

World Class U of T Says It Can't Afford A Living Wage for its Lowest Paid Workers

Update from the FTPT Table

At the table last week the University of Toronto formally rejected the FTPT unit's wage proposal (11% / 3.5% / 3%) – which aimed to get all of our members to a living wage of at least \$25.05 and keep up with inflation in the following two years. Not only that, they have rejected nearly every proposal put forward by the negotiating committee so far, many with little to no discussion.

13/15 PROPOSALS REJECTED BY UOFT

Of the 15 proposals the FTPT bargaining committee has tabled so far, 10 have been rejected outright, 3 have been countered, and only 2 have been agreed to (the retirement bridge and a minor clarification on seniority for food service workers). Some of the rejected proposals include:

- Living Wage: **Rejected**
- Stop Contracting Out: **Rejected**
- Paid Training, Certification, Licensing: **Rejected**
- No Reduction of Pay for Workers Temporarily Assigned A Lower Classification: **Rejected**
- Overtime Distribution Transparency: **Rejected**
- Increased Standby Pay and Establish Campus Closure Premium: **Rejected**
- Job Evaluation Process: **Rejected**

The University said that they can't afford to pay us a living wage. That they can't afford to stop contracting out. That our members should start to get paid less after 3 weeks if "temporarily" assigned to a lower classification. And that there's nothing wrong with our job classifications as they stand now.

A complete summary of all proposals tabled to date and their responses from U of T can be found on our website at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals.



"It's time to break the pattern at UofT and fight together for what CUPE 3261 members deserve."

Arnold Park

*Sport Facility Operator @ St. George Campus
FTPT Unit Member*

U OF T COUNTERS WITH SAME PROPOSAL AS USW

The University countered our wage proposal with what we've always been expecting they would – the same deal as USW. 9% in the first year, 2% in the second, and 1.8% in the third. From the way the University acted last week with their proposal, it's more clear now than ever: They don't respect our work, they don't respect the struggles our members experience as some of the lowest-paid workers at the University, and they are determined to keep us in the same pattern they've had us in decades. We understand that 9% is not a number we have ever seen, but if we simply accept the pattern and walk away, we are accepting everything that comes with it, the 2% next year, the 1.8% the year after that, and no solutions to all the other important issues that matter to us. We remain committed to negotiating a contract for CUPE 3261 members, not just taking one that USW members accepted.

Not only does 9% fail to raise **450 of us** to a living wage of \$25.05, but 2% in the second year and 1.8% in the third are effectively wage cuts in the face of expected inflation.

The University's proposal also includes benefit improvements, some improvements and changes to educational assistance, and one extra personal day. You can view the full package the bargaining committee received from the University on our website at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals or at a direct link [here](#).

After rejecting nearly all of our other proposals, what U of T told us was that we should accept this because USW accepted this. We haven't completed tabling all of our proposals and the University has already denied nearly all of them.

U OF T PITS LOW-WAGE WORKERS AGAINST INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Not only did the University make the outrageous claims that they cannot afford our wage proposals – they made claims to suggest that our wage increases take tuition away from Indigenous students who receive free tuition under a new U of T policy. Our wage proposal represents an estimated increase of less than 0.2% of the University's total budget which is in excesses of \$3 billion. We aren't the problem. Maybe it's the high paid administrators?

Take Action on St. George Campus December 18th

CUPE 3902 **CUPE 3261**

HOLIDAY SOLIDARITY RALLY

JOIN US IN A HOLIDAY SOLIDARITY CELEBRATION TO VOICE OUR WISH FOR RESPECT, DIGNITY, AND A LIVING WAGE FOR UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WORKERS

MONDAY, DEC 18
3:00pm - 4:30pm
In Front of Simcoe Hall

Brought to you by your U of T caretakers, food service workers, library assistants, student casuals, postdocs, TAs, CIs, sessionals and more!

FREE HOT DRINKS AND HOLIDAY TREATS FOR ALL AND HOLIDAY LABOUR CAROLS BY CUPE 3902 LABOUR CHOIR

For those on or around St. George Campus, join us on **December 18th at Simcoe Hall from 3PM to 4:30PM** for a rally outside of the governing council meeting – demanding respect, dignity, and economic justice for all CUPE members and UofT students.

The administration's decisions are causing economic strain on employees and students. We need to unite in demanding fair wages and affordable living.

It's time to show U of T that it's not just our negotiating committees making these demands but all of CUPE 3261 (and our siblings at 3902 and 1230!)

Update from the Casual Table

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND A LIVING WAGE

At the table last week, the Casual Bargaining Committee tabled their wage proposal:

- Eliminate the wage scale and introduce equal pay for equal work for positions which do substantially similar work as those in the FTPT unit (as USW casuals have)
- A living wage of \$25.05 for all other non-tipped employees (align with FTPT)
- A \$20 minimum wage for tipped employees

The University did not formally respond to the Casual proposal last week. However, the University did take the time to share some preliminary thoughts, mentioning that our proposal is in a completely different “universe” and that we should take into account the cost of the recent minimum wage increase to \$16.55 – which most of our casual members currently make.

The University's consistent stance has been that casual workers aren't entitled to a living wage and shouldn't anticipate earning enough to meet their needs. This sentiment echoes their comments from the previous bargaining round in early 2023, where they argued that casual work isn't intended to be enough to live on but serves merely as supplementary income.



“Casual workers, in particular, are the lowest paid, most precarious, and most expendable workers in our university, despite our hard work and dedication. Everyone deserves equal pay for equal work and an opportunity to be promoted to a status with stability, dignity and a future. To win this and the contracts we all deserve — unity is the best way.”

David Griffin
*Service Worker (Campus Moving) @ St. George Campus
Casual Unit Member*

The University insists that the casual unit primarily caters to students (alleging that around 80% of the unit comprises students) who, according to them, don't need a livable wage. They have even defended this position last round by claiming that there are low-income students who manage to survive without working. However, even if we were to assume students don't need decent wages, recent data obtained by our union from the University reveals that only 40% of our casual workers are, in fact, students.

The term "casual" has long been wielded by the University to rationalize poverty-level wages, all under the guise of providing "opportunities" for students. In reality, casual workers are used as cheap and flexible labour, frequently undertaking tasks similar to those performed by their full-time and part-time counterparts.

Equal work merits equal pay, irrespective of job titles or other labels. Furthermore, all workers, both students and non-students, deserve a living wage, regardless of the work they do. Whether you're a non-student juggling two to three jobs to make ends meet or a student grappling with the financial burden of tuition, fees, books, escalating rent, and food costs while relying on student loans, fair compensation is a right for everyone.

More proposals will be tabled at the next meeting. View the full language of the proposals at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals.

Update from the 89 Chestnut Table

At its first day at the table, the 89 Chestnut negotiating committee tabled a number of key proposals to achieve respect and dignity in their workplace and also to align their benefits with that of the FTPT Unit. For too long Chestnut workers have not had the same rights like proper sick leave and shift premiums as Full-Time Part-Time Unit members have.

Proposals tabled:

1. Sick leave (align with FTPT proposal)
 - Currently, our members at 89 Chestnut receive only three sick days, compared to Full-Time Part-Time's 15 weeks!
2. Bereavement leave (unified with FTPT proposal)
 - Change from five consecutive days to five working days; eliminate two-day limit for grandparents and grandchildren
3. Shift premiums (unified with FTPT and Casual proposals)
 - Currently shift premiums are only available to those working overnight – a shift that nobody has at 89 Chestnut
4. Certification, training, and licensing (unified with FTPT and Casual proposals)
 - Any certification, training or licensing required for work will be paid for by the employer
5. Benefits
 - Clarifications to include benefits in the CBA that are already in effect at Chestnut
 - Employer to pay share of benefit costs for members laid off during the summer as was standard practise prior to 2018
6. Extend Red Seal premium to cooks
 - Extend the \$1/hr Red Seal premium to cooks instead of just Chef de Partie and Lead Cooks
7. Meals, Tools, Uniforms
 - Extend the meal allowance to 89 Chestnut employees outside of the Food Services department
 - Uniform cleaning to be provided by the employer, as was standard practise prior to 2013
 - Change the knife allowance to a general tool allowance where required, increase it to \$200, remove management's discretion
 - Improve language on boot allowance replacement and increase allowance to \$200

The University did not formally respond to any of 89 Chestnut's proposals last week. More proposals will be tabled at the next meeting. View the full language of the proposals at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals.

Update from the FTPT Table (details)

Five more proposals were tabled last week:

1. Retirement Bridge
 - Reinstate the retirement bridge for the length of the next collective agreement
2. Job Evaluation Language
 - Establishing an internal job evaluation process to ensure proper classification and compensation
3. Certification, Training and Licensing (unified with FTPT and Casual proposals)
 - Any certification, training or licensing required for work will be paid for by the employer
4. Red Seal Premium (aligned with 89 Chestnut proposal)
 - \$1/hr premium for all food service workers in the classification of cook or above who hold a Red Seal qualification
5. Negotiating Committee Makeup

NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE MAKEUP

Over 94% of our 500 members who completed bargaining surveys said that they support our coordinated bargaining strategy between our three units. We know we are stronger united. That's why last week the FTPT Bargaining Committee also proposed language that states that all three of our units will be negotiated at a central table in the future. This is the way for us to solidify our strength going forward.

The University obviously knows this as well, and knows we are weaker divided – they rejected the proposal the same day (along with all proposals made that day except the Bridge). They made the false excuse that a central table isn't allowed and would change the “scope” of the bargaining units.

More proposals will be tabled at the next meeting. View the full language of the proposals at 3261.cupe.ca/proposals.

Next Bargaining Dates

For now, we have not been able to secure more bargaining dates but will be seeking dates with the University for all three units before the end of this year. However, the University has told us that they have limited availability for the next two weeks due to their vacation schedules. We will update you once the next dates are confirmed.

