

Hamilton, ON - 13 May 2022 – The front-line instructors responsible for a significant proportion of undergraduate teaching at McMaster University have concluded a strike vote after three days of online voting. Sessional Faculty and Hourly-Rated Sessional Music Faculty at McMaster University, comprising CUPE Local 3906 (Unit 2), voted 85% in favour of providing their Bargaining Committee with a strong strike mandate should negotiations the table with the McMaster Administration fail.

The Local witnessed a record number of members participating in the vote between May 10th and 12th, held online due to pandemic safety measures. “The bargaining team is grateful that a record number of members demonstrated such strong support for the Union’s proposals on the table,” says Chris Fairweather, the Local’s President. This strong mandate speaks to the sky-high inflation rates faced by members, the increasingly precarious nature of employment at postsecondary institutions, and the compensation restrictions imposed on public sector workers by the Ford government’s ‘Bill 124’ legislation. At the same time, the Employer refuses even to discuss options for retirement security and improved job security for members, many of whom have spent decades working at McMaster.

This 85% strike mandate highlights the Employer’s need to take members’ concerns to heart immediately or face job action. The Employer must work with the Union to find ways to improve job security to support Sessionals in continuing to provide the high quality teaching excellence on which McMaster prides itself as one of [Canada’s top-ranked employers](#). “We have also seen the Employer issue significant pay increases to upper management and administration over the past few years,” says Fairweather. “Now that we are coming out of our mandatory wage-restriction period, our members – who often juggle multiple jobs – deserve wages gains that address the realities of inflation and keep pace with a rising cost of living in the [spirit of respect, equity, and inclusion](#),” he adds.

The results of this vote do not mean that a strike is forthcoming, but empower the bargaining team to call a strike should further negotiations not provide meaningful gains to members. The employer walked away from our last meeting on April 27th after one hour of bargaining, declared an impasse, and filed for conciliation. The next step in the bargaining process is conciliation, in which a Provincially-appointed conciliator will meet with the parties.

Local 3906 is eager to put the support of its members into action at the bargaining table and is committed to membership engagement throughout the process. Please watch for further updates and additional bargaining support initiatives.

CUPE Local 3906 (Unit 2) represents over 600 Sessional Faculty and Hourly Rated Sessional Music Faculty at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario each academic year.

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