

First Full Day at the Table

On Friday November 17th, the following Full-Time Part-Time committee members went to the table with the University: Andrew Lobo, Anthony Jude Pereira, Bonnie Hassan, Chris Tavares, Joe Madden, Kevin McDermott and Luke Daccord.

One thing was made clear this week based on our proposals and reactions from the University – they neither understand nor respect our work. Read on for more information on our latest proposals and what the University had to say.

Union Wage Proposals Coming Soon

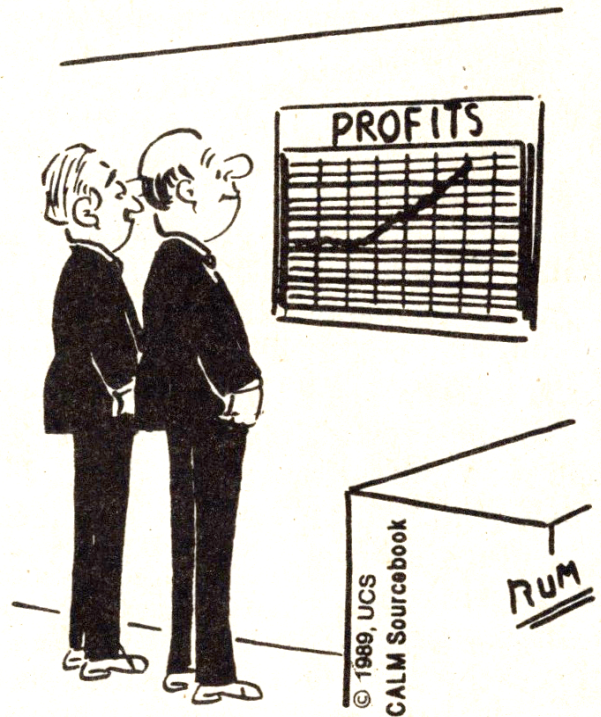
We deserve a living wage. After years of skyrocketing inflation – rents, groceries, transportation – we deserve more and we all know the university can afford it.

Yet – at the table on Friday, while the University said that “they have money for us” they also claimed they are struggling financially just like we are.

They cite Doug Ford’s tuition freeze since 2019, a provincial grant freeze since 2010, and declining international student enrollment as all reasons that they are unable to respond to inflation themselves – just like our members! They did not mention the \$551 million in net revenue the University reported in April of this year.

Furthermore, the university has not responded to our Request For Information as part of the negotiations process in order to give us the data needed to craft our wage proposal, including things like the job descriptions of each classification in our union. They have not provided us with the most basic up-to-date information on the monthly makeup of our membership, which we last received on September 31st.

Despite these delays we are still committed to tabling wage proposals as soon as possible.



"We better turn the chart upside down before we begin negotiations with the union."

Job Descriptions “Not Really That Important” says the University

The University has ignored repeated requests from the union over the past few months to provide job descriptions for all our positions – to help inform our wage proposals and to share with members – and on Friday we learned why. At the table they claimed they’re “not really that important” and not kept up to date because the University has the right to classify us however they see fit. This explains why so many of our members feel disrespected when being asked to do tasks outside of our normal job duties, and when questioned, management replies: “Other duties as assigned.”



When we pushed back on this, noting the established practices and procedures in other locals at the University like CUPE 1230 and USW 1998 for reviewing job classifications – they said our work was *different*. They said the differences between our classifications were simple: a caretaker cleans – a cook cooks! Administrative jobs are just more complicated.

What they’re really saying is that administrative workers deserve respect but not service workers. We say we do.

This issue of job classifications and job duties is something we know that many members have issues with – and we don’t plan to leave this unaddressed at the table.

Second Round of Proposals Tabled

You have told us that wages, respect and dignity at work are the most critical things. This is why on Friday we proposed the following articles, full language available on our website at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals.

1. No pay cuts when temporarily assigned to work in a lower classification

- The current language in our CBA states the university can assign any employee to do the work of a lower classification and pay them at that lower rate for any reason, at any moment, and for an unspecified length of time (as long as it is “temporary”)
- This happened to many of our members during the pandemic, some of whom lost thousands of dollars in expected wages, and is a massive shortcoming in wage security
- The University has not provided a formal response but spoke against this proposal – stating that “you should only get paid for the work that you do” – despite thousands of employees at UofT having similar if not *stronger* provisions in their collective agreements to protect their wages

2. Improved bereavement

- Change from 5 consecutive days to 5 working days; more inclusive language on partners; allowing for leave to be extended by 2 more days with management approval

3. Improvements to standby pay for snow removal

- Currently, our members in Grounds get paid only 2 hours a week to be on snow removal standby during the winter months including over christmastime. At a moment's notice they can get called in to perform the essential duty of clearing snow to keep our campuses safe and accessible. Our proposal is to raise the standby pay to 2 hours a day or 14 hours/week – much more in line with others performing the same essential duties in the university sector.
- While not formally responding the university tried to paint this proposal to align with industry standards as a ridiculous 700% increase

4. Campus Closure Premium

- In the event that campus is declared closed and our members are required to work (for example in a snow-closure), any member working should receive 1.5x in recognition of the risks they are put into in this situation.

5. Making overtime distribution transparent

- On a monthly basis, publicly post in each department the overtime hours distributed so that we can ensure the collective agreement is being followed

Discussions on Nov 14th Proposal – Job Security/Contracting Out

The university responded to our proposal regarding a complete ban on further contracting out of our work. Though they did not formally reject it – they may as well have. They say that our jobs are secure and that we can't be laid off for reasons of contracting out – we already know this. But we also know how contracting out leads to overwork and understaffing in caretaking and other departments, how it weakens our bargaining unit, and how it creates negative pressure on ALL of our wages when private contractors do our work for little more than minimum wage.

The University has not yet provided any formal responses to our proposals. We will continue tabling further proposals next week.

Next negotiation dates:

Nov 21: Casual / Nov 22: FTPT / Nov 28: Chestnut / Nov 29: Casual

