

# CUPE WORKERS AT U OF T SAY: "UNITED WE WIN!"

## CUPEs ON CAMPUS: BARGAINING ROUNDUP

For the first time at the University of Toronto, 7 Bargaining Units across 3 CUPE Locals representing over 8,000 workers are currently in a bargaining position! UofT depends on our collective labour, but our collective agreements do not reflect our value. For too long, we've seen how divide and conquer tactics allow the employer to treat Bargaining Units unequally, even though we face the same issues: unlivable wages, job insecurity, overwork, and hostile workplaces. No more!

Now, we are using our collective voice as library workers, postdocs, maintenance technicians, caretakers, teaching assistants, cafeteria workers, course instructors, and sport facility attendants (and more!) in CUPE Locals 1230, 3261, and 3902 to resist UofT's tactics. Unlike our employer, who insists on confidentiality at the negotiating table, we believe the bargaining process should be transparent. That's why we've created this joint newsletter to share our common priorities across Units and Locals for this bargaining year.



*"I'm proud to work at UofT and provide quality service to students and faculty. But the continued insistence of the university to contract out our work and create low wage jobs is disrespectful to us and against all principles of equity. This is why I'm standing in solidarity with thousands of university employees this winter to demand respect and dignity."*

**Vilma Bernardo**  
Caretaker at Simcoe Hall, CUPE 3261

### What's at stake?

Across the 3 Locals, you and thousands of your coworkers have completed bargaining surveys that highlight the most pressing concerns and top priorities for your respective future Collective Agreements. Fair pay, unified bargaining, workplace dignity and respect, transparent hiring practices, and protections against overwork are among the most critical concerns.

In 2019, Bill 124 illegally capped annual wage increases for public sector workers at 1%. Although Bill 124 was struck down in 2022, it did significant damage to your livelihoods in just three years. Now, we must demand wage increases that reflect the skyrocketing cost of living. When your employer negotiates with Locals and Units separately, they can try to force us to accept what others have already settled for. With coordinated bargaining, we can send a strong collective message to our employer: we ALL deserve dignified wages and work conditions.

## CUPE 3261

CUPE 3261 represents over one thousand service workers across UofT's three campuses. We are cafeteria workers, utility drivers, campus mail workers, parking control officers, grounds workers, caretakers, maintenance workers, vet techs, recycling workers, hospitality workers and much more!

3 out of 7 Units in our Local are in a bargaining position:

- 1) **Full-Time and Part-Time**, 2) **Casual**, and 3) **89 Chestnut**.

Alongside wage increases, we face significant issues with heavy workloads, unfair scheduling, workplace favouritism, and contracting out. That's why we must build power together across our entire membership! **After years of dividing us up and refusing to recognize our members' shared interests, the employer has agreed to negotiate with all 3 Units in the same month!** Our first round of dates are:

- Tue Nov. 14 - FTPT      Tue Nov. 21 - Casual
- Wed Nov. 15 - Casual    Wed Nov. 22 - FTPT
- Fri Nov. 17 - FTPT      Tue Nov. 28 - 89 Chestnut



*"I love my job at UofT and I'm proud to be part of it where I do serve students in the residence. But with low staffing, low wages, work load, as well as the increasing dissatisfaction of students in their dining experiences, quality service is being compromised. I am excited about this round of negotiations and building unity with thousands of workers across the three campuses to win dignity and respect we all deserve as U of T employees."*

**Adelita Ancheta**  
Food Service Worker, 89 Chestnut



## CUPE 1230

CUPE 1230 represents nearly 400 workers at University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) across 30+ departments. We have two collective agreements: one for **Full-Time and Part-Time** staff, and one for **Student Casual** staff. Both agreements expired on June 30, 2023.

We gave the employer our notice to bargain on Oct. 20 and emphasized our desire to bargain both agreements simultaneously. On the same day, our Executive and Negotiating Committees sent an open letter to Alex Brat, Director of UofT Labour Relations, to publicly articulate our unified bargaining approach. We will share Mr. Brat's response when we receive it. **We expect resistance, but we must stand strong to achieve our goals.**



*"I believe strongly in paid sick leave for student workers."*

**Brad Wood-Maclean**  
Political Science student,  
Student Help Desk Advisor

Our first dates at the table are:  
Nov. 30 - FTPT  
Dec. 6 - Student Casual



Read our letter to Alex Brat here!

## CUPE 3902

With over 6,000 members, **Unit 1** represents teaching assistants, course instructors, lab assistants, invigilators, and more across the three campuses.

On Oct. 26, 2023, we sent our notice to bargain to the employer. The following week on Nov. 2, **our members voted unanimously to adopt our bargaining platform.** Our platform revolves around four key themes: Pay & Benefits, Workload Standards & Job Security, Healthier & Safer Workplaces, and Inclusion & Anti-Oppression.



*"At a time of soaring cost of living it is crucial that we coordinate with our fellow workers at UofT to achieve living wages."*

**Julian Nickel**  
Unit 1 Teaching Assistant  
in the Dept. of Physics

Read CUPE 3902 Unit 1's Bargaining Platform here!



**Unit 5** represents postdoctoral researchers at UofT. **In Canada, professors are some of the highest-paid in the world, while postdocs are some of the lowest-paid, even though university research depends on us!**

Since Oct. 3, 2023, the Unit 5 Bargaining Committee has met with the employer 3 times. So far, we've presented proposals on the following key problems: job security, overtime pay, teaching opportunities, research funds, training recognition and compensation, and increased pay. At our most recent day at the table, we proposed:

1. An increase to the minimum salary from \$36,061 to \$50,000 for 2023 (retroactive to Jan. 1, 2023), \$52,500 for 2024, and \$55,125 for 2025.
2. An across-the-board wage increase (for workers earning more than minimum) of 9% for 2023 (retroactive to Jan. 1, 2023), 4% for 2024, and 3% for 2025.

**At the bargaining table, the university has told us that they consider postdoc work "mission critical." Will they prove this by agreeing to our reasonable demands?**

Unit 5's next dates at the table are Nov. 16 and Nov. 23.



*"I am fighting for a salary increase that would align postdocs' income with the living wage standards in Toronto!"*

**Federica Berdini**  
Former Postdoc, Centre for Ethics

## TAKE ACTION!

Join a Contract Action Team in your Local or Bargaining Unit:

CUPE 3261



CUPE 1230



CUPE 3902 UNIT 1



CUPE 3902 UNIT 5

