

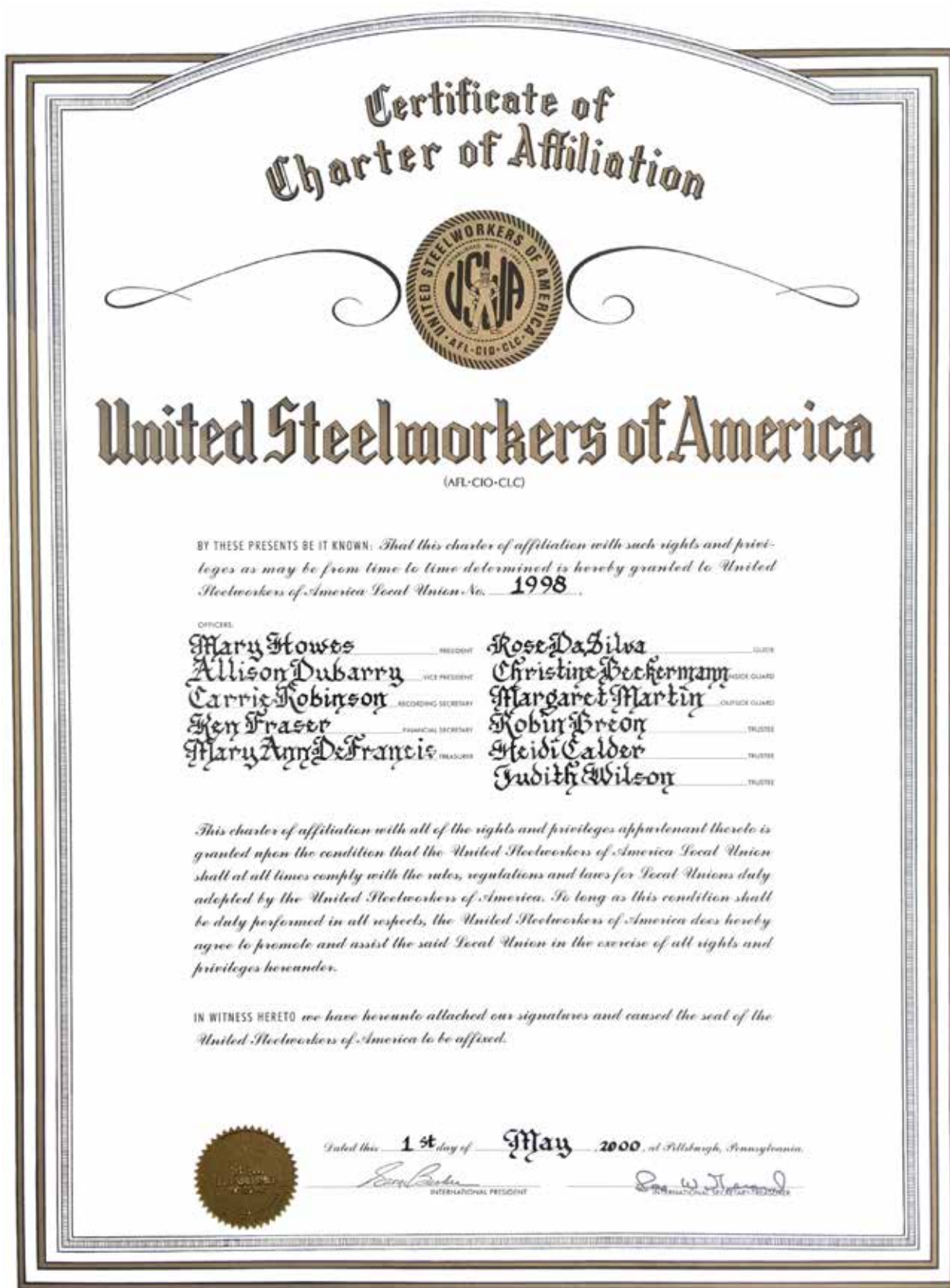


UNITED STEELWORKERS

Local 1998

20th anniversary edition

STEELDRUM



Steeldrum 20th anniversary edition editorial committee: P.C. Choo (Editor & Co-Chair), Margaret Bucknam (Co-Chair), Mark Austin, Elaine Banks, Kristy Bard, Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Colleen Burke, Nina Di Trapani, David Eden, Nick Marchese. **Cover photo:** Mary-Marta Briones-Bird. **USW Local 1998 20th Anniversary logo:** Harim Ulfig. **Design & layout:** Elaine Banks.



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USW Local 1998 wishes to acknowledge this land on which our Local operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.



Welcome to this special 20th anniversary commemorative edition of *Steeldrum*

This year marks a special milestone in the history of USW Local 1998 as we celebrate 20 years of existence. To mark the occasion, we are bringing out this special edition of *Steeldrum*, which chronicles how far we have come since 1998.

This publication is a celebration of the incredible progress that our Local has made over the past 20 years through the lenses of those who have been directly involved and contributed in so many ways – from communications to grievances, from job evaluation to human rights and everything in between.

This commemorative edition is full of inspiring stories, amusing anecdotes and lived experiences of those who have led the way and who continue to challenge and exhort us to do our very best in everything that we set out to accomplish.

While we are grateful for the past, we must also look forward to the future and envision what it holds for us. It was the English author and playwright, George Bernard Shaw, who once wrote:

“Some men see things as they are, and say “Why?”
I dream things that never were, and say, “Why not?”

A heartfelt thank you to all the members of the Communications Committee who have contributed so much to this special edition.

As we celebrate this milestone, we want to take this opportunity to thank all of our members for being an important, and integral, part of our growth and success.

~ P. C. Choo
Editor
Steeldrum

Proudly celebrating 20 years of USW Local 1998



I am proud to bring you this retrospective issue of *Steeldrum*, celebrating 20 years of USW Local 1998. As someone who started working at the University of Toronto in 2003, I wasn't around for the days of the U of T Staff Association (UTSA), the organizing drive, bargaining of the first contract or getting the Job Evaluation system off the ground. While working on this issue, I learned a lot about the work culture of the University in the late 1990s, the issues that inspired staff to unionize, and the impressive history of our Local.

We have gained so much in terms of fairer pay, good benefits and workers' rights in all of our five bargaining units over the past 20 years and it is easy to take these things for granted. Our most recent U of T Staff-Appointed seniority list shows that 84% of our members in that unit started working here after the first Union contract had been bargained. Prior to that, staff could be terminated without cause, organizational change and lay-off could be done without a clear process and some staff were not eligible for overtime pay. We hope that this issue will highlight how hard staff had to work to unionize U of T, Victoria and St. Michael's and what USW Local 1998 has won at the bargaining table over the years.

We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. As someone who came here from a non-union job in another university, I appreciate the benefits that come from a unionized job. I want to thank those who brought us to where we are today. Everyone who:

- Was involved in the organizing drive,
- Signed a union card and encouraged others to do so,
- Stepped up to run for the Executive, become a Steward or Unit Grievor, or join a committee,
- Filled out a bargaining survey or voted in ratification vote or Union election, and/or
- Came out to Local Union monthly meetings and events.

We wouldn't be where we are today without the energy, passion and hard work of all the people involved in the Union over the past twenty years. I hope that this issue will inspire a new cohort of members to get involved with their Local to help us achieve even more great things in the next 20 years.

~ Colleen Burke
President
USW Local 1998

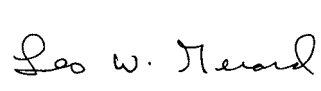
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AND ITS 7,000+ MEMBERS ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY



www.usw.org


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International President


Stan Johnson
International Secretary-Treasurer


Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada


Thomas Conway
International Vice President
(Administration)


Fred Redmond
International Vice President
(Human Affairs)



Leo W. Gerard
International President

April 11, 2018

Colleen Burke, President
USW Local 1998
25 Cecil Street
Toronto, ON M5T 1N1

Dear Sister Burke:

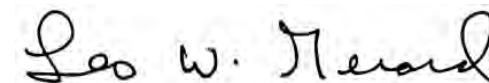
As International President of the USW and on behalf of our 1.2 million active and retired union brothers and sisters, I want to congratulate Local 1998 on 20 years of solidarity, activism and progress.

Your local is a testament to the depth and diversity of our great union. As one of our union's largest locals and as the first USW local working in higher education, you helped move our union in an important, new, progressive direction.

Over the past 20 years, Local 1998 has demonstrated how important it is for university employees to have access to collective bargaining—and how powerful they can be when they speak with a unified voice.

We wish you and all our members in Local 1998 the best as you celebrate this important milestone in your local's history and eagerly anticipate the great strides you'll make in your next 20 years.

In solidarity,



Leo W. Gerard
International President

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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Ken Neumann
National Director/ Directeur national

20 Years Strong! USW Local 1998 1998 - 2018

It began two decades ago with a grassroots campaign by women and men who were determined to assert their rights and demand that their work be properly recognized, respected and valued.

Since joining the United Steelworkers in 1998, staff members at the University of Toronto have made tremendous gains in improving working and living standards, defending retirement security and ensuring fairness for all.

USW Local 1998 has become a model for university organizing and continues to make immense contributions to our great union, helping to build a stronger, more diverse and progressive labour movement at local, national and international levels.

Congratulations to USW Local 1998 and your members for 20 years of commitment to workers' rights and a strong labour movement.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann
USW National Director for Canada

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union
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USW Canadian National Director

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USW Local 1998 20 Years of Solidarity and Achievement 1998 - 2018

It is an honour and privilege to salute United Steelworkers Local 1998 for 20 years of remarkable activism on behalf of your members, your community and the labour movement.

Staff members at the University of Toronto joined the United Steelworkers in 1998 to give themselves a real voice in all matters affecting them in their workplace.

For two decades, USW Local 1998 and your members have overcome daunting challenges and made great strides in improving working conditions, ensuring fairness and dignity for workers and making your university a better place for all.

On the occasion of your 20th anniversary I salute United Steelworkers Local 1998 for your outstanding record of solidarity and achievement for your members and all working people.

In solidarity,



Marty Warren
USW District 6 Director

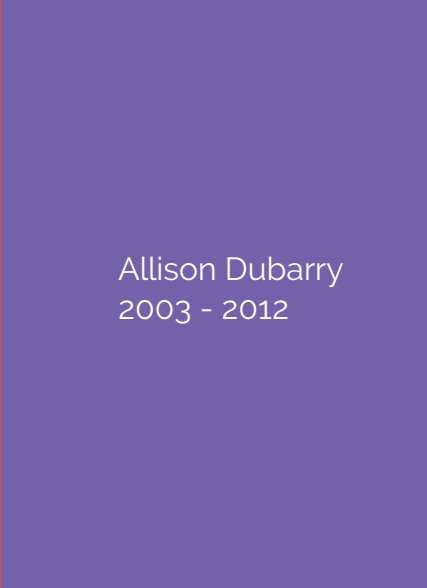


Perspectives:

Our presidents' reflections



Mary Howes
2000 - 2003



Allison Dubarry
2003 - 2012

What were the main challenges you faced during your term?

The whole process of setting up a local union office was challenging because we were doing it for the first time. Everything was new to us. The educational part of this job was very demanding because so many people had to be trained to do their job correctly – finance, grievance, stewards, etc. Then there was physically setting up of the office so we could communicate with our members. Next was making sure that all of the University's faculties and the HR generalists interpreted the language of the agreement in the context it was negotiated.

The committees had to be set up, and members selected to chair those committees, with the intent of getting members interested enough to get involved. It was, of course, a huge job getting members to attend the monthly meetings. Their attendance at these meetings was essential to getting the Local up and running because all of the rules and regulations concerning finances, training, grievances, health and safety were discussed and voted upon at those meetings. Even in the early days of running the Local office, the most important challenge was getting members to understand that they had the right to air their grievances without fear of reprisal, so that they could really confide in their stewards and grievance committee, and that the Local was there to work on their behalf.

What are you most proud of?

I'm most proud that we actually built a very strong Local. I'm proud that we were able to negotiate very strong collective agreements where everyone got at least something in the new contract. And, that we put in place a very strong grievance procedure and won practically every grievance that was put forward. In our first year we had over 200 grievances, and we won most of them. Our mediation and arbitration cases were also a success. Because we didn't have bumping rights in the collective agreement, we negotiated a redeployment pool for our members who were laid off. I was also very proud of my involvement with helping Marg Carter organize the University of Guelph [support staff]. Guelph is now represented by Steel.

What advice do you have for members who want to get more involved in the Union?

If you are interested in getting more involved in the Local Union, the first thing you have to do is make sure you attend every monthly membership meeting of the Local. That is the only way you are going to meet your executive and find out what they are putting forward for the members to vote on. Exercise your right by voicing your concerns and voting on whatever is on the agenda. If educational courses are offered, sign up for them. Also, if you are interested in a specific committee, make sure you attend those committee meetings as well. Put forward your ideas and see how receptive other members are to your ideas. If a position becomes vacant at either the executive or committee level, put your name forward for it. -MH

What were the main challenges you faced during your term?

Transforming the Local into a vibrant, responsive and member-driven local that advocated for members only a short while after the certification vote in which about 40% of staff had voted against certification was a challenge. There were many important projects, including improving two-way communication with members, and developing a strategy to prioritize these projects was key to ensuring that progress was made.

I implemented annual needs assessment surveys where members were able to provide feedback on issues important to them. Lunch-time Local meetings, teleconferencing them so that Mississauga Campus (UTM) and Scarborough Campus (UTSC) were able to participate, and committee meetings were set up so that members would have opportunities to participate and be heard.

Job Evaluation and Pay Equity was the largest project we had, and it impacted every member of the Local, delivering tens of millions of dollars in retroactive and future pay to members. Our Local is 70% female and addressing inequities in pay was crucial as it affected members during their working lives and resulted in smaller pensions.

We saw that other pay equity projects often resulted in less than ideal results, with members being pitted against one another if the project was strictly pay-equity. After the agreement was signed, we

worked with the University on a project to address the ratings of IT jobs and were able to successfully resolve several issues that affected hundreds of jobs. The project had to be one that had support of both the Union and University as the system was going to be in place for the long term, affecting the pay of many members, so there were often challenges in negotiating a result that both parties felt was fair.

Bringing transparency to the process of evaluating jobs, with members having their union involved in this process as well, was important to ensuring fairness. Prior to the Job Evaluation project it was very difficult for members to have their jobs reclassified and the results were often inconsistent. The new agreement included a process for job reclassification.

Employment equity was another project that we started work on, and it's one that needs to become an important project for the Local as our Local is very diverse and the Union can be the advocate for members on employment-equity issues. -AD



Paul Tsang
2012 - 2015



Colleen Burke
2015 - present

What are you most proud of?

I worked a lot on re-engagement, trying to get more Local members active. I also tried to get our Local more active in the wider labour movement (Toronto and York Region Labour Council, USW District 6, other university locals and UNITE, the union representing staff at universities in the U.K.). You never know which of your efforts will make a change, so you must keep at it, building relationships, making connections and making the Local physically present and engaged.

At the Local, we were there when members needed us. Even though there were some victories that had to remain confidential, I know we have made a significant difference in the lives of members. That was certainly a very rewarding part of the work for me.

What advice do you have for members who want to get more involved in the Union?

Do it! If you are looking for a 'right' time, you will always find something that might make you think it's not the right time (e.g., too much work, too much school, kids, not confident enough, not experienced enough, it's Monday (never on a Monday), etc.). There's never a 'wrong' time to get involved! Do what you can, try something new, learn, share with others, and then repeat until you've achieved social justice for all!

What would you like to see the Local achieve in the next 20 years?

In 20 years, many of the people reading this will have retired or moved on to other jobs outside the Local. I think, at that time, the Local will still be negotiating wages and benefits, and there will be engagement with some form of health and safety and grievance protocols.

But will we see an end to wage discrimination? Will we have 'reconciliation' with Indigenous peoples? Will there be an end to anti-Blackness? Will we live in harmony with one another, with other animals and with the environment?

If you don't think that this is the work of the Local, then whose work is it?

If we can imagine a better world, then we can work to create the material conditions necessary to achieve it, both locally and beyond. -PT

What were the main challenges you faced during your term?

I think the main challenge was having to get up to speed very quickly on a wide variety of issues. I had been involved in the Union as a past Executive member and a steward, so I had a good general sense of the Union's activities, member services and how the office was run. Shortly after taking office we were negotiating a new Job Evaluation maintenance protocol and I was participating in province-wide discussions about the proposed new pension plan, so there was a very steep learning curve and a lot of weekend reading!

What advice do you have for members who want to get more involved in the Union?

Go for it! There are so many different ways to get involved without making a big time commitment. Come out to a lunchtime meetings or lunch and learn. Take a course or attend a conference. Volunteer to help at an event. Our committees are always looking for people with ideas and energy. If you've ever thought "the Union should be doing X," then give us a call or email and help us to do it. Participating in the Union can be a great way to meet new people, gain new skills, make a difference in your workplace and have fun.

Who were your mentors?

I've been very lucky to have had a number of mentors in the Union. Allison Dubarry was very welcoming to me as a new member and encouraged me to get involved in Women of Steel and hired me to work on the Job Evaluation Committee. Monique McNaughton was a co-worker of mine and an experienced union steward. I learned so much from her in my job at Innovations and Partnerships, and as a union representative. "What would Monique do?" is a question I often ask myself in different situations. I learned a great deal from Paul Tsang when I was on the 2014 Bargaining Committee. He recommended me for the USW Leadership Scholarship Program and that really gave me the confidence to feel that I could step up and run for President. Every day I learn something from Omero Landi, our amazing, dedicated and experienced USW Staff Representative. -CB

USW Local 1998

Executive Committees 2000 – Present

2000

President: Mary Howes
Vice President: Allison Dubarry
Recording Secretary: Carrie Robinson
Financial Secretary: Ken Fraser
Treasurer: Mary Ann De Francis
Trustees: Robin Breon, Judith Wilson, Heidi Calder
Guards: Christine Beckermann, Margaret Martin
Guide: Rose da Silva
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: Laurel-Ann Finn
Casual Unit President: Alfredo Chow

2003

President: Allison Dubarry
Vice President: Robin Breon
Recording Secretary: Christine Beckermann
Financial Secretary: Marjorie Bhola-Swami
Treasurer: Mary Ann DeFrancis, Ron Wener
Trustees: Ana Sapp, Robert Chernecky, Lillian Lança
Guards: Lee Jeffrey, Marcella Bollers
Guide: Linda Oliver
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: David Johnson
Casual Unit President: Charles Kernerman

2006

President: Allison Dubarry
Vice President: Robin Breon
Recording Secretary: Christine Beckermann
Financial Secretary: Marjorie Bhola-Swami, Linda Wilding
Treasurer: Lee Jeffrey
Trustees: Marcella Bollers, Art Birkenbergs, Lillian Lança, Melba Remedios, Paul Tsang
Guards: Alex Thomson, Linda Wilding
Guide: Philip Murton, Linda Oliver
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: David Johnson

University of Toronto Schools Unit President:
David Chew
Casual Unit President: Lori Wells

2009

President: Allison Dubarry
Vice President: Paul Tsang
Recording Secretary: Colleen Burke
Financial Secretary: Linda Wilding
Treasurer: Art Birkenbergs
Trustees: David Chew, David Johnson, Philip Murton, Donna Wheeler
Guards: Alex Thomson, Martha Young, Kristy Bard
Guide: Sandra Grant
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: David Johnson
University of Toronto Schools Unit President:
David Chew
Casual Unit President: Vacant

2012

President: Paul Tsang
Vice President: Allison Dubarry
Recording Secretary: Sandra Grant, Kristy Bard
Financial Secretary: Karen Bowler, Toni Eyre
Treasurer: Art Birkenbergs
Trustees: David Chew, Philip Murton, Donna Wheeler, Sam Xu
Guards: Alex Thomson, Sandra Grant, Tamara Vickery
Guide: Nik Redman
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: Steven Koschuk
University of Toronto Schools Unit President:
Sean Hayto
Casual Unit President: Ezinwanne Odozor

2015

President: Colleen Burke
Vice President: P. C. Choo
Recording Secretary: Mark Austin
Financial Secretary: Toni Eyre
Treasurer: Lillian Lança
Trustees: Tamara Vickery, Alex Thomson, Victoria Simpson, John Thomas
Guards: Ludmila Elias, Nik Redman
Guide: Christine Beckermann
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: Steven Koschuk
University of Toronto Schools Unit President:
Martin Aiello
Casual Unit President: Ezinwanne Odozor, Matt Edmunds

2018

President: Colleen Burke
Vice President: P. C. Choo
Recording Secretary: Mark Austin
Financial Secretary: Toni Eyre
Treasurer: Tamara Vickery
Trustees: Ludmila Elias, Nik Redman, Zach Sholdra
Guards: Alex Thomson, Colin Harris
Guide: Betty Walters
Victoria University Unit President: John Ankenman
St. Michael's College Unit President: Steven Koschuk
University of Toronto Schools Unit President:
Martin Aiello
Casual Unit President: Nick Marchese

20th Anniversary Congratulations USW Local 1998

Whether you are retiring or just dreaming of retiring, you should know what your options are. I have provided independent and objective consultations to people considering these prospects for ten plus years. As a former Manager of Pension, Benefits and Payroll at the U of T, I have been helping staff like you by putting my in-depth knowledge & experience on your side.

Contact me for a complimentary NO OBLIGATION consultation!

Michael Low, CPA, CMA, CFP®

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LOCAL 1998

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to Union!



LEADERS: Organizing union push at U of T, from left, Mary Ann DeFrancis, Allison Dubarry, Ana Sapp, Caz Zvyatkauskas, Fil Falbo, Brad James.

"Seeing the organizers lining up outside the President's office in Simcoe Hall to present him with the notice of certification was the most memorable moment of the organizing drive."

– Omero Landi, current Staff Rep for Local 1998

From Staff Association

In 1998, administrative and technical staff at the University of Toronto voted to join the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). At that time, it did seem like an odd alliance – the white-collar, female-dominated workforce at U of T opting to join a traditionally blue-collar, heavily male-dominated Steelworkers Union. As Brad James, the Steelworkers National Director of Organizing at that time and the man primarily responsible for bringing the Steelworkers to U of T, pointed out, "There was a happy coincidence of wants. On the one hand, administrative and technical staff at U of T were looking for a strong union to protect them. On the other hand, the Steelworkers were looking to expand beyond their traditional base and looking at new sectors to organize."

According to former USW Local 1998 Vice President Robin Breon, three very significant events occurred between 1988 and 1998 that put the administrative and technical staff at the U of T on the road to unionization. The first occurred in November 1991, when then U of T President Robert Pritchard decided to lay off some 80 employees in the Faculty of Medicine in order to generate \$3 million in savings. Campus-wide protests erupted, which caught the attention of the general public and the mass media, including the Toronto Star. Pritchard was forced to publicly apologize for, as he put it, "failing to consult in advance with employees affected by the decision." Although Pritchard did initially hold fast to the decision to terminate these positions, eventually the majority of those laid off were reinstated within the faculty.

The second event that signalled the need for a union was the introduction of the Social Contract brought in by the New Democratic government under then Premier Bob Rae. Staff ended up with three unpaid days – the so-called Rae Days.

The third event occurred in 1996, also during Pritchard's term of office. The Progressive Conservative government under then Premier Mike Harris had cut back on university funding, and U of T senior administration responded by instituting a rollback in employee salaries of 3%. Faculty immediately rejected the rollback, and the University backed off.

"We should remember here that during this period, the admin and technical staff at the U of T was the last significantly large group of employees who were not protected by any collective agreement," says Breon. "The police, building engineers, cleaning staff, carpenters and painters – even graduate students! – were all represented by various unions within the University community. Knowing that the staff was the least protected and most vulnerable of this group, Pritchard instituted a salary cutback for all admin and technical staff, citing the need for 'cost savings.' Most other groups on campus (including the faculty) received either a freeze in wages or an increase." UTSA had to fight hard to have the 3% rollback reduced to 1.25%.

According to former Local 1998 President Allison Dubarry, "The wage cut in 1996 that only impacted Staff-Appointed staff made it clear to many of us that without a real place and voice at the table, the University could continue to unilaterally impose conditions on us, leaving UTSA powerless to do anything to stop it."

That UTSA's powers were at best limited was not lost on its leaders. John Malcolm, a former UTSA president and former U of T Administrative Staff Governor on Governing Council, is of the opinion that "regardless of its good intentions, its moral integrity or its professionalism, an association is not, and never can be, a union. Determination alone cannot compensate for the lack of power in the organization itself."

With the University increasingly adopting a corporate model in the 1990s, there was a sharp deterioration in working conditions at U of T. Administrative staff complained of problems with salary increases, promotions, overtime, merit pay, job losses, reorganizations or restructuring, unpaid overtime, exploitation of casuals and so on. With a highly decentralized Human Resources department, there was no consistency when it came to the application of rules and guidelines.

Breon remembered that "at this pivotal moment, talk of unionization took on a great deal of urgency." True to its democratic ideals, UTSA asked its members whether they wanted to unionize. A referendum vote was held in 1997, and the results were as follows:

1,017 members voted in the referendum (a 67% participation rate)
559 voted in favour of a union (56%)
441 preferred the current Framework Agreement negotiated by UTSA (44%)
17 spoiled ballots

In the fall of 1996, UTSA had begun the process of setting up a subcommittee (Meet the Unions Committee) to consider which union would be the best for U of T administrative staff. A list of 13 potential unions was created and five were asked to complete an exhaustive questionnaire for consideration. The unions were Ontario Public

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2	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 28 DESCRIPTION UNIVERSITY COLLEGE	10	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 15 DESCRIPTION NURSING	18	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 33 DESCRIPTION MUSIC	34	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 19 DESCRIPTION SIOUX LOOKOUT (H)
3	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 21 DESCRIPTION NEW COLLEGE	11	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 19 DESCRIPTION PHARMACY	19	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 44 DESCRIPTION SEAL WORK / INK	35	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 29 DESCRIPTION SIMCOE HALL (H)
4	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 27 DESCRIPTION WOODSWORTH	12	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 193 DESCRIPTION ENGINEERING	20	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 19 DESCRIPTION ARCHITECTURE	36	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 97 DESCRIPTION HOSPITALS (H)
5	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 23 DESCRIPTION INNIS / ECONOMY	13	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 63 DESCRIPTION DISEASE	21	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 34 DESCRIPTION CONT. STUDIES		
6	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 150 DESCRIPTION SCARBOROUGH	14	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 48 DESCRIPTION EARTH SCIENCES	22	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 45 DESCRIPTION ATHLETICS		
7	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 59 DESCRIPTION ERINDALE	15	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 33 DESCRIPTION LAW	23	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 44 DESCRIPTION ARTS & SCIENCE		
8	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 99 DESCRIPTION MCLENNAN / LAKE	16	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 58 DESCRIPTION ADM. & AWARDS	24	PRIORITY SIGN LOCATIONS NO. OF VOTERS 21 DESCRIPTION LIBRARY /		

"We had over 100 organizers in departments all over the University. I signed the first union card, was a member of the steering committee and spent all of my free time talking to staff about why we needed to join a union so that we would have a real say in our working conditions."

-Allison Dubarry

The Steelworkers sent in a team of experienced organizers to help with the certification drive. James was ably assisted by veterans such as Steelworkers Toronto Area Council President Carolyn Egan and Lisa Bertoncini, Fil Falbo, Kim Hume, Omero Landi, Hugh Mackenzie, and Brando Paris from the Steelworkers Canadian National and District 6 Offices.

On the ground, many pro-union UTSA activists took up the cause. In addition to Dubarry, Malcolm and Breon, there was Christine Beckermann, Janet Berketa, Mary Bird, Bob Chernecky, Mary Ann DeFrancis, Ken Fraser, Mary Howes, Jim Kennedy, Joanne Lacey, Lillian Lança, Mel Martin, Connor McDonough, Melba Remedios, Ana Sapp, Judith Wilson, Olga Williams, Caz Zyvatkaukas, and many others. John Ankenman and Linda Oliver spearheaded the campaign at Victoria University. Dave Johnson and others led the campaign at the University of St. Michael's College.

According to Dubarry, who chaired the UTSA Volunteer Committee, it was "the members of the committee who became the organizers for the union drive. We had over 100 organizers in departments all over the University. I signed the

first Union card, was a member of the steering committee and spent all of my free time talking to staff about why we needed to join a union so that we would have a real say in our working conditions."

The Steelworkers filed for certification with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) on May 29, 1998. The OLRB set June 5 & 9, 1998 as the dates for the certification vote for the St. George, Erindale (now UTM) and Scarborough (now UTSC) campuses and June 10 for all other U of T sites. After a protracted dispute about which positions should be in or out of the bargaining units, the OLRB unsealed the ballot boxes and counted the ballots on December 7 & 8, 1998.

The result was a Union victory. A total of 55.1% of the Staff-Appointed employees and 58.5% of the casual staff voted in favour of unionizing under the Steelworkers.

Steelworkers Local 1998 was born!

-P.C. Choo & Margaret Bucknam
Co-Chairs, Communications Committee

Service Employees Union (OPSEU), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), Ontario Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) and USWA.

The five short-listed unions were then invited for an interview. James of the USWA recalls that, "We really wanted to be on the short list to be interviewed so we did our homework. We showed up on campus to leaflet and to talk to the staff."

"I believed that our hard work paid off," James continued. "For the interview, Steel sent a strong contingent that included Harry Hynd, the District 6 Director; Hugh Mackenzie, Director of Research; Paula Turtle, Head of our Legal Department; David Mackenzie, Policy Advisor to the Canadian National Director; and myself as Director of Organizing. We told the committee that if Steel was selected, we are prepared to put our best people and the necessary resources behind

a union drive."

The Meet the Unions Committee submitted its final report to UTSA in December 1997, recommending that Steel be chosen to run the certification drive. On February 3, 1998, UTSA recommended the Steelworkers to its members at a meeting attended by over 400 members. The vote was as follows:

- 434 members voted
- 358 voted in favour of joining the Steelworkers (82.5%)
- 65 voted against joining the Steelworkers (15%)
- 11 abstentions (2.5%)

Steel had won by a landslide. Under the slogan "There Is Nothing Stronger Than Steel," the certification drive officially kicked off. Dubarry was the first to sign a Steelworker membership card.



The organizing team gets ready to march over to Simcoe Hall to deliver a copy of the Union application to the President.



"It's very hard to beat the feeling of being inspired when people make the decision to stand up for themselves and make fundamental changes in their lives."

~Carolyn Egan

View from the Trenches: An Organizer's Perspective

In the late 1990s I was an activist in the United Steelworkers. Allison Dubarry worked at U of T and was involved in the University of Toronto Staff Association (UTSA). We spoke many times about the problems that employees were facing at U of T and the fact that UTSA's role was limited because it was not a union.

She felt the potential was there to organize along with her fellow workers a membership-driven organization that could really make changes and bring the dignity and respect that they deserved. We spoke to the United Steelworkers and in the end the Union decided to take on the challenge of organizing in a new sector – post-secondary education. Other unions had tried and failed. It was critical that the USW put enough resources into the campaign so that it would succeed, and it did.

Allison played a key role along with others in convincing UTSA to move towards unionizing, and she was instrumental in making the decision to go with the Steelworkers. She continued as a rank-and-file leader in the organizing drive.

I was brought out of my workplace by the Union to work as a full-time organizer at the University and later at Victoria and St. Michael's. It was one of the largest union drives in the country and was ultimately successful because of the members' desire for a fairer workplace where their issues would be taken seriously.

I worked every day with U of T employees who were totally committed to unionizing. It was a very democratic and participatory campaign. One of the initial challenges was to overcome the feelings among some that a union wasn't necessary in a university environment, at least not for administrative and technical staff.

We held meetings on campus, did daily leafleting, and set up a broad organizing committee representing the diversity of the workplace. We tried to tailor the message to meet the needs of post-secondary education workers. We looked at earlier campaigns that had taken place at other universities, such as Harvard, which had been successful. We borrowed slogans and adapted them – for example, "U of T Works Because We Do!" We connected with workers everyday as they walked to their jobs, engaging them in conversations, listening to them, hearing what their issues were and then telling them why we felt a union could really address them.

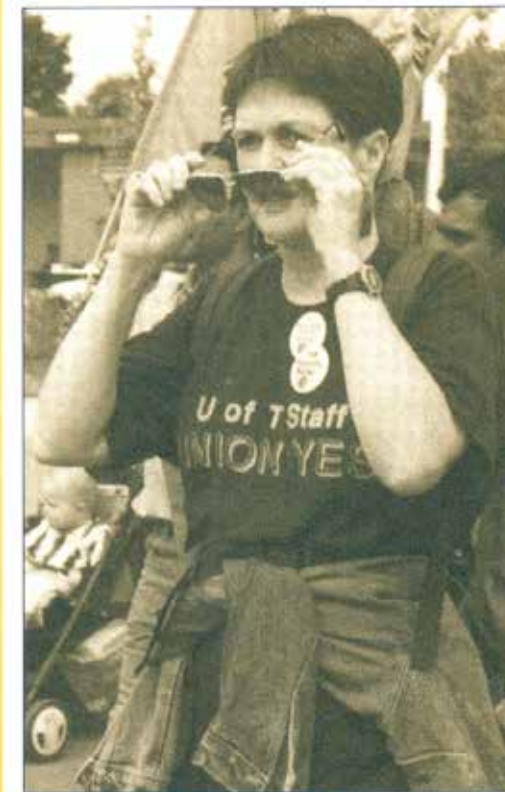
The organizing committee met weekly, debriefed on the feedback we were getting and adjusted our messaging to hopefully meet the needs of U of T staff.

As time went on and we had done so much work connecting to employees in every way we could, it was decided to release the Union cards. Allison signed the first one. It took only four months before we had what we thought were enough to win. It was a surprise that once we began asking people to actually join and commit themselves to the Union, the campaign moved quite quickly. Some who seemed reticent at first were coming up to us asking to sign and bringing co-workers along with them. It showed that people will respond to a message of hope and the potential of collective strength to make their lives and the lives of those around them better.

As I look back, probably one of the most amusing incidents, which occurred on more than one occasion, was being chased out of the kitchens at Victoria by supervisors. They seemed to get enraged when they spotted an organizer on the premises. We were pretty good at outsmarting them and found some good spots to hide. It all paid off when I saw kitchen staff, some of whom had not signed a card, give me a thumbs up after they returned from voting! One of the proudest moments was when we all saw the results of the hard work that so many put into the drive.

The numbers that came out to the meetings showing the growing momentum, the employees asking to volunteer on the campaign after chatting with us day after day, and of course the moment we won the vote. The mood of celebration and joy that had spread across the campus made me very proud to be part of something like this.

~ Carolyn Egan
President
Steelworkers Toronto Area Council



Local 1998 member Gail Bryant from Public Health Services amid the thousands at this year's Labour Day Parade.

Union Yes: a clipping from a 1999 edition of *Steeldrum*.



"If there is something in your life which is causing you difficulty, at home or at work, call the confidential numbers below and seek assistance for you, or your loved ones"

"S'il y a quelque chose dans votre vie qui vous cause des difficultés, à la maison ou au travail, appelez les numéros confidentiels ci-dessous et demandez de l'aide pour vous ou vos proches"

**Call / Appelez le :
416-977-6888**

or outside Toronto / ou à l'extérieur de Toronto

**Call / Appelez au :
1-877-801-7762**

20 Years of Progress

Collective Agreement Gains 2000 - 2020

Before We Unionized

Before joining the Steelworkers, U of T staff were represented by the University of Toronto Staff Association (UTSA). There was an elected executive committee, the members of which worked hard to improve the terms of employment for U of T staff, but because UTSA did not have trade union status, the University of Toronto could and did choose to ignore them when it suited the University's interests.

This weakness was particularly evident when UTSA tried to negotiate what was referred to loosely as a collective agreement. Without access to important information held by the University about its employees, without the right to implement job action and without the University having a legal obligation to negotiate terms of employment, let alone negotiate in good faith, UTSA was greatly hobbled in what it could do for its constituents.

The end result was an agreement with the University that was limited in scope and not legally enforceable. The University could still change at will the terms of employment of its staff. Annual salary increases were largely determined by an unevenly applied and innately biased system

that was supposedly based on merit. The so-called merit increase part of an employee's annual wage increase led to many situations where an employee who happened to "click" with their manager received a greater bump in pay than someone who was just as good a worker, but who didn't have the same kind of friendly relationship with the boss.

The weaknesses of UTSA led a number of its leaders to begin the long process of unionizing the U of T's administrative employees and, after the organizing drive to join the United Steelworkers ended successfully, significant gains were made through collective bargaining. Those gains included having the unreduced early retirement protected by a legally binding collective agreement, a bridge benefit for members who retired early with an unreduced pension and a higher monthly pension benefit through changes to the benefit calculation formula.

The many other gains included a redeployment pool safety net in layoff situations, a sick leave provision that was implemented evenly across the many departments of the University and a provision for casual employees to migrate to Staff-Appointed status.

Our First Contract

2000 - 2002

Although we first voted to join the Steelworkers in 1998, we didn't ratify our first collective agreements for Staff-Appointed and Casual employees until January 2000.

In that first round of bargaining, the key issues for Staff-Appointed Unit members were the arbitrary and unfair merit pay system, unpaid overtime, lack of recognition of employee's service to the University when it came to promotions, reorganizations and layoffs, and concern that any benefits enjoyed by administrative staff could be taken away unilaterally.

Our first collective agreement set the framework for a new relationship between staff and the administration based on mutual respect. With it, we established new committees to develop and recommend a job evaluation system and to review the pension plan. Management could no longer arbitrarily reduce benefits or terminate employment – one of the key reasons why staff wanted to unionize in the first place. Before, policies related to leaves of absence, vacation, and educational assistance were applied inconsistently.

Our first agreement brought consistency, clarity, and enforceability, ensuring member's rights could not be taken away without our consent, and that we would have the ability to advocate for change our members wanted in future bargaining.

As with any collective agreement, we obtained a grievance process for dispute resolution to ensure we had the ability to enforce the gains we won. As the January 2000 U of T Collective Agreement Summary on Contract Talks stated: "The days of going cap-in-hand to the University to get issues resolved are over."

2000 - 2002 Gains

- Implementation of a salary progression scheme resulting in fair pay increases for all staff.
- ATB increases of 11.3% on average over the life of our first agreement.
- Equal entitlement to time and a half for authorized overtime (previously, employees were divided into three groups: those who were entitled to OT pay after working 36.25 hours a week; those entitled to OT after 44 hours; and those not entitled to OT at all!)
- Seniority recognized for promotions and layoffs.
- Non-probationary members can only be terminated for just cause.
- Enhanced severance and redeployment pool options for laid off members, with proper notice given.

2002 - 2005 Gains

- 3% across-the-board (ATB) increases for each year of the collective agreement.
- First pension improvement at U of T introduced by a group other than faculty.

2005 - 2008 Gains

- Salary increases during the life of the agreement spanned from a minimum of 9.3% for members at the top of the wage grid, to 23.9% for members at the bottom.
- Steps 7 and 9 eliminated from wage grid so members reach the top step faster.
- Pension benefit increased from 1.5% below yearly maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE) to 1.6%
- Improvements to vision care, pregnancy, primary caregiver and adoption leave and bereavement leave.
- Organizational change notice increased from

four to six weeks. Redeployment status granted to members 12 weeks in advance of their layoff date, without losing the option to take enhanced severance. Access to career transition services increased from 12 to 18 weeks.

- More resources committed to job evaluation.
- Introduction of three professional development days per year.
- New health and safety language committing the University to inform about hazards in the workplace, provide appropriate training, prevent illness and injury through promotion of a safe, healthy work environment, and recognition of a Union accommodation committee to deal with return-to-work issues.
- Two hours off work for new members to attend Union orientation.
- Sunset clauses for disciplinary letters so they are removed from a member's file after 36 months. Previously, discipline would remain on a member's file indefinitely.

2008 - 2011 Gains

In this round of bargaining, members' priorities were wages, benefits, pensions, job security and job evaluation. In his message to our Local printed in the Staff-Appointed Contract Highlights, District 6 Director Wayne Fraser noted it had been 10 years and four sets of negotiations since we had chosen USW as our Union. He remarked that in that time, we had inspired other university employees to join us as Steelworkers, demonstrating how our Union activism had spread beyond the U of T campus.

- ATB increases totaling 9.82% over three years.
- New child care benefit of a maximum of \$2,000 per year.
- Improvements to coverage for orthodontics, hearing-aid coverage and massage therapy, and the addition of physiotherapy and chiropractic treatment.
- New language protecting against bullying and

harassment.

- Additions to parental, primary-caregiver and adoption-leave provisions.
- Access to the redeployment pool for laid off grant funded members. Redeployment extended to the moment employees receive organizational change notice if no new positions are created at or below their payband.
- Process to fast-track and complete job evaluation and pay equity assessments by June 30, 2010, with implementation to occur by end of contract.
- Establishment of a \$3.8 million fund for pay adjustments resulting from the SES/U process (SES = Simple, Effective Solution job evaluation system).
- Probation shortened to six months from nine; probationary employees granted up to three sick days.
- Protection for secondments, allowing members to return to their regular position provided it wasn't eliminated through organizational change.
- Discipline letters removed from member's files after 24 months, reduced from 36 months.
- Precedent-setting breakthrough on compassionate care leave, allowing members to care for terminally ill relatives, with the two week EI waiting period covered by U of T.

2011 - 2014 Gains

This round of bargaining was extremely difficult given the provincial government's attempt to freeze public wages, and the University's intent to increase our pension contributions so it could qualify for the government's pension solvency relief program. The University claimed there was no money left given the cost of job evaluation, which the University anticipated would require it to pay out \$6 million to our members in retroactive payments and step adjustments in 2011 alone. More broadly, few other public-sector unions were successfully

bargaining benefit improvements at the time, and other bargaining units at the University had accepted two years of zero compensation increases. Despite these odds, we were nonetheless again able to achieve real gains.

- \$200 signing bonus and ATB increases adding up to 6.12% over three years. These wage increases offset the pension contribution increases of 1.8% below and 2.4% above YMPE.
- Improvements to vision care, paramedical (massage therapy/physiotherapy/chiropractic), safety shoe/boot and dentistry clinical staff uniform allowances, education assistance and expanded pregnancy/primary caregiver/adoption leaves.
- Units planning organizational change must meet with the Union to provide rationale prior to members receiving notice.
- Introduction of five days off with pay for training/job search during layoff period.
- Conversion to Staff-Appointed status for casual English Language Program instructors working full-time reduced from 156 weeks to 144 weeks within five years.
- Joint Union-management investigation process for member on member civility complaints. Timelines added to the investigation process to ensure prompt action and accountability.

2014 - 2017 Gains

We faced another tough round of bargaining as the Ontario government-directed austerity in the public sector continued and our pension plan remained in solvency deficit as a lingering result of the 2008 economic downturn. The University took a hard position on "net zero" increases, meaning the bargaining committee had to agree to give something up in order to get the pay increase. Despite member anger over the temporary reduction of personal days from four per year to three, this contract nonetheless still included some momentous gains.



Members in U of T Staff-Appointed Unit

Dec. 2000 – 2,799
Dec. 2005 – 3,361
Dec. 2010 – 3,824
Dec. 2015 – 4,316
Dec. 2017 – 4,572

Members at Vic, St. Mike's and UTS

Dec. 2000 – 116 Vic, 61 St. Mike's,
Dec. 2005 – 120 Vic, 71 St. Mike's
Dec. 2010 – 114 Vic, 67 St. Mike's, 20 UTS
Dec. 2015 – 146 Vic, 60 St. Mike's, 20 UTS
Dec. 2017 – 161 Vic, 52 St. Mike's, 23 UTS

- ATB increases adding up to 3.25% over three years in addition to lump sum payments of \$500.
- Historic agreement between the University of Toronto Faculty Association and the University to establish a Joint Working Committee tasked with reporting by June 2017 on pension plan options, including a multi-employer post-secondary sector jointly-sponsored pension plan (JSPP) to ensure financial sustainability of the pension. Pension contribution increases delayed until the last day of the contract.
- Improvements to staff tuition waivers, vision benefits, and expansion of paramedical services to include naturopathy, homeopathy, acupuncture, osteopaths and occupational therapy.
- Hiring preference expanded for members facing organizational change and layoff; and improvements to the severance schedule.
- Members who receive organizational change notice during pregnancy, primary caregiver/ adoption or parental leave receive salary continuance for the six week organizational change notice upon return from their leave, in addition to the 12 week layoff notice.
- Tuition waivers expanded to redeployment pool members.
- ELP time to conversion to Staff-Appointed with benefits for casual instructors reduced from 144 weeks to 132, with evening and weekend ELP work now counted towards conversion.

2017 – 2020 Gains

In the most recent round of bargaining, we returned to a no-concession contract, which included the return of four personal days per year. Also:

- ATB increases of 1.8%, 2% and 2%, with a one-time-only increase of 0.7% to offset the pension contribution increase negotiated in the 2014 contract.

- Approximately \$4 million in vision, dental, mental health care and combined paramedical benefit improvements over the life of the contract; improvements to School of Continuing Studies tuition waiver.
- Redeployment pool members eligible for School of Continuing Studies tuition waivers.
- Additional information for members when they get organizational change notice, including the right to meet with a Union rep immediately after receiving notice.
- Job search days increased from five to seven during the layoff period; members enter redeployment pool immediately upon receipt of organizational change notice.
- All laid off members now have 24 months in the pool, regardless of seniority.
- Six extra weeks of career transition services for redeployment pool members.
- Establishment of a \$250,000 Pathways to Employment Fund to support various training and development needs of redeployment pool candidates.
- Improvements to the severance schedule, especially for members with over 20 years of service.
- 12 month sunset clauses for coaching letters, which previously remained on file indefinitely.
- Support for members experiencing domestic violence.
- Establishment of a joint sustainability committee to explore initiatives and practical measures to address climate change.

~ Kristy Bard, Grievance Officer
with John Ankenman, Grievance Officer

Victoria University

2000 – 116
2005 – 120
2010 – 114
2015 – 146
2017 – 161

University of St. Michael's College

2000 – 61
2005 – 71
2010 – 67
2015 – 60
2017 – 52

*How many
USW Local 1998
members are there?*

U of T Schools

2010 – 20
2015 – 20
2017 – 23

U of T Staff-Appointed Unit

2000 – 2,799
2005 – 3,361
2010 – 3,824
2015 – 4,316
2017 – 4,572

Casual Unit

2000 – 1,524
2005 – 2,101
2010 – 2,411
2015 – 4,001
2017 – 3,389

Casual Unit Bargaining:

a story of incremental gains

Representing casual employees is a challenge in any workplace. Their precarious status makes casual employees hesitant to assert themselves for fear (real or imagined) of reprisals by their employer and difficult for a union to keep them organized and engaged in workplace issues. Unfortunately, this is the state of our Union's Casual Unit members.

Yes, some advances have been made the past 18 years of bargaining collective agreements, but the employer maintains the upper hand in contract language that defines our members as casual workers, even though many aren't, and aside from a negotiated wage floor and provincial employment standards around equal pay for similar work, has unilateral discretion to set and/or changes the wage rates of Casual Unit members.

So, while our USW Local 1998 as a whole can be proud of what's been achieved the past 20 years, now is not the time to sit on our laurels. For the next 20 years, one of our primary goals must be to lift our Casual Unit members out of the mire that is precarious work. We'll be all the better for it.

Our First Contract

As did the Staff-Appointed Unit, we ratified our first collective agreement with the University of Toronto in January 2000.

Unlike our sister unit, we did not achieve benefits or language around preventing arbitrary termination of employment.

However, we did gain the following over successive collective agreements with the employer.

2000–2002

- Conversion to Staff-Appointed status for casual employees working at 40% of a full-time equivalent (FTE) or more for 24 consecutive months, or after 18 months at 60% FTE or more.
- Casual Unit members performing similar work to those in the Staff-Appointed Unit would be paid the hiring rate of the relevant Staff-Appointed classification, with a minimum wage of \$9 per hour.

2005–2008

- Minimum wage increased to \$10.93 per hour, and a 3% wage increase for members meeting certain requirements.
- Casual Unit members performing similar duties to those in the Staff-Appointed Unit became eligible to receive the same across-the-board (ATB) wage increases.
- Bereavement leave.

2008–2011

- Minimum wage increased to \$12 per hour, with One Time Only (OTO) payments for members meeting certain length-of-service requirements.

2011–2014

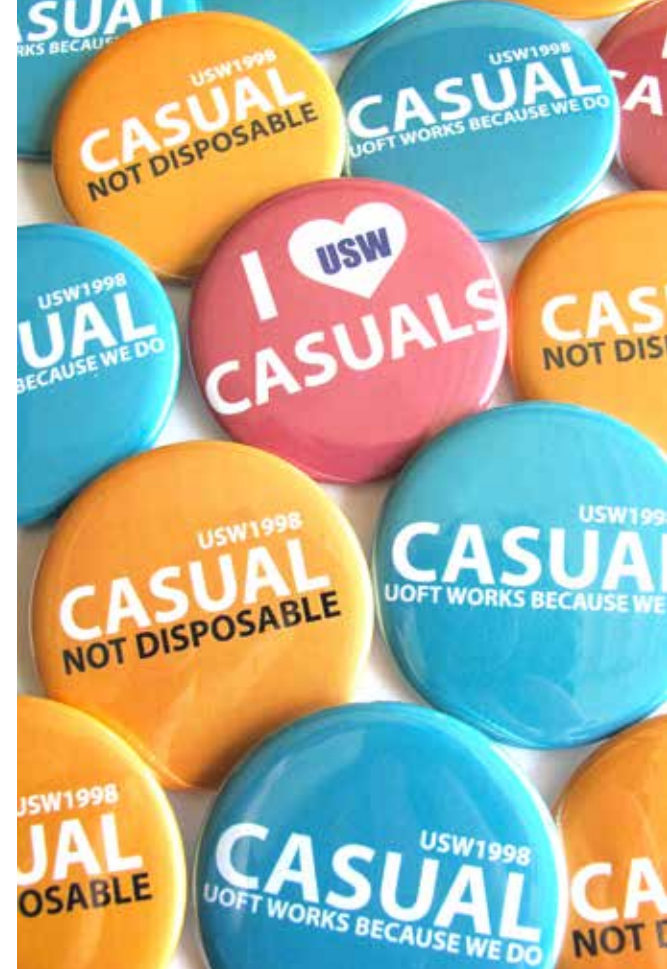
- Wage increases of 1.75%, 2% and 2.25% respectively, in each year of the three-year agreement, and a modest healthcare spending account for members not covered by any existing campus supplementary health care plan.
- Job-protected emergency personal leave of up to 10 unpaid days per year.
- Minimum 12-hour notice for shift cancellation.
- Members to be provided with Union information upon hiring.

2014–2017

- Members who take pregnancy, primary caregiver, adoption and/or parental leaves no longer have these leave counted against time to convert to the Staff-Appointed Unit.
- Minimum wage increased to \$13.15 per hour, and OTO payments for members meeting certain criteria.
- Longer timelines for members to file grievances.
- Casual employees hired for more than one month will be provided with a letter of offer outlining the job's end date (if known), rate of pay and name of direct supervisor.

2017–2020

- \$15/hour minimum wage, and OTO payments for members meeting certain criteria
- University will review employment of all Unit members semi-annually to assess eligibility for conversion to Staff-Appointed Unit.
- Members who believe they are at or beyond the point of conversion can request access to their timesheets going back two years.
- On a quarterly basis, the University will provide the Union with a list of members who have converted.
- Hours worked under UTemp contracts count towards conversion, and UTemp must inform new employees they are represented by USW.
- 24-hour advance notice for shift cancellation.
- Members given right to a Union rep in disciplinary/termination meetings.



Number of members in the Casual Unit

According to its own figures, in 2016 the University employed more than 8,000 individuals who belonged to the Casual Unit.

Some worked no more than a couple of days that year. Below are the number of Casual unit members in a three-month period up to December 31 or March 31.

Dec. 2000 – 1,524
Dec. 2005 – 2,101
Dec. 2010 – 2,411
Dec. 2015 – 4,001
Dec. 2017 – 3,389
Mar. 2018 – 3,687

–Nick Marchese, Casual Unit President

Our Constituent Units

SMC

UTS

VIC

University of Toronto Schools

Founded in 1910, University of Toronto Schools (UTS) is an outstanding Toronto institution. Conceived as a “practice school” for teachers, it quickly became a place where young minds were encouraged to flourish. Always linked in some way or another to U of T, UTS formally separated and became an institution on its own in 2004.

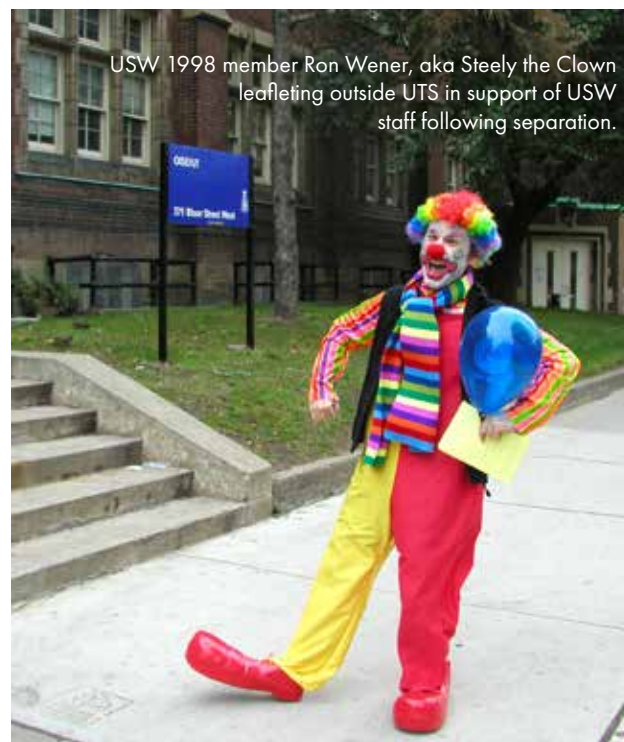
Separation was hard at first. USW Local 1998 members at UTS had to become a separate unit and had to negotiate a new collective agreement with the employer. However, the Local leadership was always present and supporting members in the transition.

On December 15, 2015, UTS and U of T formally signed a renewed affiliation agreement, which will see the two institutions work in partnership for 50 years, with the opportunity for renewal.

Through the UTS Unit, UTS employees have both a voice in Local affairs and the support of it.

It has been a mutually beneficial relationship that has helped UTS Unit members and, in turn, the UTS community as a whole.

~ Martin Aiello
UTS Unit President



USW 1998 member Ron Wener, aka Steely the Clown leafleting outside UTS in support of USW staff following separation.



UTS staff members with their lucky draw prizes at a USW Local 1998 Holiday party.

Growing Stronger at Victoria University Since 1999

One day in 1997, hourly-paid Vic employees were called to a meeting for an announcement by the Bursar, Larry Kurtz. He told us that, effective immediately, our sick leave would be reduced from twelve to six days per year. Many of us milled about afterwards, sharing our frustration at how our terms of employment could be changed for the worse so easily. We discussed our lack of control in almost every aspect of our employment relationship with Victoria University.

Salaried employees at Vic also faced problems. Their experience tended to be determined by their manager. In many cases everything was fine, but it was not uncommon to see a competent, salaried worker who hadn’t “clicked” with their boss being treated unfairly. They sometimes received lower than standard pay increases based on a biased performance evaluation, or they had to beg for sick time because there was no written sick leave policy for salaried workers. There were no written policies for other important aspects of employment at Vic, and too often policies that did exist were implemented inconsistently. Even those who enjoyed good work conditions could face a serious setback if their boss was replaced by someone less generous.

It was these types of experiences that led a group of us, Milly Weidhaas, Linda Oliver, Vince Montori, Steve Jacobs and me, to pay attention to the administrative staff union drive underway at U of T. We met with Allison Dubarry, Carolyn Egan and others who were involved in the U of T campaign. Through those conversations, we decided it would be best to wait until there was a successful outcome at U of T before organizing at Vic. Immediately after the Steelworkers Local 1998 at U of T was certified, we started our campaign with an after-work information meeting off campus. A significant number of union cards were signed at that first meeting.

Then the hard work began. Organizing at Vic was not easy. The administration of the day used intimidation tactics to try to convince staff to not engage with the Union and to vote against unionization. Managers were assigned to follow

Carolyn Egan when she was on campus to speak to workers on their coffee and lunch breaks. The managers stayed fully visible, a hundred feet back of Carolyn, hoping that if workers knew their conversations with Carolyn were being documented, they would not speak with her.

Managers were also strategically posted on routes staff would take to on-campus, lunch-time union information sessions. People on their way to the sessions were meant to see the managers taking note of who was going and thus be intimidated into not attending. I remember standing at the window of the Wymilwood Music Room just before an information session was due to start. I could see two managers posted nearby, and several workers on their way to our meeting turning around when they saw the managers, arms folded across their chests, glaring at them. Another manager was bold enough to stand right outside the room door until we challenged him vigorously enough that he left.

Of course, there were workers who would not be intimidated and openly supported unionization. There were workers who did not support unionization, and their voices were also heard. In the daily debates between workers, pro-union employees made the point that it was not anti-Vic to be pro-union. We acknowledged that, despite our concerns, Vic was a good place to work, but we stressed that it was important to have a place at the table where our employment conditions were determined. In the end it came down to a vote in May of 1999, and the majority of employees who cast a ballot voted in favour of unionization.

Since those early days as Steelworkers, we have moved from strength to strength. In successive rounds of collective bargaining we have won significant improvements in our pension provisions, including unreduced early retirement with a bridge benefit and a higher monthly pension benefit through changes to the calculation formula. We enjoy better sick leave, job security, maternity leave, health-care benefits, parental leave and bereavement leave. We now have a child care benefit plan and a self-funded leave plan. There is also an anti-harassment policy, a harassment complaint process and a legally binding grievance procedure to use when the University violates provisions of the collective agreement.

There is no doubt that we are stronger now than ever before. The success we achieved in our latest round of collective bargaining is proof of that. Our strength comes in part from being part of an international union that has many times provided us with the resources necessary to succeed. It also comes from being able to draw on support from the other units of our Local and the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council. Above all else, we derive our strength from working together to create an effective voice for ourselves in the Vic community. As a union we play an active role in determining the terms and conditions of our employment.

~ John Ankenman
Victoria University Unit President

no consistency in the application of rules or guidelines, lack of equity and the lack of any meaningful input into decision-making affecting them.

Encouraged by their colleagues' success at U of T and staring at the imminent dissolution of the U of T Staff Association, administrative staff at St. Mike's launched their certification drive in the winter of 1999. The certification drive was led by Steelworkers stalwarts such as Brando Paris, Carolyn Egan and Tom Walsh, with the support of Brad James, National Director of Organizing. On the staff side, Dave Johnson was the driving force behind certification.

A mere four months after the drive began, the certification vote was held in April 1999 and members voted to join the Steelworkers.

Negotiation for a new contract was the next logical step. However, the St. Mike's administration dragged its feet until the spring of 2000 when an impasse was reached. Fed up, angry and upset, St. Mike's Steelworkers convened a meeting of the unit on May 4, 2000. In a daring move, members voted to give their negotiating committee an 84% strike mandate – the first ever strike mandate in the short history of the Steelworkers at U of T. They were in a legal strike position at midnight, May 6, 2000. The strike mandate was a stark wake-up call and got things moving. The Ministry of Labour intervened and set a mediation meeting for May 17. The negotiating team and St. Mike's administration met until the wee hours of the next morning. A Memorandum of Settlement was reached. Two weeks later, on May 29, St. Mike's Steelworkers ratified their first contract with a resounding 97% 'Yes' vote.

Laurel-Ann Finn was acclaimed as the first Unit President and Guillermo Mejia was acclaimed as the first Unit Grievor for St. Mike's in 2000. Johnson became Unit President in 2003. Steven Koschuk is the current Unit President, having assumed the position in 2012 when Johnson retired. Manda Vrkljan is the current Unit Secretary and Steven Craig is the Unit Grievor.



Morteza Memari (left) and Dave Johnson, St. Mike's



USW Local
4120 is proud to
celebrate with
Local 1998 on your 20th
Anniversary. We look forward to
working together for the next 20
years and beyond.

Celebrating 20 Years of Solidarity at the University of Toronto



John Ankenman, Linda Oliver, and Omero Landi

St. Mike's Led the Way with the First-Ever Strike Mandate in 2000

After watching the Steelworkers organize at the University of Toronto in 1998, administrative staff at St. Michael's College took it upon themselves to begin a certification drive. Although St. Mike's is nominally an 'independent' university with its own separate administrative structure, it was clear that the issues faced by administrative staff at St. Mike's were very similar to those faced by administrative staff at U of T: lack of job security,



What the Union Means to Me

“The Union has provided me with more than just material gains and a decent living standard – it’s provided me with a sense of community. ”

~Kristy Bard
USW Local 1998 member since 2008

It is a testament to the dedication and negotiating skills of all the members who have served on our bargaining committees over the years that we were able to achieve all these gains without having to go on strike or resort to job action. It is also thanks to all our members who have ever supported our bargaining committees by voting yes in a strike mandate, and the incredible support we’ve received in every round of bargaining from our staff representatives and USW National Office staff. Although I have never served on a bargaining committee, I have had the privilege of enforcing these gains since 2009 when I became a Steward, and since January 2017 when I became a Grievance Officer.

In 1998, when USW Local 1998 was organized, I was 15 years old, plotting about how acceptance to university would be my ticket out of the town I hated. The only things I really knew back then was that I wanted to move to Toronto, Nike was evil, and worker exploitation, injustice, and inequality made me really mad.

Soon I discovered getting accepted to university wasn’t just my ticket to Toronto. As a post-secondary student, I qualified for a summer job at Union Gas where my step-dad worked. It was my first union job, and it was such a remarkable difference from the jobs I had previously worked in farm fields, as

a janitor and in housekeeping. In 2003, just before completing my degree at York University, my mentor asked me what my post-graduation plan was. My response: “Get a union job.”

It took me a few years to get that union job. First I moved to Vancouver, where I worked as a Financial Administrator for a small community college. In contemplating whether to return to Toronto, seeing the salary range for U of T jobs and realizing I was qualified for them convinced me. I returned to Toronto in 2005 and had my first U of T interview. When parting, one of interviewers shook my hand, saying he hoped to see me again one day. I interpreted it as “you aren’t getting this job, but keep trying.” Instead I got a temp job working for the Ontario Public Service in the Ministry of the Attorney General.

That became a permanent position, but I was frustrated in my attempts to get involved with the Union there and my participation in a so-called “justice” system where whoever can afford the best lawyer wins. I started applying to U of T positions again very aggressively in 2007, thinking I’d rather work at an institution focused on improving people’s lives through education and research rather than destroying them through litigation. I probably applied to around 50 positions before I finally got called for my second U of T interview.

This time, I got an offer, starting as the Chair’s Assistant in Anthropology in January 2008, at the age of 25.

In my 10 years here, I have directly benefited from these gains in so many ways. Most substantially through job evaluation. In 2011, my position went from 06N to payband 10, and I received thousands of dollars in retro pay. Tuition waivers have meant my partner finished his undergraduate degree, which never would have happened if I didn’t work here. He excelled and went on to complete a master’s degree. I’ll be convocating with my second undergraduate degree this June. Every two years we get new glasses, every six months we get dental cleaning, and every month I get to enjoy some massage therapy.

The Union has provided me with more than just material gains and a decent living standard though – it’s provided me with a sense of community. When I started here, I was so happy to see my letter of offer included information about attending my Union orientation. I immediately got on the Union listserv and received notification of monthly meetings.

I remember my first meeting, I got up and raised a motion that we support TTC workers who were at the time on the verge of striking. In planning to participate in a political demonstration, John Ankenman suggested I take a Union flag back to

my office before meeting up at the demo later on.

I had to remind him I probably shouldn’t be bringing any Union flags into the office until I completed my probation. That’s an indication of just how quickly I became engaged in the work of this Local, in large part because of how welcoming other Union activists were.

It hasn’t all been fun times though, and I think it’s important that we commemorate both the challenges and the victories. Serving on the Executive as the Recording Secretary during the tumultuous period in 2014–15 when our Local was put under administration was particularly difficult. But we got through that and are now a much stronger Local for it.

Writing this article has given me a renewed appreciation for everything this Union has provided me with. I hope you experience the same appreciation reading it – and next time you hear a colleague say “what has the Union ever done for us?” I hope you will show them this article! Not satisfied with these gains? Then step up and put your name forward to serve on our next bargaining committee to help ensure the next 20 years are even better.

~ Kristy Bard
Grievance Officer

Daina Z. Green
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The Way We Were

1998

Twenty years seem like a long time ago...

What was it like in 1998? Was life much simpler back then? Did people mean 1998 when they talked about the "good old days"?

Steeldrum reached back in time to see what life was like in 1998 – in politics, the economy, the environment, entertainment, sports and music. So, here goes ...

Perhaps one of the biggest events for Toronto happened at the beginning of the year: amalgamation. A plan of then Ontario Premier Mike Harris, it fused together the six municipalities that made up Metro Toronto into one mega-city. Although opposed by a referendum the previous year, the Harris government ignored the will of the people and ploughed ahead with amalgamation. It was supposed to bring about "efficiencies" but they never actually materialized.

In Canada, the ice storm in Ontario and Quebec, which caused widespread power outages, was the big news at the beginning of the year. The dollar plunged to an all-time low of 64.02 cents U.S.; Swissair flight 111 crashed off Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia; the government formally apologized for past mistreatment of First Nations; and Conrad Black published the first edition of the *National Post*.

In the world, the U.S. was caught up with the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky affair; Northern Ireland saw the signing of the Good Friday accord, bringing an end to hostilities between factions; and 120 countries voted to create a permanent International Criminal Court to prosecute individuals for genocide and other crimes against humanity.

Google was founded on September 4, 1998 in Menlo Park, California by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were both PhD students at Stanford University.

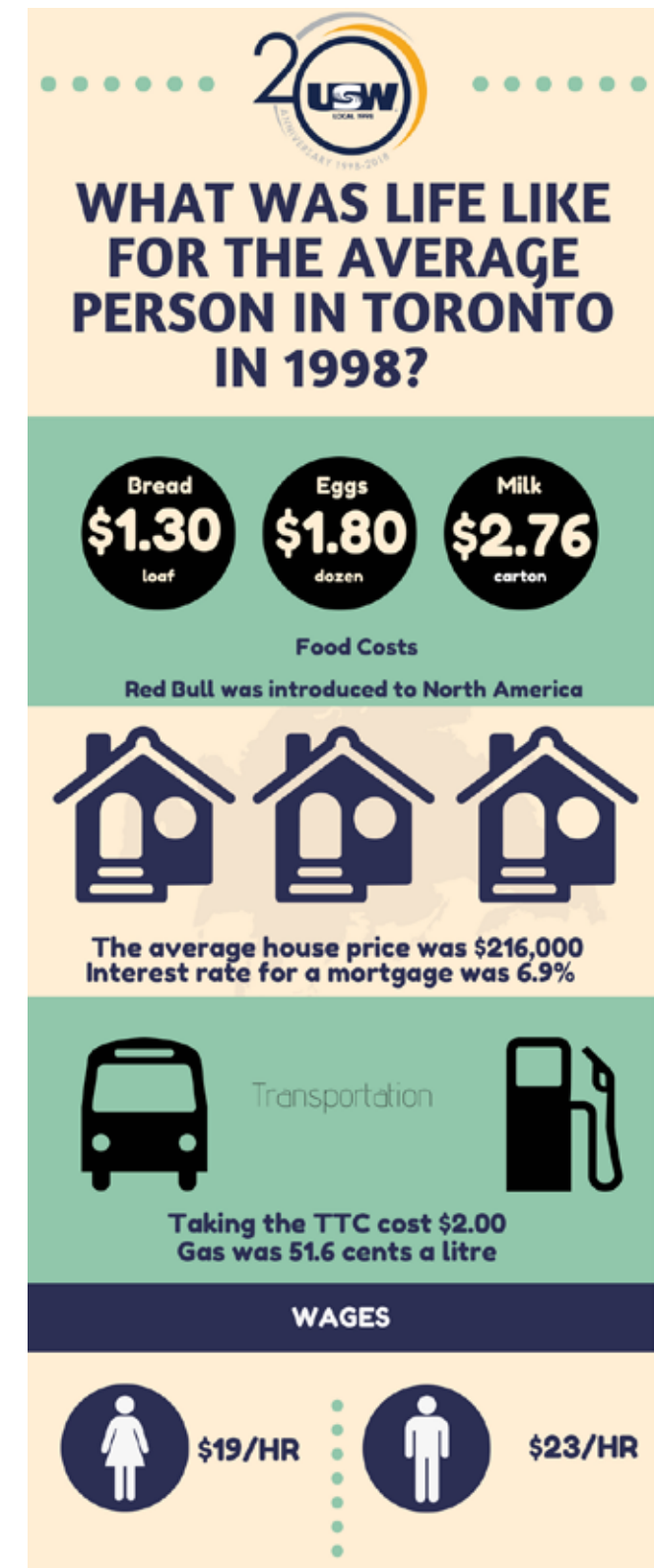
Here at U of T, the student body totalled about 50,000, with 80% being undergraduates, and Erindale College became known as the University of Toronto Mississauga, or UTM.

Apple introduced the iMac in August. Earlier, Microsoft released Windows 98 on June 25. Internet Explorer passed Netscape in market share for Internet browsers. Sony released a high-capacity floppy disk and introduced the first memory stick. The number of households with a personal computer reached 40%.

In the world of entertainment, the big movie of the year was "Saving Private Ryan." At the Oscars, Titanic won best movie and awards in 10 other categories. Best Actor and Actress honours went to Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt for *As Good as It Gets*. On TV, the top shows were "ER," "Friends" and "Frasier," while the CBC introduced the series "Da Vinci's Inquest" and "Twitch City" (filmed near the St. George campus in Kensington Market). Shania Twain's "Come On Over" was one of the year's top-selling albums.

In sports, France won the 1998 FIFA World Cup by defeating defending champions Brazil 3-0 in the final. And, the Detroit Red Wings mauled the Philadelphia Flyers in a four-game sweep to hoist the Stanley Cup. ●

~ David Eden
U of T Libraries



Committees: Members in ACTION!

The lifeblood of any union is its volunteers, and you'll find many of them sitting on the Union's various committees.

Over the past 20 years, USW Local 1998 has been fortunate enough to have a dedicated cadre of activists working to strengthen the base and, indeed, broaden the scope of trade unions.

Some of our committee stalwarts share their most memorable and important initiatives.

Committees and the Union Drive

Allison Dubarry, the Local's longest-serving President who now works as an Associate Director in U of T's Division of University Advancement, recalls how absolutely necessary committee work was before and after the successful drive to transform the former staff association (UTSA) into a trade union.

"I was on the Executive of UTSA, and the plans leading up to the union drive included several committees, one of them being the volunteer committee. It was a committee that wasn't a high priority, so much so, that no one on the Executive was assigned to it. I volunteered to chair this as I knew that member involvement would be vital to the success of any union drive. The volunteer committee became the inside organizer team, with members located throughout the University. This was an important element in the ultimate success of our union drive," says Dubarry.

Once unionized, the early leaders of the Local fulfilled their obligation to set up standing committees as per the USW International Constitution, but they also chose to form committees to give voice to sometimes marginalized members. Thus, the SteelPride Committee was created, one of the first Steelworker locals to do so, as well as the Communications Committee (formerly the Newsletter Committee). "I knew that for our Local to be successful and member-driven, members needed to be involved in a meaningful way.



UTSA T-shirt design by Ada Cheung

The Executive needed to be responsive to members, and members needed various forums where they could participate in the Local and make their views known," says Dubarry.

Dubarry points to the "resounding success" of the Women of Steel Committee as evidence for the efficacy of building grass-roots committees. "We often had larger turnouts to these meetings than the monthly Local meetings."

Dubarry says members of the Human Rights Committee pursued a similar strategy under the leadership of Ruby Barker and Linda Oliver, and they, too, were quite successful in engaging members. "They inaugurated the annual Black History Month event that was successful from the start and continues today."

Standing committees play an important role in a healthy union local as for many members, attending standing committee meetings may be their only involvement with the Local. Committee meetings were often the first meeting that many members attended who later became more involved with the local. A responsive, member driven local needs strong and vibrant standing committees that engage members.

Election Committee (Tellers)

Every three years, after nominations for the Executive and other positions close, the general membership elects at least three of its own to form this committee. A chairperson is selected from among them.

Chairs:

P. C. Choo	2003–2012
Lee Jeffrey	2015–2018
Margaret Bucknam	2018–Present

Grievance Committee

It's the only standing committee the detailed operation of which is noted in the Constitution of the International Union, and its members are, for some, the vital point of first contact with the Union. Members, who include Chief Stewards/ Unit Grievors elected for three-year terms and grievance officers, debate and then recommend to the Executive whether grievances should proceed to mediation/arbitration.

Co-Chairs:

Lillian Lança & Ron Wener:	2003 - 2006
Lillian Lança & Allan Revich:	2006 - 2008
Nik Redman & Allan Revich:	2008 - 2009
Nik Redman & Paul Tsang:	2009 - 2012
Nik Redman & Sandra Grant:	2012 - 2013
Bill Mboutsiadis & Astrida Ezergailis:	2015 - 2016
Bill Mboutsiadis & Kristy Bard:	2016 - 2018
Jessica Finlayson:	2018 - 2021

Human Rights Committee

This group has a daunting task, defined as follows: The Human Rights Committee "seeks to identify the needs of those who may face discrimination in the workplace (be it racism, ageism, sexism, disability, etc.) and work to develop strategies to overcome the discrimination. Building solidarity and mutual respect among all our members is critical to building a strong union."

Former Co-chair Tade Credgeur and company did an amazing job in the fall of 2016 with the STEELwool project, bringing together more than 30 Local members to knit scarves for the needy.

On December 6, more than 100 of these "woolie wraps of goodwill and kindness" were on display on the trees in Hart House Circle. The installation ceremony included a moment of silence to commemorate Women's Remembrance Day.

Human Rights Committee Co-Chairs

Marcella Bollers & Linda Oliver
2001–2004

Ana Sapp & Ruby Barker
2004–2006

Ruby Barker & Melba Remedios
2006–2007

Ruby Barker
2007–2013

Tade Credgeur & Carrie Flood
2015–2016

Tade Credgeur
2016–2017

Jo-Anne Wilson
2017–Present

The scarves were then bundled up and shipped to several charities, including the Redwood Women's Shelter.

The effort received recognition from many fronts, including winning the Labour Organization Award at the 2017 Mayworks Labour Arts Awards, a spot on CIUT radio and a nomination for the Steelworkers International Jefferson Award for community service.

Credgeur, who left the University in 2017, was well known for her e-mail sign-off, which put in a nutshell what the inclusive nature of the committee: "We welcome all people of any religion, gender, race, age, sexual orientation and ability across U of T and Canada." And she used the hashtag #STEELcaring after many of her messages to fellow committee members.

Human Rights Committee members accepting the 2017 Mayworks Labour Organization Award for the STEELwool project.



Women of Steel

While the committee's event around International Women's Day became one of its most popular event, every year the committee has organized a speaker series, with good turnouts, both women and men. Allison Dubarry says the committee was a driving force behind the Job Evaluation/Pay Equity project, and its pension seminars were standing-room-only.

Kristy Bard, a co-chair of the committee since 2015, admits she was at first resistant to becoming more active in the group. "Partly I was hesitant to be pigeon-holed into 'women's work,' and sometimes wondered if it was really necessary to have a women's committee in a local that's dominated by women. I also wasn't particularly motivated by the issues being taken up by the committee at that time, such as child care."

When she did become co-chair, she organized an event on anti-bullying. As she explains, "Having been bullied as a teenager, this is an issue that I could personally get motivated by." The event, titled "Detoxify Your Workplace! Standing Up to Bullying & Harassment at the University of Toronto" and co-sponsored by the Next Gen Committee was well attended. "I remember watching on in amazement as a member I had been assisting as a steward opened up to the room about her very personal and painful experiences dealing with her bully manager." The Local now holds anti-bullying lunch-and-learn presentations at various "problem areas" of the University.

Since 2016, Women of Steel has organized Wen-Do self-defence classes at the Athletic Centre in collaboration with the University's Community Safety Office. The classes are also open to non-member students. "It's served as a great way to introduce Women of Steel and the Union to students, in addition to making women feel unafraid to walk alone at night on our campus," says Bard.

In addition to the items noted by Dubarry and Bard, co-chair Mary-Marta Briones-Bird notes

Celebrating 20 Years of Solidarity at the University of Toronto



Women of Steel Co-Chairs

Lou Hawkes & Allison Dubarry
1998 – 2001

Mary Bird & Allison Dubarry
2001 – 2003

Allison Dubarry & Lillian Lança
2003 – 2004

Allison Dubarry & Marcella Bollers
2004 – 2006

Marjorie Bhola-Swami & Colleen Burke
2006 – 2007

Colleen Burke & Sandra Grant
2007 – 2010

Allison Dubarry & Sandra Grant
2010 – 2013

Mary-Marta Briones-Bird & Kristy Bard
2015 – Present

the committee has endorsed and participated in the Women's March (2017 & 2018) and the U of T December 6 National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women, 2018 Strawberry Ceremony at Toronto Police Services to bring awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Before becoming president of the Local, Colleen Burke was a co-chair of Women of Steel, from 2006 until 2010. "It was one of the first things I got involved with in the Union. I had two young kids at the time, so I had really limited time for any political activity and this was something I could do on my lunch hour," says Burke.

Burke credits the Local's early organizers for taking actions around the pay gap between men and women and being serious about women's involvement in the Union. "From the very beginning, the leadership in Local 1998 saw the Women of Steel Committee as a political, feminist committee and not some kind of 'ladies' auxiliary.' This has continued to the present, and I think it's really important," says Burke.



Former Women's Committee (Women of Steel) co-chair Marcella Bollers (right) presenting speaker Ellen Roseman of the Toronto Star with a token of appreciation.

NextGen Committee

The Local formed a NextGen Committee in 2014, following NextGen initiatives at the USW District and National levels aimed at involving younger members (aged 35 and under) in the Union. However, founding co-chairs Kristy Bard and Sean Hayto and the rest of the committee decided not to put an age limit on committee involvement because they liked the concept of youth learning from more experienced members. "We wanted our committee to serve as a forum for younger members to learn from those with the experience to teach us about the history and important lessons they have gained over years of union activism," says Bard.

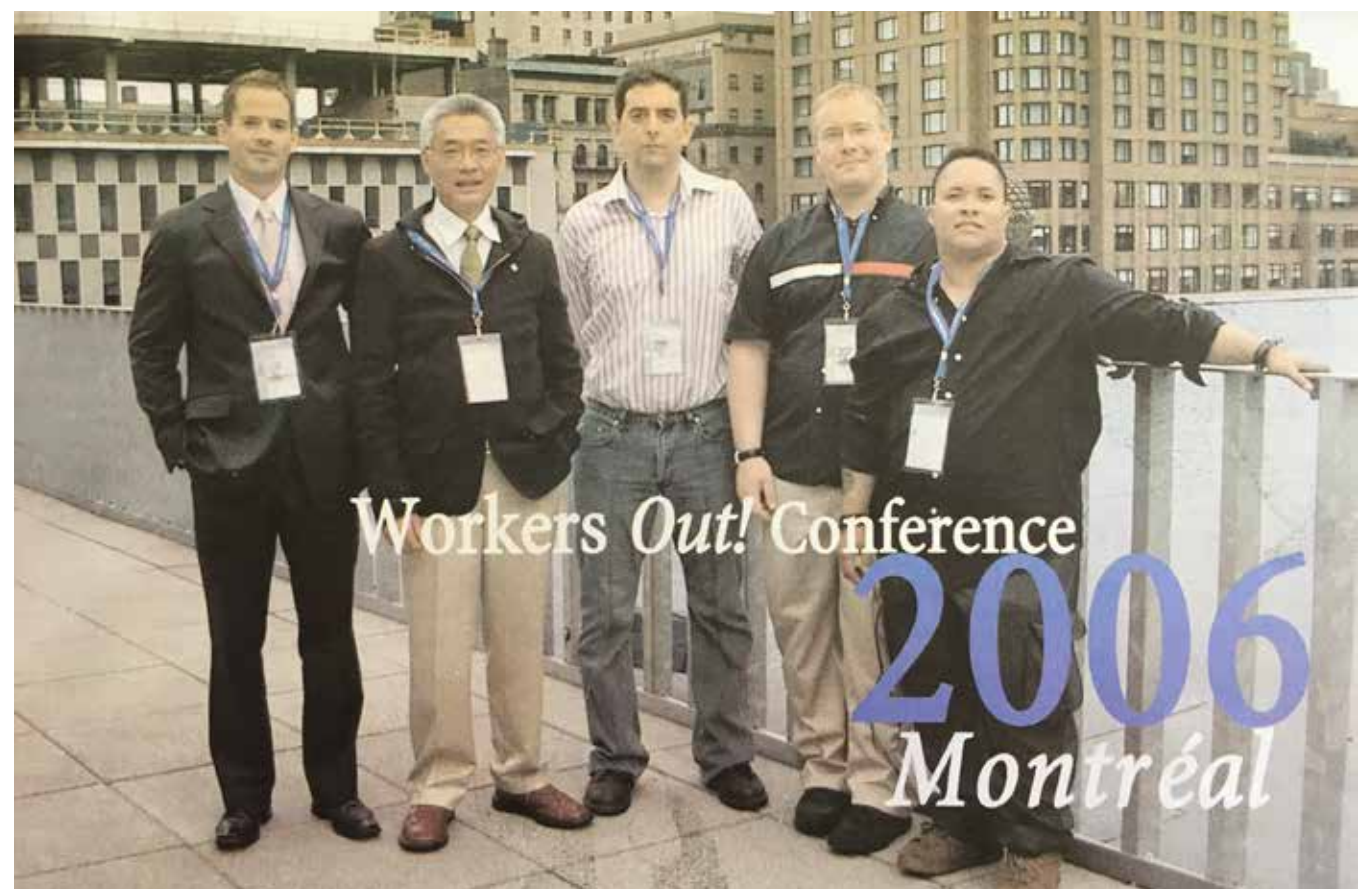
One of the most memorable NextGen initiatives for both Bard and Justin Holloway, a current NextGen co-chair, was to get the Local to endorse the U of T Leap Manifesto. "While initially there were some reservations among some members, when it passed at the general membership meeting, I don't think there was a single person to vote against it. One member told me what I had said in the meeting brought tears to their eyes. I cried writing it, and also teared up a bit giving it," says Bard.

Holloway, who works in OISE's office of the registrar and student services, says the Manifesto speaks to "the importance of workers' roles in making a just transition from the current carbon-based economy to a new green and renewable one." He adds that the debate around the Manifesto "stoked a learning process and had Steelworkers at U of T become even more engaged in talking about sustainability, climate change, and the environment."

One of the outcomes of the endorsement is that in the most recent round of Staff-Appointed Unit bargaining with the University, the two sides agreed upon the establishing a joint Sustainability Committee. Bard and Holloway hope to see many environmental initiatives come out of that joint committee in the years ahead.

SteelPride Committee

Nik Redman (Student Services) was one of the Local's delegates to the USW *Workers Out!* Conference held in Montreal in the summer of 2006. The SteelPride Committee was formed shortly thereafter, and Redman was the first elected co-chair of the committee in September 2006. He and Natasja VanderBerg are the current co-chairs of the committee.



Kai-Lai of the USW Canadian National Office (second from the left) is pictured with Local 1998 delegates to the Workers Out! Conference in Montreal in 2006. They are (l-r) Michael Godwin, Martin Aiello, Paul Morrison and Nik Redman.

Along with holding lunch-time meetings on campus, committee members participate in the annual Toronto Pride Day celebrations.

This article is a snapshot of some of our committees and their activities over the years.

Do you have stories or photos of other committee work to share?

Send them to info@usw1998.ca

~ Nick Marchese

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Health & Safety at U of T: *The Early Days*



Mark Austin

Mary Ann DeFrancis was the first USW Local 1998 Health and Safety Officer, serving from 2000 to 2006. Although I have not had the honour of meeting Mary Ann in person and was unable to contact her prior to writing this article, her health and safety reports and articles in past publications of *Steeldrum* assured me that she was passionate about ensuring a safe and healthy work environment at the University of Toronto. The following are a few of the Local's substantial achievements and gains in health and safety in its early days.

In 2000, due to the numerous health and safety issues at the University, Mary Ann, along with then Local President Mary Howes, Rose DaSilva, Cynthia N'Glek Kazadi and Fil Falbo (the USW Staff Representative) met with David Gorman, the University's Director of Environmental Health and Safety, several times to raise the Local's concerns. Through these meetings it was found that there was a need for the union and management to meet on a more frequent basis. The result of these meetings was the formation of the union/management Central Health and Safety Committee, as provided for in the Staff-Appointed Unit's collective agreement with the University. The committee's purpose was to ensure that identified health and safety risks were attended to appropriately and, in a timely manner, "to monitor, assist, and provide direction to Joint Health and Safety Committees" (JHSCs).

The Central Health and Safety Committee worked to ensure all areas of the University were covered by a JHSC. The Local canvassed for members in unrepresented areas of the University, causing the number of JHSCs to increase from 32 in 2000 to 50 by 2003. Mary Ann also made it a priority to ensure the Local had a solid core of members that were knowledgeable about health and safety legislation, and more importantly, their rights as workers. To achieve this, many members were trained by the Workers Health and Safety Centre and became certified JHSC members. In addition, the Local established a Health and Safety Committee as one of its standing committees.

In the fall of 2000, the Local experienced its first substantial health and safety emergency on campus during the decommissioning of a SLOWPOKE-2 nuclear reactor that was housed in the Haultain building. The beryllium reflectors were removed from the reactor and placed in a container located in a laneway between the Haultain and the Mechanical Engineering buildings. To everyone's horror, the radiation levels from the reflectors were found to be much higher than expected. Mary Ann sprang into action. After attending the scene, she called for a work stoppage. Soon after, the University held an information session and Mary Ann insisted that an independent report be made by the Radiation Institute of Canada, to which the University agreed. The report is very detailed and speaks of deficiencies in the

process of decommissioning the reactor, which had the potential to cause serious harm to U of T community members. The report also cited the University's failure to inform members of the hazard, violating a worker's right to know about any hazards in the workplace.

As part of the decommissioning of the reactor, the University was required to apply for a licence from the Canadian Nuclear Regulatory Commission to abandon it. The licence would confirm that the decommissioning was completed successfully, and that the SLOWPOKE-2 facility was radiologically clean. The Local made a request to intervene at a public hearing around the issuance of the licence. Mary Ann and Rose DaSilva attended the hearing in Ottawa and made 12 recommendations, 11 of which were found to be meritorious. They focused on the consultation process, contingency plans, lack of involvement of the JHSCs, and the unsubstantiated statement that no worker received any dose of radiation beyond background levels.

In late 2001, the Local had concerns about the University's Asbestos Control Program. Mary Ann and Mary Howes mobilized presidents and health and safety reps from the various unions at the University to review documentation of exposures, contaminations, and violations of the control program. The Local then called for the formation of an Asbestos Task Force (presently the Asbestos Review Committee). The committee members were trained about the use of asbestos, undertook a review of best practices in other universities and made recommendations to improve the way asbestos is handled at the University.

Also, in 2001, after an investigation into an exposure of a designated substance at the Lash Miller building, it was found that an inventory of the designated substances had not been updated in over seven years. The Local and workers on the Local JHSC pressed the issue until the University hired a consultant to update the inventory.

In 2002, the Central Health and Safety Committee worked with the University on new operating procedures regarding the term of reference for JHSCs and draft inspection forms. Although there was a term of reference in place, they were out of date and did not acknowledge the existence of USW or relevant changes in legislation.

The Local's work to improve health and safety in the work environment was recognized by the University on December 1, 2000 when it became the recipient of the University's Centre for Health Promotion's "Healthy U of T Award." In Professor Dennis Raphael's submission to the selection committee on the Local's behalf, he noted the Local's persistence in ensuring existing hazards in the workplace were removed, efforts to educate the Local's members on health and safety legislation, and its bargaining of strong health and safety language into the collective agreement. Also noted was the Steelworker's "long and solid tradition in workplace health and safety," which includes its commitment to environmental change at the Local, district and national level.

Health and Safety today at U of T is a direct result of the pioneering work of Mary Ann and other health and safety activists. She has been widely recognized for her many contributions in the area of health and safety. Today, 20 years later, we are still dealing with many of the same issues here at the University, whether it is asbestos, air quality concerns, or ensuring that members are aware of hazards in their work environment. As a member of the current Central Health and Safety Committee, we will continue Mary Ann's legacy and work with the University to ensure that legislative requirements are met, hazards are identified and addressed in a timely manner, and workers are made aware of their rights.

~ Mark Austin
Health and Safety Officer



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PAY EQUITY & JOB EVALUATION

Mary Cornish is a litigation lawyer and leader in the fight for Pay Equity in Canada. She served as legal advisor to USW Local 1998's Job Evaluation project from 2006 to 2012.

Mary-Marta Briones-Bird and Colleen Burke interviewed her for *Steeldrum* on April 23, 2017. This is an edited version of that interview.



Mary Cornish speaking at a Pay Equity Commission rally, January 2008

When the University of Toronto staff unionized, correcting the problems with the University's initial pay equity plan and bringing in job evaluation was a top priority. The first contract in 2000 had a letter of intent to start this process, but it wasn't fully implemented until 2011. What were some of the complexities of the project that made it such a long journey to get a new system, pay adjustments and retro pay?

It was the Union's decision that it would be pay equity and job evaluation. Not everybody did it that way, which is also what made it more complicated. If it's just under the *Pay Equity Act* (PEA), then only the female job classes are eligible for adjustments. Including job evaluation for everyone meant there was an opportunity for male job classes to move up as well, if they were undervalued. From the membership point of view, this meant that male job classes could see that the process had advantages for them. But a lot of them already were quite substantially advantaged relative to the female-dominated job classes. The Union's analysis showed that gender bias in the ratings and the classifications at that time was actually delivering vastly different amounts of pay to male and female classifications for the value of the work they performed.

From the employer's point of view, doing both gave them the opportunity to rationalize their compensation system. One of the things the evaluation showed was that there was actually massive irrationality to the U of T classification system.

Given the number of classifications in the bargaining unit, it was a large, complicated process to do both pay equity and job evaluation. The job evaluation system requires internal equity across the University, including jobs based at UTM and UTSC. This requirement for consistency is quite a powerful tool to ensure jobs throughout the University are paid fairly.

In order to be successful and get the necessary evidence on all the bargaining unit work, it was necessary to take a very detailed approach. This required time, effort and resources. There needed to be constant monitoring of the process in order to ensure that the job content collection and ratings were producing results which were both equitable generally, were free of gender bias and complied with the PEA.

The Union and University signed its precedent-setting pay equity and job evaluation agreement in 2011, which led to

millions of dollars of pay equity adjustments retroactive to 2007. In an article you wrote at the time in *The Lawyers Weekly*, you said that the most important part of the agreement was the maintenance protocol, which ensured that equity would be maintained in the future.

Yes, part of the significance of the project was embedding the evaluation process in the University's compensation systems and making sure the Union had a key role in maintaining the integrity of the process moving forward. I wasn't ever involved in a pay equity project that I thought was structured as well as this one.

One of the reasons why the protocol document was so innovative and precedent setting was that it challenged the University's power over its whole classification and compensation structure by requiring them to act upon the job evaluation system when they created or reclassified jobs. And it gave the University employees through the Union the ability to dispute the University's decisions and have an outside arbitrator decide if necessary.

If you look across sectors, I can't think of an employer that has this elaborate and powerful a protocol, and I think this was partly why the University fought it as much as it did. The compromise reached with the University at the time was they could go ahead and post new jobs only if they followed the job evaluation to determine its value and pay. The job was then posted subject to review by the Union. The person who got the job had to know that the classification in essence was tentative. After the person was on the job for six months, you could challenge the rating.

The whole system was aimed at balancing of the interests of the University to carry on with its classifications and compensation setting, while embedding in the system going forward the appropriate and gender-compliant criteria and Union involvement. One of the things we learn from a lot of these pay equity implementations is that if you didn't embed it in the actual system, it can start producing inequitable results.

However, embedding it does not ensure it's always going to work. Since there are always pressures on management to reduce labour costs, they may not classify properly and may want to avoid paying what the rating shows is necessary. Usually it's the employer who decides what the pay is. The right to classify was a pretty essential management prerogative. So the success of the system also requires a strong legal role for the Union in the process so that decisions can be challenged. Not many workplaces have the Union's role so clearly embedded as in this case. However, this also requires the Union to continue to properly resource the process, or gains can be lost.

So, did the fact that we had this big and successful project here at U of T pave the way for any other groups or did it set a model for any other groups?

I don't know. Many unions are not able or willing to invest the resources, which Local 1998 did in this project. Pay equity and job evaluation is always complicated, exhausting and time consuming. There is always internal criticism about priorities and whether pay equity is taking up too much time and resources. USW 1998 spent a lot of money and resources to get those adjustments and retro payments. But it is difficult to get equitable results without the proper investment of time and resources – especially when many employers are using their resources to try to minimize adjustments required.

I like to use the example of a pension plan. If an employer were violating the pension plan, I think everybody would agree to spend whatever money was needed to make sure people were paid their pensions. The same approach should be used for pay equity plans. Good pay equity and job evaluation plans often produce more pay adjustments than collective bargaining does.

Pay equity settlements ended up giving members more money?

Absolutely. And then people get collective

bargaining money on top of it. So why wouldn't you do it? There is no point to leaving money on the table that should rightfully be in the hands of employees.

Were there other positive impacts?

There was the whole effect of everybody being listened to. I remember when people were doing questionnaires, and when you do all these meetings with people to go over what their job was. Most workplaces do not have that intense focus on listening to employees about what they do and why it is valuable to the University. People feel very strongly about the work they do. So I always found that the process in itself had its own merits for listening to people about their work and allowing the discussion to compare the value of work. And yes it can cause disputes and resentments sometimes about how people are paid, but in itself, the process is important.

We've had the PEA now in Ontario for thirty years, so why do we still have a pay gap? I mean, apart from patriarchy, which is the one-word answer.

For a whole lot of reasons. First of all, there was a whole sector of people it didn't apply to. So if you were in a workplace with less than 10 people, the PEA does not apply to you. As well, since the 1990s the number of smaller workplaces in Ontario has increased, thus increasing the number of excluded employees. Then effectively if you didn't have a union, you didn't see much compliance either. And even if you were a union, you didn't necessarily get full compliance either, because some employers did the first process to achieve pay equity and then did not maintain pay equity after that. If you don't keep after the employer to keep them complying with the PEA, they often go back to doing what they were doing before. They have to think the union will always be there to ensure they will comply. This is why the USW Local 1998's decision to embed the maintenance process in the University's compensation system was so important.

So, with Ontario's Pay Transparency Act

and the momentum that's out there with the #MeToo Movement and Time's Up and these high-profile Hollywood equal-pay discussions, are you feeling optimistic that there's some more momentum on equal pay?

I do think there's more momentum now. However, it's very easy to lose the momentum if people don't keep struggling all the time. In my experience over the years, the pay equity pendulum has gone backwards and forwards. We've progressed with the PEA, then we had the repeal of parts of the Act, lack of funding, but then we won some Charter challenges against the government. The Equal Pay Coalition and the unions kept up their campaigning and starting around 2005 they started putting the issue of closing the gender pay gap back on the agenda. The coalition came up with 12 steps to close the pay equity gap and broadened the issue beyond the PEA to include matters such as employment equity, child care, violence against women and harassment. All of those impact what women actually earn. Women lose jobs because of violence or harassment. If they don't get childcare, they don't get the same income jobs that they might have otherwise, or they may be working part-time instead of full-time.

So that if you're looking at the overall gender pay gap, there are a lot of different potential levers to address to close the gap. You can't be complacent about it. There is a large gender pay gap still there to be closed.

Mary Cornish is one of the co-founders of the Equal Pay Coalition and was a leading voice in the fight to create Ontario's Pay Equity Act. In 2004 she was honoured by the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress for her work advancing the cause of working women in Canada and was named a member of the Order of Canada in 2017.

Over her career she has been at the forefront of the most important pay equity challenges in Canada and has successfully obtained fair pay for hundreds of thousands of women workers.

Job Evaluation Committee:



(l-r) Robin Breon, Ana Sapp and P. C. Choo.

A Pictorial History

The establishment of a Joint Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) was contained in a letter of intent dated January 24, 2000 in the Staff-Appointed Unit’s first collective agreement.

The goal was “the development of a gender neutral, point factor job evaluation system that reflects the University environment, values, workplace and jobs. The Union’s SES system will be considered as a potential basis for the development of an acceptable system.”

The Local established its own Job Evaluation Committee, with Robin Breon and Nancy Okada as the first Co-Chairs. Okada stepped down shortly after and was replaced by Tony Gallina. The other member of the committee was Holly Robinson, with Fred Aulich as an alternate.

The source of our strength: Our members!

Job evaluation lunch-time meetings on all three campuses are well attended.



June 2006: JEC expands to nine members to cope with the heavy workload.



Seated (l-r): Jan Eichmanis, Martha Young, Melba Remedios
Standing (l-r): Mary Bird, Shelley Glazer, Robin Breon, Carolellen Norskey, Monique McNaughton, P. C. Choo.

The JEC began its work in earnest in 2003 when the three elected Principals (Breon, Ana Sapp and P. C. Choo) were granted release time to work full-time on the job evaluation project.

Well-known labour lawyer and pay equity expert, Mary Cornish, served as our Legal Counsel on Pay Equity and the Job Evaluation Project from 2005 to 2009 (read an interview with Mary on page 51).



Carole Jodoin from the USW Canadian National Office (fourth from left) was our Job Evaluation Advisor from 2005 to 2008. (L-R): Mary Bird, Marisa Fereire, P. C. Choo, Allison Dubarry, Shelley Glazer and Kristina Smith.

On Release:

Fred Aulich
Mary Bird
Robin Breon
Mary-Marta Briones-Bird
Colleen Burke
P. C. Choo
Mohan Doss
Valerie Ferrier
Tony Gallina
Shelley Glazer
Pat Hood
Irene Kao
Rudy Limberger
Pat McClelland
Monique McNaughton
Amelia Nanni
Carolellen Norskey
Nancy Okada
Nik Redman
Melba Remedios
Holly Robinson
Ana Sapp
Kristina Smith
Martha Young

Continuing Staff:

Jan Eichmanis
Patrick Legay
Kim Walker

Our struggles:

Despite the fact that job evaluation was jointly negotiated in the first collective agreement between Local 1998 and the Governing Council of the University of Toronto, the Union has had to drag the University, kicking and screaming, into the job-evaluation project and force it to adhere to the terms set out in the agreement.



Job Evaluation Consultant **Daina Green** speaking at a job evaluation lunch-time meeting held in November 2004. She is currently the Union’s Job Evaluation Consultant and Referee.

U of T denies experience counts: Local pursues arbitration

When revised job descriptions finally were delivered to our members in the latter part of 2005, the Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) was beleaguered by dozens of calls from staff who had discovered that the University quietly had changed the education and experience requirements of their positions. A Learning Strategist who devises specialized programs for students with learning disabilities was distressed to find out that a graduate degree and broad teaching experience were no longer prerequisites to serving a special needs population by analyzing and planning appropriate strategies for the intersection of a variety of disabilities with a range of specific academic programmes. A Telescope Operator who describes himself and his coworker as "practical astro-physicists" who not only maneuver the telescope but also serve researchers world-wide by analyzing celestial events and ...continued on page 8

On many occasions, the Union had to resort to arbitration or seek the intervention of other outside help to compel the University to uphold its end of the bargain. The Union has had to negotiate every step of the job-evaluation process with management, from the questions included in the job evaluation questionnaires, how and when they are distributed to staff, the factors used for rating, to the timelines involved and so on.

STEELD RUM

News for members of Steelworkers Local 1998, University of Toronto November 2008, volume 8, no 3 www.usw1998.ca

Job Evaluation: Just Get it Done!

THE MESSAGE came through loud and clear even before negotiations started: "Get job evaluation done as soon as possible."

The negotiating committee was determined to get a guarantee that job evaluation would get done without the kinds of delays and frustrations that occurred in the past. The slow painful progress that occurred between 2005 and 2008 is going to pay off in a fast tracked schedule as outlined below.

Union seeks assistance of Pay Equity Commission

STEELWORKERS LOCAL 1998 is seeking the assistance of the Pay Equity Commission of the Province of Ontario out of concern that the joint Job Evaluation Committee is not progressing at its scheduled rate and that the University is deliberately impeding steady advances towards the completion of a fair and equitable system of job evaluation and compensation.

The Union decided to engage the assistance of the Pay Equity Commission when its request that the University provide the Union with documentation of compliance with the Pay Equity Act and of maintenance of the University's 1990 Pay Equity Plan was denied. The Union has engaged the counsel of labour, human rights and pay equity advocate, Mary Cornish. Cornish, an Adjunct Professor at Osgood Hall Law School and senior partner in the firm Cavalluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre and Cornish, is recognized nationally and internationally as an expert in the field of labour and human rights. She co-founded the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition which persuaded the Ontario Government to ...

The job evaluation project has the potential finally to propel the University of



As Mary Bird (left), a former member of the JEC, observed, "We have learned two things from our decade-long campaign for pay equity and a job evaluation scheme that involved the employees and not just management. One is, for a union local as large and diverse as ours, success requires years of struggle. And two, like liberty, maintaining equity is a matter of ongoing vigilance. USW Local 1998 members will continue to benefit from the gains we've made as long as we defend gains already achieved and forge new ones."

Our 2018 JE committee: L-R: Mary-Marta Briones-Bird, Jan Eichmanis, Kim Walker and P. C. Choo.



DON'T FORGET!

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STEELDRUM

Then & Now

DID YOU KNOW?

The first issue of *Steeldrum* rolled off the press in November 2000.

The newsletter was in an 8.5" x 11" format. *Steeldrum* underwent a revamp in 2003 and changed to a 11.5" x 16" format. *Steeldrum* reverted to an 8.5" x 11" format in 2015.

Steeldrum has won numerous awards at the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) conferences and the United Steelworkers Press Association (USPA).

Patrick Boal (ITS) coined the winning entry, *Steeldrum*, chosen as the official name of our newsletter.

Name Newsletter Contest Winner

We received so many remarkable suggestions that it was quite a task for the Newsletter Committee to choose the winner. The eventual first place winner was Patrick Boal's (pictured) entry – *Steel Drum*, and for his efforts he received a Steelworkers denim jacket. The second place winner was



Jaye Skeoch-Brewer who was awarded a Steelworkers denim shirt for her entries of *SteelRap*, *Steel Tracks* and *Scrap*.

Congratulations to all of you, and thank you to all our members that submitted entries.
Margaret Martin

STEELDRUM

News for Members of USWA Local 1998 - November 2008 - Volume 1, No. 1



Caz Zyvatkauskas (left) was the first Editor of Steeldrum and Lara Cartmale (right) was the Associate Editor



The first issue of Steeldrum.



Lori May Cuttress was Steeldrum committee Co-Chair, 2007 - 2009.



Kim Walker (above) has been Steeldrum's Layout and Design Editor since 2003.



Steve Rutchinski (left) was Steeldrum committee Co-Chair, 2003 - 2006.



Margaret Bucknam is the current Co-Chair of the Communications Committee and P. C. Choo is the Editor and Co-Chair of Steeldrum.

STEELDRUM AWARDS

Steeldrum won four awards at the 22nd United Steelworkers Press Association (USPA) Biennial Conference held in Las Vegas in June 2008 —garnering the most awards at the convention:

- Civil and Human Rights Departmental Award for our coverage of gay and lesbian rights at the 'Workers Out!' Conference (October 2006)
- Best Feature Story Award (for circulation more than 2,000) for our coverage of the job evaluation project (April 2007)
- The Raymond Pasnick Award for Best Newsletter (circulation more than 2,000)
- Merit Award for Best Editorial or Column Award for our coverage on job evaluation (August 2007)

Local 1998 delegates (l-r: Lidia Mestnik, Jenny Fan, Glenda Gillis, P. C. Choo and Kim Walker) posing with USW International President Leo Gerard at the 2006 USPA Biennial Conference in Pittsburgh



Steeldrum won the Best Membership Mobilization Material at the 2018 CALM Conference in Halifax in May 2018. L-R: Nick Marchese, Kristy Bard, Margaret Bucknam, P. C. Choo and Nina Di Trapani.

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Best Wishes From Our Members

"Congratulations and all the best for the next twenty years! Very much in solidarity!"

~ Judith Wilson, former U of T Staff Association (UTSA) President and Governor for Administrative Staff, Governing Council

"Happy anniversary to the sisters and brothers of Local 1998 on the beginning of their third unionized decade!"

~ Robin Breon, former Vice President, Local 1998 and Principal, Job Evaluation Committee

"Happy Birthday, Local 1998! Every day, we are proud and confident working at our jobs because we know we have a strong and supportive union behind us! Looking forward to the next twenty years with Local 1998 by our side! Keep up the awesome work, everyone!"

~ Sam Xu, former Trustee & NextGen member

"Congratulations to Local 1998 on celebrating 20 years strong."

~ Mary Bird, former Co-Chair, Women's Committee and member, Job Evaluation Committee

"I remember going to 214 Koffler Centre to vote whether to join a union or not. The 'Union Yes' vote won by a close margin. Thank you for continuing the great legacy started in 1998. I can't believe we are celebrating our 20th anniversary. Wishing Local 1998 the very best. Happy 20th anniversary!"

~ Nimmi Mathanda, Rotman

"USW 1998 is where you meet the BEST friends! Happy 20th birthday!"

~ Dianne Robertson, UTM

"Heartiest congratulations to Local 1998 on its 20th anniversary! May it continue to grow from strength to strength in the years ahead!"

~ Ana Rivero (Sapp), former Trustee, Local 1998 and Principal, Job Evaluation Committee

"Fighting for members' rights and benefits is always an uphill battle. Keep up the fight and don't give up! Great job and Happy 20th birthday!"

~ San Yip, Enrolment Services



~ Laurane Harding, U of T staff member with 40 years of service

Being a member has meant a lot to me over the years. I have been a member since the start of USW Local 1998 and I have not regretted it. It was difficult getting my position reclassified. Because of Local 1998 my position was successfully reclassified. The Union advocates for people who do not have a voice and has done an excellent in representing us at the bargaining table.

I would like to wish U of T staff and USW Local 1998 all the best on the 20th Anniversary and thank you for all that you have accomplished over the 20 years.

Keep up the good works and keep on keeping on!

"I've been a USW member for 2 years now and it's been an eye-opening experience. When you are a USW member, you are part of a larger community of people working to serve the people. It's great to be a USW member in a role where you are helping students succeed in school. I think that's great to know that you how your Union helps you in many ways is a reflection of the role and power you have of enacting positive change and influence in the work you do.

One of the great benefits of being part of Local 1998 is you are constantly being flooded with different opportunities to learn and grow. I simply love taking the workshops and Union courses that are constantly offered to it's members and I have got to say, they are very educational and informative! One of the great perks being a USW member is the unique opportunity to take educational courses at U of T that are covered under the Educational Assistance Program which is fantastic to keep on learning. It's been a great journey so far being part of the USW and I'm excited to see what the future holds for me in the years to come!!"



~ Danny Fee, Administrative Coordinator, Foundations Learning Program

United Steelworkers Local 1998 Members



Jeff Cook, Institute for Aerospace Studies.



Art Birkenbergs, UTM.



At UTSC with (l-r) Ann-Marie Smith, Janet Roopnarinesingh and Sue-Ann Hicks.



-Matt Edmunds, Causal Unit and John Ankenman, Vic.



Vic members.



Ruby Barker, former Co-Chair, HR Committee.



Doug Rothschild and Manda Vrkljan were the 2017 negotiating team for St. Mike's.



St. Mike's Unit President, Steven Koschuck.



Harim Ulfig - our 20th anniversary logo contest winner.



Linda Oliver (Vic) marching in the Pride parade.



2003 - 2006 Executive members



Allison Dubarry with 10th anniversary award.

Across 20 years and three campuses

Celebrating 20 Years of Solidarity at the University of Toronto

Thank-You for being our strength!



John Malcolm (formerly of UTM) with the SOAR certification for USW Local 1998.



Staff at UTM's 2017 summer BBQ.



Nina Di Trapani, USW Local 1998 Office Coordinator.



Negotiating team, 2017.

The English Language Program team.



United Steelworkers Union Local 1998



What will we achieve in the next 20 years?

It's up to you!

This special issue of *Steeldrum* has highlighted the work and achievements of people who decided that they needed more power in the workplace and made it happen.

Staff at U of T, St. Mike's and Victoria banded together to organize a union and then successive people over the past twenty years have continued that work to bargain and defend contracts, uphold our members' rights and to build a community within our Local. An anniversary is a time to be retrospective, but we should also look ahead to what we want to accomplish over the next twenty years.

Personally, I really want to see U of T as a place where staff strongly identify as Union members, where they know that they can come to the Union for support and understand the importance of having a union. Vic and St. Mike's are great examples of a strong union identity among members and we need to continue to build this in the larger U of T units. I also want our Local to continue to be an agent for change within the larger USW structures. USW leadership and staff at all levels must reflect the diversity of union membership and there are miles to go to change this. I'm proud that our Local has always been a progressive voice within USW and we will continue to set an example.

What about you? What do you want to see your Union accomplish in the next twenty years? How will you help build it?

The next twenty years are in your hands. I can't wait to see what we can all achieve together.

~ Colleen Burke
President
USW Local 1998

STEELDRUM

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