

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Sent via email

Tony Staffieri

Chair, Board of Governors
Toronto Metropolitan University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

Mohamed Lachemi

President and Vice-Chancellor
Toronto Metropolitan University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

Dear Mr. Staffieri, President Lachemi, and the TMU Board of Governors:

Re: Letter to TMU's Board of Governors Members from TMU's Campus Coalition to Bargain a Fair Agreement with CUPE 233 and OPSEU 596

The members of TMU's Campus Coalition are writing to you today to express our support for CUPE 233 and OPSEU 596 who are currently in negotiations for pension fairness.

As you may be aware, it was determined in April 2022 by Arbitrator Wilson that TMU violated the TFA collective agreement when, in January 2021, the university unilaterally increased the pension contribution rate by approximately 0.4% for all members of the Ryerson Retirement Pension Plan (RRPP). The result of Arbitrator Wilson's award was a reversal of the pension contribution increase for faculty members, but not for CUPE and OPSEU members. This means that both CUPE and OPSEU members are contributing almost half a percentage more than faculty for the same level of pension, even though CUPE and OPSEU members are among the lowest wage workers on campus.

This inequity in the pension contribution framework at TMU is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Job action is the last resort. As the TMU's Board of Governors, you have the ability to prevent this from happening. We call on the university to negotiate a settlement with CUPE 233 and OPSEU 596 that is equal and fair for all unions representing members of the RRPP and avoid a labour disruption on campus.

Union bargaining rights over member pension contribution rates is a broadly established standard at universities with similar pension plans in Ontario. There is absolutely no justification for TMU to deny CUPE and OPSEU members this province-wide norm in the province particularly now that the Faculty Association has successfully defended this right on the TMU campus. CUPE members and OPSEU members deserve nothing less. All three unions, CUPE, OPSEU, and TFA, agree strongly that the unions at TMU have the right to collective bargaining over pension provisions. In the context of the employer's recent unilateral actions with respect to our pension plan, the three unions have pledged to support each other in securing these rights and welcome the broader support of our campus-wide student-labour coalition.

As an institution that aspires to be a leader in research and innovation among Canadian universities, we urge you to take a step in the right direction by ensuring pension fairness and respect for the dedicated staff and valued members of the university community.

Sincerely,

The TMU Campus Coalition,

TFA , CUPE 233 , OPSEU 596, CUPE 3904 and TMAPS