

Dear Professor Terpstra,

On 4 December 2020, the contract student educators of the Department of Italian Studies held our first meeting for the 2020/2021 Unit 1 bargaining session. At this meeting, an overwhelming majority voted to endorse the following letter and formally request that the Chair of the Department acknowledge receipt and endorse the following statement:

The Chair of Italian Studies acknowledges that Unit 1 of CUPE 3902 (Teaching Assistants, Course Instructors, and Invigilators) is beginning its bargaining process with the University of Toronto. CUPE 3902's main priorities for this round of bargaining are to improve workload standards, foster inclusion and anti-oppression at U of T, increase compensation and job security, and promote (mental) health and safety. As Chair of Italian Studies, I support our graduate students/CUPE 3902's attempt to demand for a fair, safe, and just workplace at the University of Toronto. Specifically, the Department of Italian Studies agrees to 1) vote against and reject any academic continuity policies set forth by the University; 2) not hire any contract labour to substitute or replace workers on strike; and 3) refuse to force 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 Italian Studies acknowledges the importance of unionized student labour to its teaching operations and upholds their right to a good faith bargaining climate. The Department of Italian Studies 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 Italian Studies greatly appreciate the support that the Department's faculty have given to graduate students in the past. Once again, we believe the University of Toronto's Dept. of Italian Studies can lead by example by advocating for an equitable university.

Best wishes,

Graduate Students' Association of Italian Studies (GSAIS)