

Over 1,200 service workers in 7 bargaining units across the University of Toronto's 3 campuses

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February 25 General Membership Meeting

Our next General Membership Meeting will be held in a hybrid format on February 25th. See the reverse page for a detailed agenda and information on how to attend.

Key agenda items will include:

- Nominations for President
- Nominations for the Full-time Part-time Unit bargaining committee (see the FTPT unit update for more details)
- Nominations for one Trustee position
- Financial presentation and approval of our annual budget including the establishment of a strike fund

President's Message

Dear CUPE 3261 members,

It is with a heavy heart that I must inform you that I am resigning as CUPE 3261 President. As of Monday January 30, CUPE 3261 Vice President Edwin Viteri will become Acting President as per the by-laws of the Local. At the GMM on Saturday Feb 25, nominations will become open for the president position.

I have served as CUPE 3261 President for the last 11 years, and it has been an honour to lead this union during that time. I am grateful to you for your support during my tenure as president. I have had the privilege of learning from all of you, including all of the new leaders who have stepped up and contributed to building a fighting union during the recent FT-PT round of bargaining.

I am deeply proud of all that we have achieved together. However, it is now time for me to move on to different challenges and to provide the space for other leaders to step up to lead the local.

I want to thank my wife and daughters for the sacrifices they have made to allow me the time to give my best to CUPE 3261. I have accepted a different job at the University of Toronto that will enable me to give more time to my family.

Thank you again for the privilege of serving as your president.

Sincerely,

Allan James



Transition Period Details

As per CUPE 3261 bylaws, Vice President Edwin Viteri will assume the role of Acting President on January 30th until a new President is elected. Allan James will remain involved in an advisory role until February 26th to support the transition. Nominations for the position of President will be held at our next GMM on Saturday February 25th. If more than one candidate is nominated at this meeting, an election featuring the nominated candidates will take place at the next GMM in June 2023. As the current term for President runs from 2022 to 2024, this will be a by-election. The successful candidate for President will hold office until the next regular election for the position in October 2024.

Acting President Edwin Viteri can be reached by cellphone at 416-820-5067.

If you are considering seeking a nomination, we strongly recommend reviewing Section 8 of the CUPE 3261 Bylaws titled "Nomination, Election, and Installation of Officers" for detailed information on the nomination procedure and eligibility. These can be found on our website 3261.cupe.ca under the "Resources" section. If you have any questions about this procedure please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Union office using information below.

CUPE 3261

Workers United!

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WHEN

Saturday, February 25, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

WHERE

The William Doo Auditorium
(45 Willcocks St, Toronto)

or

Join virtually via zoom

The William Doo Auditorium is part of New College and is located directly adjacent to the Faculty Club. Street parking is available in the surrounding area, and it is also located steps away from the Spadina streetcar line.

If you plan to attend virtually, an individualized Zoom link to attend the meeting will be sent out to all members via email 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. If you or your coworker would like to attend virtually but don't receive emails from CUPE 3261 make sure to sign up at 3261.cupe.ca.

AGENDA

1. Roll call of officers
2. Reading of the equality statement
3. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Treasurer's Report: 2022 Financial Statement
7. Trustee's Report
8. 2023 Budget Proposal (including establishing of a strike fund)
9. Motion to donate \$1500 to the Workers Action Centre
10. Nominations for President
11. Nominations for Trustee
12. Nominations for FTPT Unit Bargaining Committee
13. Establishment and appointment of a By-Law Committee
14. Unfinished business
15. New business
16. Adjournment

NOMINATION PROCEDURE

If you are considering seeking a nomination for the President or Trustee positions, we strongly recommend reviewing Section 8 of the CUPE 3261 By-laws titled "Nomination, Election, and Installation of Officers" for detailed information on the nomination procedure and eligibility. These can be found on our website 3261.cupe.ca under the "Resources" section.

If you have any questions about this procedure please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Union office using information at the bottom of this page.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

General Membership Meetings set the priorities of our Union. Decisions are often made that directly affect you, and they are made based on the attendance to each meeting. If attendance is low, this could mean that decisions involving how your dues are used, or who will represent you at the negotiating table, for example, are decided by a select few.

General Membership Meetings are only about 2 hours long and are held only 3 times a year. Whether you've never missed a GMM, or have yet to attend your first one, we encourage every member to try to make the time to attend this upcoming GMM and join your co-workers in shaping your union.

Unit Updates

Full-time & Part-time

Bargaining Committee Nominations

Nominations for our next bargaining committee will take place at our upcoming GMM on February 25th. As per our bylaws, the committee shall consist of the President, The Unit Representative, and five (5) specially elected members of the Unit with at least one (1) from Scarborough Campus and one (1) from Mississauga Campus. Elections for the bargaining committee will then be held at our June GMM.

Steward Training

During our November ratification meetings, and later via email, we provided sign-up forms for people to attend steward training. We are excited to announce that we received an overwhelming amount of responses and have set dates for steward trainings at all three campuses in early March. Please check out the details on the next page and be sure to RSVP!

Also, if you indicated last year that you were interested in joining the Good Jobs Committee, please stay tuned for more information to come.

Medical Note Reimbursement

A reminder that if your supervisor requires you to provide a medical note and your doctor's office charges for this service, this cost must now be reimbursed by the University – just don't forget your receipt! This is one of the improvements negotiated in our latest round of bargaining.

Casual

Bargaining Update

With the recent ratification of the Full-time Part-time collective agreement, our union is now moving forward with negotiating a new contract for the casual unit. The casual unit is our second largest unit, with over 200 workers and is represented across many departments including athletics, food services, caretaking, building patrol, and more, many of whom work directly with FT-PT members.

For several years, casual workers have seen wages stagnate, and most are now making only the minimum wage. Casuals also lack important measures such as paid sick leave, adequate job security, a reasonable path to permanent part-time or full-time employment, access to benefits, and more.

We have an excellent bargaining committee who will do everything possible to achieve improvements to the casual collective agreement. However, the committee cannot achieve meaningful improvements on its own. Just like the FTPT unit, the committee will need the active support of all workers across our union to ensure we build maximum strength and power so that the employer knows we are serious and willing to fight.

If you are interested in being more involved with the bargaining campaign, please email us at casuals@cupe3261.ca.

This is also a reminder for all casuals to please complete the bargaining survey that was recently sent out. In the form, we are also asking casuals if they are interested in becoming shop stewards for their department.

We currently have vacancies across most departments. As a steward, you would help enforce the collective agreement and resolve workplace issues. You will be trained and supported in this role! You can find the survey at 3261.cupe.ca/casuals.

Infectious Disease Emergency Leave

Please be advised that the *Infectious Disease Emergency Leave* is in effect until March 31st, 2023. Until then, casual workers (or any worker who does not have paid sick leave) who misses a shift due to COVID-19 are eligible for the paid leave. The leave provides up to \$200/day for lost wages. Workers can claim a maximum of three days from the period of April 19, 2021 to March 31, 2023. If you miss any days due to COVID, make sure to inform your supervisor. If you have previously missed shifts since April 19, 2021 due to COVID and did not get paid for that day, please talk to your supervisor about claiming the leave retroactively. If you have any issues, please contact your casual rep at casuals@cupe3261.ca

Rest Period

All workers are required to have 11 consecutive hours of rest each day. Any shifts scheduled within the 11-hour period is in violation of the *Employment Standards Act* and cannot be overridden even if the employee consents. For example, if you finish a shift at 11:00 pm, the earliest time your next shift can be scheduled is 10:00 am. Please make sure your managers are following this rule. If there are issues, please contact us.

Unit Updates *Continued*

U of T Press Part-time Retail (Bookstores)

Your collective agreement governing your working conditions expired in October 2022. This means you have an opportunity to make improvements at work! Negotiations are scheduled to begin February 2, 2023. To help your negotiating committee understand the needs of all members, make sure to fill out the bargaining survey that you should have received to your email, or visit 3261.cupe.ca/press.

Real gains in working conditions doesn't come from the bargaining table but from building power in the workplace. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact your unit representative Chris Stanford, press@cupe3261.ca.

U of T Press Full-time

Our current collective agreement expires May 1st, 2023. Stay tuned for bargaining preparations in the coming months.

U of T Press Part-time Warehouse

We are in need of stewards in the unit! If you are interested in being a workplace steward please see the Steward Training section in this newsletter.

Faculty Club

Our collective agreement expired in June of 2022 and the bargaining committee will be starting negotiations on January 31st. The unit is seeking a rollover of the agreement but with wage increases to reflect the growing cost of living.

89 Chestnut

Our unit's collective agreement expired on December 31, 2021. A unit meeting for 89 Chestnut members will first be held soon to elect a bargaining committee. We are working to determine a date that works for all 89 Chestnut members. Please let Atalla know if you have any suggestions.

We are also looking for members to fill shop steward positions as per bylaw 7(h)6 across a variety of departments: Kitchen, Housekeeping, Food & Beverage Service, Maintenance, Stewarding, and Banquets. If you are interested please see the training info below and reach out to Atalla if you have any questions.

Steward Training

Steward training sessions will be held at the beginning of March on each campus. Any members who are interested in learning more about enforcing the collective agreement and building worker power in the workplace are encouraged to attend!

Visit 3261.cupe.ca/steward for more details and to **RSVP**.

Please be aware that the number of stewards each bargaining unit is allowed is determined by that unit's collective agreement. As such, not all members that attend can officially be appointed stewards. As per our by-laws, in areas where more members are interested than we have allotted stewards, elections may be held. Don't let this stop you from attending however – the more informed we all are on our rights in the workplace, the stronger we become.

Ouwcc Conference

The Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC) is holding its annual conference at Niagara Falls from February 23-26. Several of our executive members will be attending to hear from union leaders across Ontario on how to strengthen public post-secondary education and improve workers' lives.

Representing CUPE 3261 at this conference will be Outgoing President Allan James, Acting President Edwin Viteri, Secretary Treasurer Tuan Vong, Health and Safety Officer Nancy Tomas, FTPT Unit Rep. Anthony Jude Pereira, UTP Unit Rep. Chris Stanford, Faculty Club Unit Rep. Janny Tram, and 89 Chestnut Unit Rep. Atalla Savory.

Christmas Party

Thank you to all members who attended our annual holiday party at the Hilton Toronto and Dragon Pearl! Between the two parties we had over 600 members and guests attend. We hope you had a wonderful time, and congratulations to all those who won raffle prizes.

If you have any feedback or suggestions for our next holiday parties, feel free to contact our social committee chair Edwin Viteri at vicepresident@cupe3261.ca



Bill 124 Ruled Unconstitutional

The legislation that restricted compensation increases to 1% for our FTPT, Casual, and 89 Chestnut Units was ruled unconstitutional by the Ontario Superior Court on November 29th 2022. The court found that the bill violated the right of unions to freely negotiate. This legislation has caused significant harm to public sector employees across Ontario, including our members.

While Doug Ford's Conservative government has filed an appeal for the ruling, as long as the bill remains struck down, our Casual and 89 Chestnut Units – who currently have expired collective agreements – are no longer restricted and can negotiate freely.

As for the FTPT Unit which ratified their collective agreement on November 25th, 2022, we remain a long ways away from receiving any sort of compensation for this unlawful bill. It is unfortunately the case that settlements in situations like this historically take years to happen and any compensation won tends to pale in comparison to the injustice done by the bill. We will however continue to monitor for developments with Bill 124 and follow the guidance of CUPE Ontario.

Building on the momentum from our 2022 round of bargaining, our FTPT Unit will have the opportunity to win real wage gains this summer/fall after the expiration of the current collective agreement.

Healthcare Privatization in Ontario

In response to the worsening healthcare crisis, the Doug Ford government recently announced that they will be moving up to 50% of surgical procedures to private, for-profit facilities. This move is a significant threat to our public healthcare system, as it will slowly create a two-tier system that will starve our public system of funding and staff.

This move to privatize healthcare is not a solution to the crisis our hospitals are facing, and will only further exacerbate issues in the long-term. Privatization doesn't save money, and will in fact increase the overall cost of healthcare, as government funds will be used to reimburse higher fees within private clinics in order to supplement their profits and enrich their shareholders. This means less money available for public facilities.

At the same time, private facilities will draw away doctors and nurses from the public system, worsening the healthcare staff shortage.

This will also open the door for more user fees and line-cutting, where wealthier individuals will be able to pay for higher quality care and jump the queue for tests and elective surgeries.

Furthermore, private clinics are less accountable to the public, so quality of service is not as adequately regulated.

As the public system is starved of resources, the government can use the worsening crisis as an excuse to further expand private healthcare. This threatens our universal health care system and moves us closer to American-style health care, which is more expensive, less accessible and leaves millions without access to care and high amounts of debt.

At the same time, a two-tier system erodes commitment to universal access as wealthy people become disengaged with the public system and become less willing to pay taxes to support it.

We cannot allow healthcare to be driven by profit, and must preserve and strengthen our public, universal healthcare system.

The provincial government is not facing a fiscal crisis, and in fact, came out in a strong fiscal position during the pandemic due to a strong economy and by relying heavily on federal support. Instead, the current government (and its predecessors) have deliberately manufactured this crisis by starving the healthcare system (already one of the least funded across Canada) and now are able to use the crisis as an excuse to privatize care, which serves the interest of their business lobbyists who for a long time have demanded the system be open to profiteering.

To learn more about the issue and how you can help, visit ontariohealthcoalition.ca.

Canada Housing Benefit

The Government of Canada is offering a one-time \$500 tax-free benefit to Canadians. You may be eligible if you meet the following criteria: 1) your 2021 income was less than \$20,000 (individual) or \$35,000 (families), and 2) you paid rent in 2022 and it cost at least 30% of your income. You need to have filed your 2021 taxes and have had your primary residence in Canada. Applications can be found online and are open until March 31, 2023.