



Association des professeur.e.s à temps partiel de l'Université d'Ottawa
Association of Part-Time Professors of the University of Ottawa

Possible Strike: Difficult Negotiations Between the University of Ottawa and the Association of Part-Time Professors at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute

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The University of Ottawa and the Association of Part-Time Professors (APTPUO) are in the process of negotiating a first collective agreement for part-time professors who teach language courses at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI) and the University of Ottawa. Despite several bargaining meetings, the University remains staked in its position to offer no improvement in working conditions for this group. Compared to their part-time colleagues who teach on campus and do the same job, OLBI teachers have no benefits and have had no salary increases for more than seven years. The University offers nothing in this respect.

Most disturbing, however, is the fact that the proposals presented by the University of Ottawa are likely to affect the success of students enrolled in a program in their second language, most of them international students, and to compromise the quality of their education.

The main task of language teachers working at OLBI is to support international students in acquiring language skills in English or French to enable them to complete their degree.

The University of Ottawa claims that bilingualism and Francophonie are an integral part of its strategic plan: "Francophonie and bilingualism, central to the University's mandate, are one of the four strategic pillars of our establishment"[1]. On the other hand, the University does not seem ready to invest and put the necessary resources there to ensure a quality teaching as well as a support to its international clientele. Moreover, the administration does not hide its qualification of the Institute as a business enterprise to generate income. This is very disturbing and unusual for a University institution whose main mission should be education.

In addition, poor working conditions have a direct impact on the retention of skilled labor: "Poor working conditions mean that the Institute is a revolving door for language teachers. The University is losing its expertise in second-language teaching," said Robert Johnson, President of the Association.

"It is sad to note that all offers at the bargaining table are based solely on a business model, negating the goals set by the University of Ottawa."

Tuition fees for international students are currently between \$ 15,000 and \$ 28,000 per session and will rise by 12% in September. The Association understands that without an improvement in the working conditions of its members and a willingness of the University to improve the quality of its program, this will have a major impact on the success of international students and even on their recruitment.

Currently, the University of Ottawa generates millions in profit to the detriment of language teachers and has been suffering from poor working conditions for several years. In view of the difficulties and intransigence of the Employer, on **May 16 and 17, members of the Association voted 100% in favour of a strike vote.** It could be the first strike in the history of the University of Ottawa.

However, bargaining sessions will be held next week and the Association strongly hopes that the parties will make significant progress to avoid jeopardizing student services.

[1] <https://www.uottawa.ca/francophonie-bilingualism/>