



Dear President Summerlee,

I am writing to express my deepest concern over the contents of your recent public message and the prospect of a labour disruption on Monday, March 5 between Carleton University and CUPE 2424, representing over 800 administrative, technical, and library staff.

We view any removal of our Collective Agreement language as a concession, yet we have demonstrated a strong willingness to negotiate. We have tried in earnest to find middle ground with the University around pension language but we simply cannot relinquish *all* bargaining rights and protections around our pensions.

You have stated the University does not plan to change or remove our existing pension benefits. However, the University is demanding the deletion of key language that clearly protects our members from changes to pension provisions that may be decided without the agreement of the Union.

We have tried repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, to engage the University's negotiating team in frank discussions about possible changes to the pension plan. In the absence of any forthright answers, we have no choice but to assume and expect the worst.

You have stated that CUPE 2424 cannot have preferred treatment under the plan. We have not asked for special treatment and we strongly believe, in fact, that protection around pension benefits is a benefit for everyone under the Plan.

You have also said that we must have confidence in the role and function of the Pension Committee. Yet, when the Union proposed that parties mutually commit to ensuring the Committee will continue to function in a fashion consistent with past practice, the Employer rejected this.

I have been a member of the Carleton community for more than 20 years, as both student and staff. I was on strike with 2424 in 2007. Now, with the threat of another strike in just over 10 short years, and too many battles with other campus Unions in between, Carleton is facing irreparable damage to its reputation and the morale of its community members.

You and I share a deep love for Carleton. We have both talked openly about the special community spirit that resides here. I fear, however, that after Carleton forced CUPE 4600 onto the picket lines in the Fall, and in the event of a 2424 strike now, that Carleton's spirit will surely be eroded. Poor labour relations could be Carleton's legacy well into the future and could jeopardize our reputation as one of the region's top employers.

You have said that we are valued and respected members of the Carleton community. As valued and respected members, we expect to have a voice, and we speak through the rights, benefits, and protections enshrined in our Collective Agreement.

In the spirit of transparency, I, along with CUPE 2424's Negotiating Team and CUPE representatives, invite you and other University principals not at the bargaining table to be present at the negotiations set to resume in advance of Monday's strike deadline.

By ensuring a positive outcome and a stable future for workers, Carleton has a chance to be a true leader, to distinguish itself from other institutions, governments, and corporations nationally and globally who are cutting costs by gutting worker rights, benefits, and protections.

President Summerlee, I urge you to do everything in your power to avert a strike on Monday and let our members continue fulfilling their mission to serve Carleton students and the University community.

Sincerely,
Jerrett Clark
President, CUPE 2424