



Dear friend at Queen's University,

March 2009

Ten years ago, the staff at the University of Toronto voted in favour of joining the United Steelworkers. It was the right decision. Since then, we've made many gains that at one time seemed unattainable.

In 1996, the university imposed a unilateral 1.25% salary cut that our Staff Association was powerless to stop. When we looked around us, we realized that none of the unionized groups on campus had the wage cut and changes to working conditions imposed on them that we were forced to accept. We needed a seat at the table and a real say in our lives at work. We needed to protect ourselves against arbitrary decisions made by the university administration. We decided to unionize, and chose the United Steelworkers to be our partner so that we would have the expertise and resources we needed.

The backbone of our certification campaign was volunteers, our fellow staff who spent time talking to their co-workers about why we needed a strong voice and who encouraged them to sign union membership cards. It was challenging work and it took a long time. There was a lot of talking to people one-on-one, building a dialogue, answering questions and addressing concerns, but that's the way a successful campaign works. In the end, all the hard work paid off and we won our union certification vote in 1998.

Right from the start, we made many improvements, built a solid and respectful relationship with the university administration and improved on the existing flexibility in our workplace. We negotiated:

- meaningful and long overdue consistency in the way policies and procedures are applied across departments
- strong language on job security and protection in re-organizations
- improved pension provisions, including early retirement and a pension bridge
- workplace flexibility, including the possibility of working from home, compressing the workweek and working more flex hours
- the right to have effective representation when problems arise at work
- solid wage gains, not rollbacks

Ten years ago, U of T staff wanted to have a place at the table with the university administration so that we could have a say in the decisions that affect us. By joining the United Steelworkers, we achieved our goal. Our union fits very well with the culture, values and working environment of the university. We are proud to say, "U of T works because we do."

We encourage you to find your voice and win a say in your lives at work by signing a union card today. Doing so will give you the right to vote on your future at Queen's. If you have any questions about what we've achieved for U of T staff, please call Allison at (416) 506-9090. We'd be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

USW Local 1998 Executive

Allison Dubarry, University Advancement

Philip Murton, Computing and Network Services

Christine Beckermann, Administrative Management Systems

Alex Thomson, Registrar's Office, Victoria University

Linda Wilding, Student Information Systems

David Chew, University of Toronto Schools

Lee Jeffrey, Woodsworth College

John Ankenman, Trades Department, Victoria University

Art Birkenbergs, Parking and Transportation Services
University of Toronto Mississauga

David Johnson, Physical Plant Department, University of
St. Michael's College

Paul Tsang, Sociology & Equity Studies in Education
(SESE), OISE

Nick Plagakis, English Language Program