at the July 6, 2017 Unit 1 membership meeting following several months of consultations with members in various forums. The message from the membership is clear: working and teaching conditions for Unit 1 members at the University of Toronto are inadequate, and Unit 1 members need to be better supported by their Employer, The University of Toronto. We believe in the CUPE 3902 Bargaining Platform, which represents the most salient and immediate needs of our large and varied Unit 1 membership:

- The University should improve compensation packages for graduate teaching staff to reach a more livable minimum income of \$20,000 a year plus tuition and fees.
- Course Instructors need appropriate compensation at \$10,000 per half-course, up from the current rate of \$7,385.12 per half course.
- The University must provide more work opportunities and financial support to members in all programs and years of study who have no minimum funding.
- Healthcare needs to be significantly expanded and made more accessible, especially for workers with mental health needs, workers caring for dependents, and transgender workers
- Finally, it is well within the University's ethical mandate to explicitly protect and support parents, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and other workers in need of accommodation, explicitly prevent workplace harassment committed by academic supervisors, as well as explicitly address the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The full platform is detailed on the web at <http://www.cupe3902.org/unit-1/bargaining>.

By signing this letter, we pledge to fight for our Members' top priorities from this Bargaining Platform. But we also recognize that, all totaled, the great number and diversity of policy changes proposed reflect the great diversity of our colleagues across the three campuses at The University of Toronto. Together, we are strong. We all deserve safety, dignity, and support in our workplace so that we can pursue our own academic goals at this institution that prides itself on the quality of the research and study that we and our colleagues do. In doing so, we also better support our students. At The UTGSU, we recognize that the fight of CUPE 3902 is not only a fight for our Unit 1 members, but for the rights of all academic workers. And we recognize that the gains made over successive rounds of bargaining will impact labour laws across the province. We recognize that our power at the bargaining table comes not through reasoned arguments at the bargaining table, but rather through our willingness to act collectively.

We strongly urge The University to respond to the Bargaining Team with thoughtful and respectful counterproposals at the bargaining table, that address all facets of their platform. The ambitious platform of the Bargaining Team will change the lives of Unit 1 members and transform The University. This success would do much to elevate the status of The University of Toronto as a world leader, by reaffirming the value of postsecondary education as a public good: to be of excellent quality, equally accessible to everyone regardless of socioeconomic class, and provided under a fair and equitable structure that recognizes the welfare of teachers and educational staff as instrumental to the learning experience.

In solidarity,

### **The UTGSU Executive Committee**

Branden Rizzuto – Executive-at-Large 1

Brienne Berry-Crossfield – Finance and University Governance Commissioner

Christopher Ball – Academics and Funding Commissioner (Divisions I and II)

Cristina Jaimungal – External Commissioner

Leonardo Jose Uribe Castano – Civics and Environment Commissioner

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