



Media Release
For immediate release
Wednesday January 17, 2007

UofT contract faculty file for conciliation

Toronto – Due to an impasse in negotiations between the University of Toronto and CUPE Local 3902, representing nearly 5,000 UofT teaching assistants and about 1,000 UofT sessionals (contract faculty), both parties filed separately for conciliation on Wednesday January 10.

On Monday January 15, the Ontario Ministry of Labour confirmed the appointment of Senior Mediator Mary Beth Furanna as the conciliation officer who will confer with both parties and attempt to bring them together. Conciliation dates are set for January 30, and February 2, 6 and 7.

If conciliation fails, a "no board" report will be issued, and the right to strike or lock-out will accrue within 2 weeks. The Union has called a membership meeting for January 23 to ask for authorization to call a strike vote.

"We regret that the UofT has left us no choice but to ask our members for a strike vote," said CUPE 3902 Chair Anil Varughese. "Our members do a significant amount of the undergraduate teaching, and a strike would affect thousands of UofT students in the crucial end-of-term period. However, the University has proposed no wage or benefit increases, and hundreds of hourly-paid sessionals currently have no benefits at all. Many hiring decisions cannot be questioned, and the UofT has not addressed the problem of inadequate TA support for courses taught by sessionals. All of these issues affect quality of education at the UofT."

"It is unfortunate that on the eve of the February 7 day of action for accessible, quality post-secondary education, the UofT can't address the inequities that face their own teaching staff," said Emily Shelton, VP External for the University of Toronto Students' Union, representing 50,000 full-time undergraduates. "While we are pleased that the University is encouraging students to participate in the February 7 actions for more public post-secondary funding, as undergraduates we care about our instructors and want to see them treated fairly."

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For more information please contact:

Anil Varughese, CUPE Local 3902 Chair
Mobile: 416.948.3902

Chantal Sundaram, CUPE Local 3902 Staff Representative
Mobile: 647.223.3902

CUPE Local 3902

902-180 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V6

tel: 416.593.7057/416.978.7632 * fax: 416.593.9866

info@cupe3902.org * www.cupe3902.org