



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO EDUCATION WORKERS
803-180 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V6
tel: 416.593.7057; fax: 416.593.9866
info@cupe3902.org/www.cupe3902.org

Executive Committee

7 July, 2015

Chair:
Ryan Culpepper

Secretary-Treasurer:
Emily Clare

Vice Chair Unit 1:
Isabel Stowell-Kaplan

Vice Chair Unit 3:
Erin Black

Vice Chair Unit 5:
Scott Melvin

Vice Chair Colleges:
Kristen Allen

*Communications/Recording
Secretary:*
Pamela Arancibia
(pro-tem)

External Liaison Officer:
Evan Miller

Internal Liaison Officer:
Ellie Adekur-Carlson

Grievance Officer:
Emil Marmol

Executive Director:
Wayne Dealy

Staff Representatives:

Jesse Payne (on leave)

Rebecca Strung

Shiraz Vally

Dear Friends,

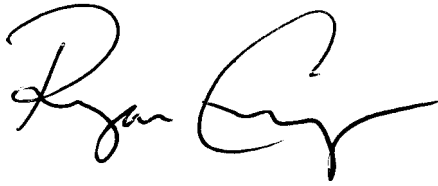
We write today to thank you for your moral and material support. When Unit 1 of our local voted to strike, we knew we would need to come together, to help each other and to strengthen our community of teaching assistants, course instructors, and invigilators. We also knew that we would depend on allies beyond our local for financial support. Our broader community—advocates for education workers and for fair labour practices—came through for us. Your solidarity with our labour action brought strength to our lines and courage to our representatives at the bargaining table. We could not have held our position against a far larger, richer employer without the knowledge that we had your support and encouragement. We are humbled and grateful to have you stand with us in our struggle.

On 26 March, after 28 days on picket lines, our membership voted to accept binding arbitration with the University of Toronto. This decision was bittersweet. We are proud of our strike and achieved a great deal. Our membership is tremendously diverse, a body of Masters and PhD students from 222 distinct educational programs. We labour in different ways, grading papers, supervising labs, proctoring exams, and teaching courses of our own design, all of this alongside the requisite coursework, research and dissertation writing that is required of us in our capacities as students. For many, picket duty presented the first opportunity to meet members from different departments and divisions. We learned that while our intellectual interests differ widely, the challenges posed by our unfair labour conditions unite us. We came together, mobilized, and focused on bringing about significant, enduring change to our graduate funding structure and collective agreement. We forged new friendships and alliances. Our local is stronger for this strike and we look to our future with great enthusiasm.

While we did not achieve everything we would have liked through arbitration, the strike produced an historic agreement with major gains for our members. Now we regroup and look to the future. In our next round of bargaining, we will continue to press for a living wage for our members. We will fight to stop the erosion of the real value of our benefits. We will continue to mobilize our members, to reach out to undergraduates, staff and faculty at the University, and to promote solidarity among the dozens of other unions on campus. We invite our allies beyond the University of Toronto to stay connected with our local, to support us in our continued struggle and to help us understand your communities and challenges.

The issues that brought our members out to the lines are relevant to us all. We made the decision to strike not just for a better collective agreement but in protest of the corporatization of education. Our strike called on Canada's largest university to meet its responsibilities as a public institution; we believe that education must be accessible to all and that all workers deserve the respect of their employer. For this, we have taken a stand. Our hope is that our strike will inspire you to continue to fight with us in defence of public education and the rights of workers. We are stronger together!

In solidarity,



Ryan Culpepper
Chair



Isabel Stowell-Kaplan
Vice-chair, Unit I

Thank you so much for your extremely generous donation. Having the support of a union such as yours, whose members so appreciate the struggles we all face means a great deal to us.