

USW 1998 Casual Unit Bargaining Update #2



Negotiating with the employer for a new collective agreement (CA) can be a long, drawn-out affair, and this round of bargaining is no exception. Indeed, the last time we met across the virtual bargaining table was in mid-December 2020, and we're not expected to resume negotiations until later next month.

This, however, doesn't mean there is nothing going on or to report. Since the first bargaining update sent out January 7 of this year, your Negotiating Committee and Communications Action Team (CAT) have pressed on with a variety of bargaining campaign items aimed at 1) raising awareness among our members and the broader community of the need to change those working conditions that put us in precarious positions, and 2) gathering support for our proposed changes to the CA.

They include:

1) Sharing our video, **Precarity U**, and bargaining song, **Bills to Pay**, with an ever-widening audience. If you haven't yet watched the video, where fellow members tell their stories of the reality of working on casual contract at U of T, or listened to the song, click on these links: <https://bit.ly/3s0tsYR/> / <https://bit.ly/3hZCRvr>

2) Gaining local media coverage. The Varsity highlighted our bargaining efforts ("Dangerous and irresponsible": casual workers at U of T demand sick days, draw attention to precarity of work – The Varsity) and in a related article tends to debunk the

position that U of T coffers are empty (Financial snapshot: university's net income, net assets increase despite pandemic recession – The Varsity)

3) Joining with other unions and progressive groups to call for paid sick days for all. If you haven't already signed the province-wide petition (<https://act.leadnow.ca/sick-days-ON/>), please do so. Also, in the coming weeks, look out for a U of T-specific petition campaign around paid sick days.

4) Launching a “**selfie rally.**” As it wouldn't be safe right now to meet in person as a group, we want to use social media to connect and tell our stories. The “rally” will start at our next CAT meeting (Friday, Feb. 19), and you're invited to attend via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/97635500452?pwd=NFG4NThzdUtaajlzcEY3UXJiRzFPQT09>). Come up with creative ways to use your cellphone to record yourself telling your story about working at U of T and/or what your union has done to help you. For those members who want to share their story, you will be entered into a draw to **win an Apple iPad!** Contact Nick Marchese (nick.marchese@usw1998.ca) for details. Upload your information here: <https://usw1998.unionpowered.ca/story/>.

4) Creating a Decent Work & Health chapter at U of T. Conversations around decent working conditions and health and safety issues shouldn't just take place every three years when we have to bargain for a new CA. The founding of a Decent Work & Health coalition at U of T will bring together students and workers in common cause for a more just U of T community. To become a part of this fantastic new group, send your expression of interest to <mailto:nick.marchese@usw1998.ca>

5) Setting up bargaining alerts. To receive timely messages about the state of bargaining, join our text messaging alert system by texting **Casualunit to 32323**. Do it and you'll be entered in a draw to win a **\$100 gift card!**

All these efforts and more are needed if we are going to achieve a better CA. Now is the time to participate; to stand and deliver.

In solidarity,

Your bargaining team