



March 13, 2024

CUPE 3903 Bargaining Team
VIA EMAIL: 3903bargaining@gmail.com

**OFFICE OF LABOUR
RELATIONS**

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Dear CUPE 3903 bargaining team,

We are writing in response to your March 9 and March 12 emails.

As we review these two emails, please know that we are increasingly concerned for our students and their ability to complete their academic year and stay on track for graduate and professional school admission, accreditation and professional licensing processes, co-op placements, study abroad plans, summer employment and more. We must support student success, retention, and graduation. It is critical to the University's ability to attract students in the future, including in the recruitment cycle currently underway.

The University is pleased that the CUPE bargaining team has expressed a desire to return to the bargaining table on March 19, 20 and 21. The University would be prepared to meet on those dates (March 21 being subject to the parties agreeing to postpone an arbitration hearing scheduled for that date), and given the urgency of ending the strike, would be willing and available to meet sooner, subject to the advice of the provincially appointed mediator ("mediator"). In a March 12 email sent to us both following the Union's March 9 revisions discussed below, the mediator expressed the view that the parties remained "quite far apart in their positions" and that returning to the table at this time was "not likely to result in a settlement."

We note the optimistic tone of your March 12 email and are interested in hearing more from the CUPE bargaining team regarding what you described as "much to discuss at the bargaining table" with respect to the Unions' March 9 proposal packages. We do want to be transparent that while open to those discussions, we share the mediator's view and have set out some of our concerns below.

This is now the third week of CUPE 3903 Units 1, 2 and 3's strike and it took two full weeks of the strike before the three units delivered counterproposals to the University's two outstanding comprehensive proposals of February 7 and 21. The University's comprehensive proposals addressed what we understood to be crucial items, importantly including a new Job Stability Program proposal for contract faculty in Unit 2 that would strengthen the Union and the University's joint work to develop the Program over a two-year mediated process.

Following an offer of interest arbitration from five other Unions at York; YUFA, YUSA-1, OHFA and CUPE 1356 and 1356-1, we made a similar proposal to CUPE 3903 Units 1, 2 and 3 on March 7, 2024. We are disappointed that you have rejected our proposals for mediation and arbitration ("mediation-arbitration") to address issues of salary for the Bill 124 moderation period, and salary and non-salary compensation issues for a renewal Collective Agreement. This would have provided the most expeditious process by which to end the strike, returned



our students to classes, and set a path for the payment of any moderation period salary increases in quick order.

Your March 9 proposals contain no movement on the Union position on pay and only minimal movement on your requested improvements for extended healthcare benefits. As discussed previously with your team at a bargaining meeting, CUPE 3903 already receives the best extended healthcare benefits of any comparator employee groups (i.e., contract faculty, teaching assistants) in the Ontario University sector.

Your pay increase proposals for each of CUPE 3903 Units 1, 2 and 3, remain unchanged from December 11, 2023, and represent a total 31% non-compounded cumulative increase:

Moderation period

2020–21: 4% (5%^)

2021–22: 4% (5%^)

2022–23: 4% (5%^)

^When adding the 1% previously negotiated for the moderation period

Renewal collective agreements

2023–24: 7%

2024–25: 7%

2025–26: 5% or CPI increase+

+Cost-of-living (CPI) indexation for future wages increases

CUPE 3903's pay proposals exceed what has been negotiated or awarded for other unions in the Ontario University sector for both the moderation period and for renewal collective agreements, and your proposals disregard the University's financial position.

As indicated above, the University is reviewing your March 9 package proposals and your March 12 email, and we will consider next steps in consultation with the mediator. Our March 7, 2024 proposals were not accepted by CUPE 3903 Units 1, 2 and 3 and have therefore been withdrawn, however we do remain open to the possibility of mediation-arbitration and again request that you consider that possibility (including in conjunction with your proposed bargaining dates next week) as the most expeditious means to end the strike allowing instructors and students alike to return to their classrooms and to avoid putting at risk the summer term.

Sincerely,



Dan Bradshaw
Assistant Vice-President
Labour Relations