

Dear Chair and Faculty of the Department of Classics,

I'm writing in my capacity as the CUPE liaison for Classics, on behalf of Classics graduate students.

On January 22nd 2021, the graduate student educators of the Department of Classics (Teaching Assistants and Course Instructors) held a meeting to consider matters pertinent to the ongoing CUPE 3902 Unit 1 Bargaining. At this meeting a motion was moved and passed unanimously to endorse the following letter and formally request that the Department of Classics acknowledge receipt and publicly endorse the following statement:

The Department Chair and the Department of Classics acknowledge that Unit 1 of CUPE 3902 (Teaching Assistants, Course Instructors, and Invigilators) is beginning its bargaining process with the University of Toronto. The Department of Classics supports our students' attempt to demand a fair, safe, and equitable workplace at the University of Toronto. Specifically, the Department of Classics pledges to 1) reject any policies of academic continuity passed by University administration, 2) not hire any contract labour to replace striking workers and 3) refuse to compel any students to perform educational labour independent of labour decisions made by the Union with financial compensation from budgetary lines that were not already dedicated to wages, or by use of threats to academic completion. By taking this stance, the Department of Classics acknowledges the importance of unionized student labour to its teaching operations and upholds their right to a good faith bargaining climate. The Department of Classics wishes its Unit 1 employees an equitable bargaining round regardless of potential labour disruptions and will contribute to fostering such an environment.

The graduate student educators of Classics greatly appreciate the support that the chair, previous chairs, and departmental faculty have given to graduate students formally and informally in the past. We would like to also recognize that in previous work-action, the Department of Classics has engaged constructively and positively with striking graduate student educators. In the same spirit, we wish to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect that will redound to the future health of the Department.

In endorsing the above statement, the Department will be making a show of solidarity with graduate student educators. By agreeing to a statement of solidarity and making that statement public, the Department will be producing, in effect, a readily accessible record of its good faith engagement with unionized student labour.

Furthermore, this will be an acknowledgement by an organ of the employer that its members are bargaining with a platform in compliance with current Bill-124 regulations that minimize the ability of the union to bargain for significant gains. Recognition of the new bargaining reality will foster faith in the employer's commitment to bargain in good faith. Once again, we believe the University of Toronto's Department of Classics can lead by example by advocating for an equitable university.

Pursuant to our request that the endorsement of the above statement be made public, we believe its placement on the website would be sufficient.

Best wishes,

Justin Yule, CUPE liaison for Classics

& the graduate student educators of the Department of Classics