



# NOTES FOR TALKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT UNIT 3 BARGAINING

*This script is designed to take 5 minutes to present at the start or end of a lecture or tutorial. The goal is to direct students to this e-action. Make sure it's done in your own time and **not during your lecture**. General rule: If a student asks a question that you don't know the answer to, tell them you will find out and message Tom @ [vp2@cupe3902.org](mailto:vp2@cupe3902.org).*

## INTRODUCTION

You might have heard that Unit 3 is in bargaining and took a strike vote so I want to explain what that means. You might think that every instructor who teaches your classes is a Professor, but that is not always the case at U of T. Professors have a permanent job, and are given a yearly salary that pays to teach and do research. They also get first pick for which courses they want to teach.

Many of us teaching you are actually Sessional Lecturers on contracts. None of us is tenured or full-time. We are paid per course, and must re-apply to those courses every semester no matter how many times we have taught the class. We are treated as if we are filling in gaps, but many of us have been teaching for sometimes 20 years. If we want to do research or write articles, we have to do it on our time, without pay. (continued on next page)

Contract academic workers are part of a union called CUPE 3902, Unit 3, which consists of all Sessional Lecturers, Music Professionals, Writing Instructors, and Sessional Instructional Assistants.

The main way that we in the union protect our rights is with a Collective Agreement. That's our union contract, which sets our workplace rights, including pay, benefits, safety rules, etc. Every 3 years we negotiate with the University to improve this contract, our working conditions, and therefore your learning conditions. This is happening right now and has been since May. While we fight for better working conditions for ourselves and our students, the University tends to be most concerned with the financial bottom-line.

[Here you can ask a question that demonstrates our working conditions: "Do you know how many classes I have to teach to afford living in Toronto?"]

## WHAT IS THE UNION TRYING TO GET IN THIS ROUND?

In this round of bargaining, we are focusing on things that will improve both working conditions for people like me and learning conditions for you, students.

- 1) Number 1 is job security, given that many of us have to re-apply for our jobs every 3 months. U of T already has full-time teaching-stream jobs; so we want access to those.
- 2) We also need an increase in wages. The Conservatives limited wage increases to 1%, so that's all we're asking for- it's way below inflation! We do want to be paid however, for work we do for free like supervising TAs and teaching a course for the first time (which requires creating it!).
- 3) We also want better healthcare and benefits! We want our own benefits plan, more mental health coverage, and better leaves (like parental and sick leaves).
- 4) We also want general equity gains for our members such as better protections against sexual assault and harassment and fair job posting & hiring.





Workers' ultimate power rests on the ability to withhold their labour, the labour that the University relies on to make its money. We might have to strike to get job security. However, you can help avoid a lengthy strike of Unit 3 members by emailing the university at this link is **[weareuoft.com/support-unit3/](https://weareuoft.com/support-unit3/)**. [Drop this in the chat.] Remember it's entirely voluntary, your support means a lot! You can read more about our negotiations on that website.

