How do we build a balanced, inclusive, and bold workplace?

Our THESIS: Transparency, Health, Equity, Safety, Inclusion, and Security

CUPE 3902, Unit 1: Bargaining Platform

6 November, 2020

Challenges

- Financial precarity

- Oppression and systemic bias at work

- Balancing academic work with overwork

- Compensation caps imposed by Bill 124

- Mental health crisis

- COVID-19

- Social isolation

- University bureaucracy

Opportunities

- Many Unit 1 members are **students** — the University likes to be seen to care about its students

- Our students need better **learning conditions** — improving our working conditions will improve their learning conditions

- Bill 124 sets financial parameters on bargaining — these will force the Employer to engage **non-financial issues** they have been avoiding

- U of T wants to cultivate a progressive public image with respect to anti-racism work — we can **leverage** this to hold them to account

- We've already pushed U of T back with **effective union work and activism** — we have a campus coalition, media connections, and a history of contacting department Chairs

We asked:	Overwork	Precarity	Inequity	(Mental) Health & Safety
In what areas did COVID-19 negatively impact you?	74% — academic progress 37% — Unit 1 work	34% — access to future work 25% — housing/shelter security	37% — domestic and/or care work	75% — mental health/well being
What are your health & safety concerns in the workplace?	64% — stress related to academic workload 39% — stress related to Unit 1 workload	59% — stress related to precarity (lack of predictable, secure income)	7% — harassment at physical work site(s) 6% — harassment at virtual work site(s)	74% — stress related to mental health 73% — exposure to COVID-19 23% — safety at physical work site(s)
What are your bargaining priorities?	44% — COVID-responsive language to protect our rights and students' learning conditions 20% — improvements to Unit 1 workload	69% — more funding without adding mandatory work 65% — better compensation 60% — improvements to financial assistance funds	43% — quality paid training 20% — protections against discrimination and harassment 14% — clear hiring language	64% — mental health supports for Unit 1 members and students 23% — health and safety standards

What our members have said about **Overwork**

- *"We are allotted 3 minutes to mark each report; it takes 10-15. Our labs are 4 hours long, but it is expected that students leave early so we are only paid for 3."*

- *"There has been no instruction or expectation-setting re: **Unit 1 work boundaries**. While everything occurs at home and online, I believe we should [think very deliberately] about this (ex: when will you answer emails, when you will not be working etc.)"*

- *"A Workload Review has **never been openly discussed**; would be worried that if I requested more hours after receiving a position, this could affect my eligibility to receive paid work in the future. This is not a departmental concern specifically, **but rather a university-wide, academic culture concern**."*

Workload Standards

- Transparent **parameters on work**

- Special provisions for **dual-delivery and remote work**

- Regular and flexible **workload review processes**

Workload Standards

Transparent parameters on work

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Transparent parameters** on job duties, responsibilities, and hours associated with any given course before signing a contract

- **Fair, standardized (re)scheduling** of hours for Invigilators, Services to Persons with a Disability, CPOs, Peer Assistants and Assistant Invigilators

- **Increased insurable hours for CIs**

- **Right of refusal** if an appointment that will count towards 'base funding' misaligns with academic interests

Workload Standards

Special provisions for dual-delivery and remote work

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Transparent parameters** on the job duties, responsibilities, hours assigned, and hours of work associated with any given dual-delivery or remote course before signing a contract (e.g., whether TAs can be asked to record tutorials)

- **Increased hours** for dual-delivery and remote work

- **Support for technology and/or equipment** needed to perform dual-delivery and remote work (e.g., compensation for additional purchases/rentals or equipment provided by the university)

Workload Standards

Regular and flexible workload review processes

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Structured DDAH form** with mandatory tasks (e.g., mid-point DDAH meeting) automatically appearing on the form

- **Right to refuse to work until DDAH has been signed**

- **Clear, flexible workload review procedures** that take place at the mid-point DDAH meeting (mid-point defined as the point at which half the hours of the appointment are projected to be used); as needed in the appointment process; and allow for review after the fact in instances where an employee may have not been able to raise an issue right away (e.g., due to stress, family issues, illness, crisis support)

What our members have said about **Inequity**

- *"[I did not raise workload issues.] I was registered with a temporary disability which caused me to take more time to do the same amount of work, and **I didn't want to draw attention to how much harder it was for me**."*

- *"I would be interested in **additional training** regarding anti-racism, equity and inclusion as well as supporting students with mental health concerns."*

- *"[I'm concerned about] Issues of equity within the workplace (e.g., **casual racism**, **microaggressions**)."*

Inclusion & Anti-oppression

- **Fair hiring** practices and policies

- **Mechanisms** to counter institutional inequities

- **Training and supports** to build an anti-oppressive workplace

Inclusion & Anti-oppression

Fair hiring practices and policies

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Accountability and transparency** in hiring policy and practice/procedure (e.g., central parameters on departmental hiring policies, enforcement mechanisms, grievance provisions)

- **Not constrained or approved** by academic supervisor or dependent on academic progress (e.g., academic supervisors cannot set maximums on members' hours or sign off on members' appointments)

- **Identity-based data** to explore the impact of systemic racism, (hetero)sexism, and ableism on hiring and appointments

Workload
Standards

Inclusion &
Anti-oppression

Compensation
& Job Security

(Mental) Health
& Safety

Inclusion & Anti-oppression

Mechanisms to counter institutional inequities

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Transparent process to report, navigate, and seek redress** for discrimination, harassment, workplace violence, and/or inappropriate behavior at work (e.g., clear mechanism to report, steps to grievance)

- **Course evaluations** from students do not factor in to hiring processes and decisions, and are not retained in personnel files

Inclusion & Anti-oppression

Training and supports to build an anti-oppressive workplace

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Pre-approved, paid training** for workers to access regularly (to the maximum number of hours allowed per appointment) in areas related to systemic racism, (hetero)sexism, and ableism (e.g., inclusive pedagogy; supporting students in crisis; indigenous cultural competency; decolonizing academia; seeking redress for discrimination at work; trainings put on by offices at UofT dedicated to anti-racism, equity, cultural competency, accessibility, inclusive pedagogy, etc.)

- **Access to the Employee Family Assistance Plan** for members making a grievance based on these grounds

- **Protected time off** for members who have reported discrimination, harassment, and/or inappropriate behavior at work

What our members have said about **Precarity**

- *"I have had 5 TAships at a time (11 TAships in the past 12 months), and have not felt particularly overworked in any individual course. Instead, **the fact that I've had to work that many TAships to be financially okay is a major systemic problem**. That we are not funded for all the years of our programs is the most significant issue I see here and it has resulted in me being significantly overworked overall."*

- *"I believe that **the cost of living in Toronto is higher than the University believes**. I have filled out financial aid forms and the cost of living is much more than that. I believe that the cost of living for Toronto should be accounted for in our funding package. I strongly believe that there should be more access to TA positions in my department."*

Compensation & Job Security

- Improvements to **wages, benefits, and the amount of bargaining unit work in the funding package**

- Additional rights and access to **subsequent appointments**

- More equitable distribution of **Unit 1 funds**

Compensation & Job Security

Improvements to wages, benefits, and bargaining unit work in the funding package

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Increased wages**

- **Improved benefits**

- **Decreased CUPE 3902 work that can be counted as 'base funding'** in the funding package

- **No clawbacks** following on decreased CUPE 3902 work that can be counted as 'base funding' in the funding package (e.g., no reduction in funding, or increased expectation of non-bargaining-unit work such as RAships)

Compensation & Job Security

Additional rights and access to subsequent appointments

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Subsequent appointments for all Masters'** students in their second year

- **Improved, additional right to defer** for PhDs

- **Guaranteed right to work** after subsequent appointments expire (minimum hours of work to access Union healthcare)

Compensation & Job Security

More equitable distribution of Unit 1 funds

Some ways we might achieve this!

- *Note that fund decisions are not bargained with the employer but recommended by our Collective Agreement Implementation Committee in accordance with priorities identified in bargaining.*

- **Streamlined tuition and funding assistance funds**

- **More equitable distribution** of tuition assistance funds, not dependent on program kind

- **Equity fund for BIPOC workers** in emergency financial situations related to their experience as BIPOC workers

What our members have said about (Mental) Health

- *"Stress/mental health related concerns due to lack of support for parents (of young children) during COVID.* **It was extremely stressful receiving little support from the university during the initial wave.** *Their declaration of "flexibility" is impractical for many people and does not address the logistical issues related to parenting small children. I am very stressed about how things will be handled if primary schools close or if my child is home a lot due to small illnesses/COVID."*

- *"**Chronic pain and illness and lack of a home work space are major concerns.** I don't have a desk or space for a desk and working from the couch is often impossible due to pain."*

(Mental) Health & Safety

- **Actions and resources** to better support our students, members, and world in crisis

- Increased access to **sick days and leaves**

- Improved access to and information about how to access **accommodations**

(Mental) Health & Safety

Actions and resources to better support our students, members, and world in crisis

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **On-campus crisis supports** centred in harm reduction

- **Access to Employee Family Assistance Plan** for members in crisis or supporting students in crisis

- **In every offer letter**: a list of mental health resources to help members guide students and information on members' duty to report

- **Address climate crisis** (e.g., via divestment)

(Mental) Health & Safety

Increased access to sick days and leaves

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Paid sick days for all** regardless of hours of work, or job category

- **Paid sick days for those with dependents**

- **Increased sick days for all under pandemic conditions**

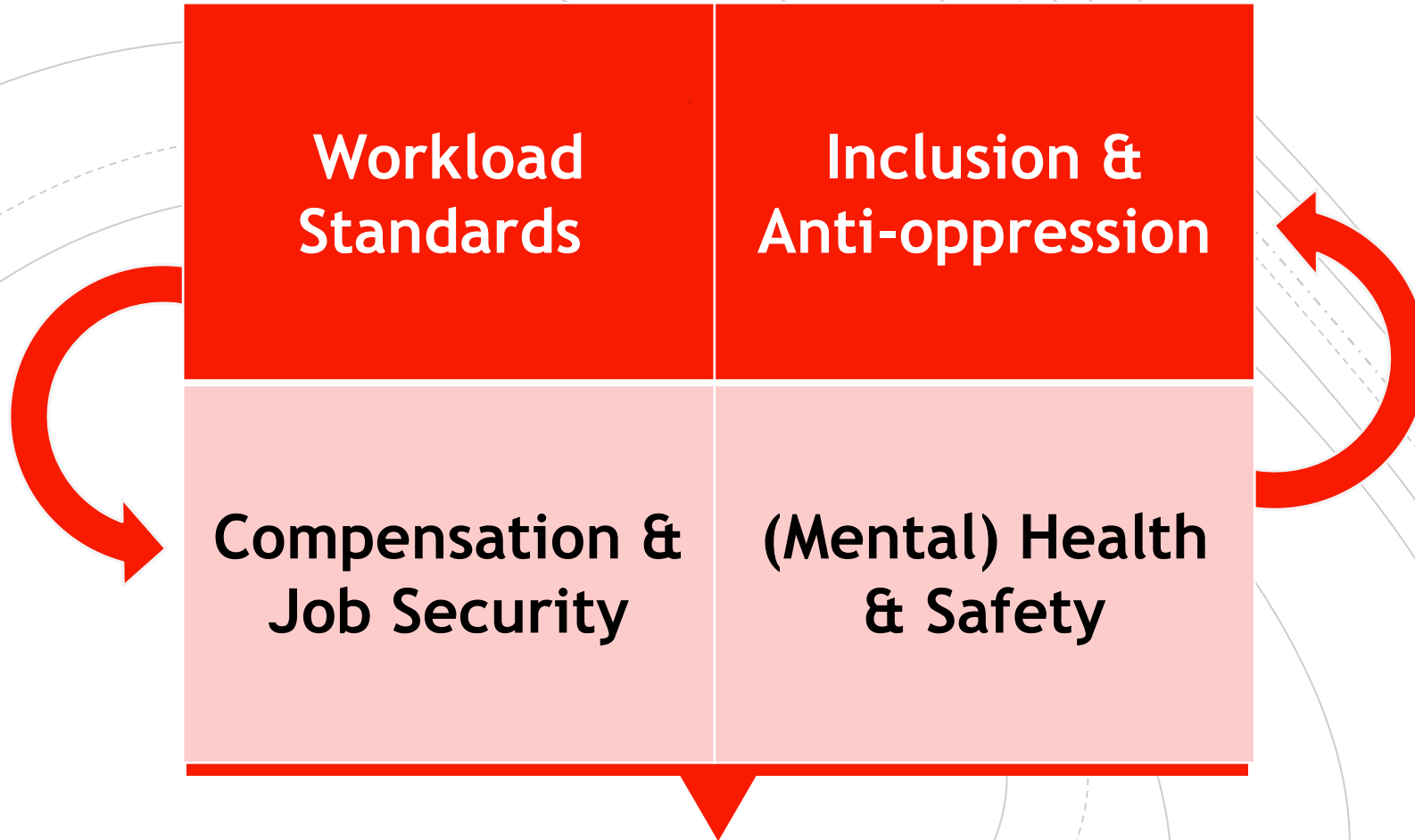- **Better access to leaves**, especially pregnancy and parental leave

(Mental) Health & Safety

Improved access to and information about how to access accommodations

Some ways we might achieve this!

- **Information about how to access accommodations** included in letters of offer, at DDAH meetings, etc.

- **Clear, widely available access to accommodations in pandemic conditions** for those who are or live with someone who is immunocompromised and for those who need accommodation for family care reasons

How do we build a balanced, inclusive, and bold workplace?

Workload Standards	Inclusion & Anti-oppression
Compensation & Job Security	**(Mental) Health & Safety**

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