

Dear Chair and Faculty of the Department of History,

I'm writing to you in my capacity as the GHS President.

On November 24, 2020, the Graduate History Society alongside student contract educators of the Department of History (Teaching Assistants and Course Instructors), held their first meeting for the 2020/2021 Unit 1 bargaining meeting. At this meeting a motion was moved and passed unanimously to endorse the following letter and formally request that the Department of History acknowledge receipt and endorse the following statement:

The department chair and the Department of History acknowledges 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 History supports our students' attempt to demand a fair, safe, and equitable workplace at the University of Toronto. Specifically, the Department of History 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 History acknowledges the importance of unionized student labour to its teaching operations and upholds their right to a good faith bargaining climate. The Department of History 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 History greatly appreciate the support that the chair and departmental faculty have given to graduate students formally and informally in the past. During the 2017–18 bargaining round, the Department contributed to fostering positive labour relations by endorsing a statement against the deployment of academic continuity in the event of a labour disruption. Beyond good labour relations, that good faith statement greatly strengthened the confidence of workers in the bargaining process. Given this positive past history and the additional hardship brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, this statement will serve in the same spirit.

Furthermore, this will show 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. Such support recognizes the new bargaining reality in a way that fosters faith in employer's commitment to bargain in good faith. Once again, we believe the University of Toronto's Department of History can lead by example by advocating for an equitable university.

Best wishes,

The Graduate History Society