President Petter:

I’m writing to you to express my support for the members of the Teaching Support Staff Union at SFU, and to urge our university to engage with them in real bargaining for solutions to real issues.

As you know, the TSSU represents a vital part of our university community. Their membership accounts for a quarter of the teaching that happens at our university, and they play a major role in the educational experience that has come to define SFU’s reputation. Many graduate students depend upon the Teaching Assistant and Tutor-Marker assignments they receive to be able to afford to go to school. Many talented instructors, both sessional and continuing, depend upon work that provides no real security for their livelihoods, are paid a fraction of the wages for equivalent work done at this institution, and continue to be denied equity. To continue to dismiss these real concerns and issues can only cause harm to our school and our community.

The TSSU has been engaged in attempts to bargain a fair contract with SFU for over two years with no substantial progress. Our school now stands out among the other universities in this province, who face the same constraints and concerns, but have nevertheless succeeded in making real progress at the bargaining table on non-monetary proposals. As an institution that speaks to engaging the world, it is troubling that SFU does not engage its own teachers.

SFU’s failure in this engagement has serious potential consequences for me: I urge you to start bargaining now!