

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

Member Newsletter • Nov 2014

President's Update

I'd like to get right to the point: this is *your* Local and it needs *your* help. Recently, the

Local has attempted to contact members around a few very important issues. Those issues relate to a **financial audit**, a **reduction in Local dues**, **voting platforms**, and changes to **member benefits**.

We've sent out emails and a newsletter, posted announcements on our website, and called for General Membership Meetings (GMMs) - all to solicit member feedback and all with less than stellar results. It's not unheard of in our Local's history for us to have these sorts of results, but it's troubling when we need member feedback around major issues.

Unfortunately, since the Executive Committee hasn't received much member input, we've had to make decisions to keep the Local moving forward, as our Bylaws tell us we must. While we've made decisions that we feel are in the best interest of the membership, the Executive Committee has been greeted with mixed reactions to those decisions.

Over the past month I've been greeted by a number of surprised members: some unaware and bothered and others pleasantly surprised by a change at the Local about which they weren't aware. I painfully, and often awkwardly, attempt to explain that the membership has been notified only to find out that the member deleted an email, didn't click on a link, didn't open an attachment, or wasn't able to make it to one of our GMMs.

I get it. We're a membership of precarious part-time employees who are all already extremely busy. We're often running from one thing to another without much time to stop and read the emails. Messages from the Union don't make it through the sea

of information we are all struggling to swim through on a daily basis.

That being said, we're going through an unprecedented **period of change** at the Local and I'm asking each one of you to open our emails, read them, respond, attend, vote, and have your voice heard. Your Local needs your input, it matters, and it affects you. Everything from the Local's **financial health** to the **future of your benefits** will be discussed at the next GMM and the Executive Committee wants to act on these matters with your input.

Help shape the direction of *your* Local.

Cameron Kroetsch

President
CUPE Local 3913

Call to join the Women's Council

The Women's Council is getting started up again and we're looking for new members to get involved! There is potential for the Council to do many things and we're looking for member feedback to direct our efforts and ensure that the work we do is important and valuable to the women of the Local.

If you identify as a woman, and have ideas about campaigns, social events, research projects, or anything else that you think would benefit the women of CUPE Local 3913 we invite you to get involved. Joining the Women's Council is also a great way for you to learn more about the union that represents you and provide feedback about decision-making.

Meeting times for the Council will be determined based on the availability of interested individuals, so please get in touch soon so a meeting time can be arranged. If you are interested in the Women's Council, or are aware of an issue that is affecting women members of the local, but do not have time to get involved, please get in touch by email at women@cupe3913.on.ca or stop in to the office (UC 213A).

The Women's Council Chair, Ashley Wilson, will be available in the CUPE Local 3913 office on Tuesdays from 12-2pm, if you want more information or have questions or concerns.

Member Benefits

Updates to our benefits policies and procedures have been instituted. All current members in good standing were emailed their **password** information in order to access our online claims system. Members will also need an **Employee Number** in order to access the system. Check your email if you're having trouble logging in. For more information about the changes to your benefits please see our [October Newsletter](#) or visit the [Benefits](#) section of our website.

New Executive Committee Members

Your Local is grateful to have seen quite an increase in involvement at the Executive Committee level. We're happy to announce that the following individuals have been appointed to positions on an interim basis until the elections at our next Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Adam Sparks, Finance Officer
Leah Breslow, Unit 1 Chief Steward
Ernest Damalie, International TA Representative
Ashley Wilson, Women's Council Chair
Katya Pogrebtsova, Health & Safety Representative
Charlotte McCallum, Guelph-Humber Representative

The following **Assistant Chief Stewards** have been appointed:

Kelsea Beadman, College of Business and Economics
Ebenezer Agyei, College of Arts
Sara Kafashan, College of Social and Applied Human Sciences
Rodrigo León Cordero, Ontario Agricultural College

Pay More, Get Less Campaign

Your Local is officially endorsing the

Guelph Student Mobilization Committee's (GSMC) **Pay More, Get Less** campaign which highlights the effect that funding cuts at the University of Guelph continue to have on the campus community. The campaign focuses on cuts to education, raises to tuition fees, and the overall impact of the recent Program Prioritization Process (PPP). CUPE Local 3913 joins the CSA and CUPE Local 1334 in officially endorsing the campaign. Watch our website for more information and check out the

[GSMC's Facebook page](#). Thanks to the Local's Political Action Committee for its work in bringing this forward to our members, and especially its chair, **Rodrigo León Cordero**, for his passion, dedication, and continued work on this campaign. Rodrigo will act as the Local's liaison to the GSMC and will continue to advocate for issues important to our members.

Financial Audit

As you've no doubt heard by now, the Local is going through a detailed financial audit. So far, the Executive Committee has approved a retainer of up to **\$5,000** to be used to offset costs related to generating a scope of audit. BDO Canada LLP, the group that the Local has retained to conduct the audit, has recommended that the Local proceed with the full audit, which may cost up to **\$25,000** (+ applicable taxes). The Local's Executive Committee is proceeding with this recommendation and is implementing cost-saving measures to keep the amount of the audit under this projection. Members of the committee will be volunteering some of their time over the next few months to help the auditors collect information. Of course, this means that the report that our Trustees normally prepare will not be ready on time. The Local is working with CUPE National, our lawyer, the auditors, and others in the campus community, to ensure that this audit is performed properly, in a timely manner, and with limited cost to the Local.

If you have questions about the audit, we encourage you to attend our next GMM (which will be scheduled some time in January) for an update. In the meantime, please email the Finance Committee directly at audit@cupe3913.on.ca.

Membership Dues

After the recent referendum, the Local's Executive Committee, in consultation with one of its Trustees, developed a recommendation for lowering the Local's membership dues. At this time, the Local is recommending that membership dues be lowered **from 3.1% to 2.6%**. This will take place during the next fiscal year and after reviewing the results of our financial audit in the event that we have to make any related changes. The Executive Committee was reluctant to make the change immediately, especially until the audit has been completed. A more detailed presentation will be made at our next GMM.

Additional Compensation for the President

The Executive Committee has decided to compensate the President in addition to his regular honorarium. The President is currently going above and beyond his regular contributions to the Local to oversee issues related to the recent financial audit, continuing financial reforms at the Local, and changes to the benefits program. The Local will be paying the President, in addition to his regular honorarium, a **50% increase** as additional compensation for taking on these duties. If you would like more information about what the President will be spending this time doing, please attend the next regular GMM in January.