

CUPE 3913

OCTOBER 2022

NEWSLETTER

*Representing TAs and Sessional Instructors at the
University of Guelph*



MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING – BECOME ONE NOW!

We would like to encourage all those who have not become a Member in Good Standing (MGS) yet to consider doing so! Having many MGS demonstrates to the University that we are a strong Union, allowing us to push for initiatives that can improve the working and living conditions for TAs and Sessionals (e.g., higher wages, job security, fair work conditions). Also, MGS get to vote on Union matters, so you can have a direct impact on these issues by ensuring your voice is heard. If you're not a MGS yet, sign up now by filling out the online form here.



MEMBER OUTREACH – UNION TABLING

On Oct 12 & 26 and Nov 9 & 23, you will find us at the CUPE 3913 table in the University Centre from 10am-2pm where we will be doing member outreach. We are here to answer your questions about the Union and your rights, though we will also have snacks, swag, and prizes for new members.

www.cupe3913.on.ca

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WANTED: ELECTION OFFICER AND TRUSTEES - WITH HONORARIUM

CUPE 3913's annual election is set to take place next semester and your union needs your help! If you are interested in working with the Election Committee to help organize and carry out the election process, this position is for you.

We are also looking for two members to assist in completing CUPE 3913's annual budget report to CUPE National. The work involved is not math-heavy, but if you have an interest or facility with accounting, this position is for you. Please contact [our president](#) for further information. All positions come with an honorarium.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

At the [beginning of October](#) we will be emailing members a survey to find out more about what your priorities are for bargaining next year. Watch out for the survey in your inboxes, and be sure to fill it out because this information can help us focus our efforts during upcoming negotiations with the University. Plus, there will be prizes!



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EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND FOR TAs



The EFAF is available to TAs who have experienced financial hardships and need assistance. Click [here](#) for a list of eligible expenses. The maximum payable is \$500 per academic year, which starts this month. To qualify, you must have had a work assignment within the past year. Click [here](#) for the form and submit your claim to efaf@cupe3913.on.ca along with claim receipts.

FEELING UNSAFE AT WORK? INFO ON REFUSAL OF WORK

The Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) gives a worker the right to refuse work that they believe is unsafe to themselves. A worker who believes that they are endangered by workplace violence may also refuse work. All you need is a feeling or belief that the work is unsafe. The Act sets out a specific procedure that must be followed in any work refusal. Click [here](#) for more information about the process of work refusal.



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KNOW YOUR BENEFITS!



As a Union member, you have access to **benefits**. Benefits can be claimed once per academic year (September to August) for **yourself**, **your spouse or partner**, or **your dependants**. Here is an overview:

UNIT 1 (TAs and GSA-1s):

- Vision care expenses - \$300
- Mental health coverage (counselling only) - \$300 (reimbursed at 50% per claim)

UNIT 2 (Sessional Lecturers):

Any expense under the Income Tax Act 118.2(2) - \$1,000

This includes (among others):

- Dental
- Prescription drugs
- Vision care
- Physiotherapy
- Massage therapy
- Chiropractic



Members have benefits coverage up until 1 year after their last work assignment. For example, if your last work assignment was Fall 2022, you would have coverage until the end of Fall 2023, and the deadline to submit those claims would be Sept 15th, 2023. For more info, click [here](#) for Unit 1 and [here](#) for Unit 2.

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INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS' TOWN HALL

Teaching assistantships, contracts, and union can be a new concept for the international students, much like so many other things that come with moving to a new country. We will be there to answer ALL your questions, from a bunch of international TAs to another.



DATE: OCTOBER 12, 2022

TIME: 5:30-7:00 PM

LOCATION: TBD OR ONLINE

ZOOM LINK [HERE](#)

Join us for a friendly chat and a slice of pizza!



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REMINDER: RED FLAGS FOR TAs

Supervisors can take advantage of TAs in multiple ways. Below is an overview of the most common issues that TAs face. All of these are direct violations of the Collective Agreement between CUPE 3913 and the University of Guelph. If you experience any of these personally or if you know of them occurring to others, please contact our President, Unit 1 Steward, Unit 2 Steward, or Labour Relations Coordinator – or all four – immediately!

The following are violations of your Collective Agreement

why?

Your supervisor doesn't set up a meeting with you before the semester starts

You're not given any safety training for an in-person lab

You see or are offered a TA work position that is less than 0.5 (70 hours)

Your supervisor is pushing you to work more hours than outlined in your contract (eg. >70 hours for 0.5)

You're not informed about overtime pay after agreeing to work more hours than your contract

Your supervisor tells you to enforce safety protocols

Your supervisor bullies or discriminates against you

Supervisors are required to meet with TAs **prior to the start of classes** to review the contract and go over expectations for TAs as per our CA

This is a health and safety violation. Supervisors must give you in-person safety training in the lab; a Courselink course is not enough.

Departments have attempted to assign 0.25 Work Assignments; however, **our Collective Agreement explicitly states** that Work Assignment contracts must be a minimum of 0.5 (70 hours per semester)

You are free to consent to work overtime - **with the clear stipulation that you will be paid for said overtime.** You are also free to refuse any work outside of the stated hours in your contract

You are entitled to overtime pay for anything above your contract hours, but **you and your supervisor must agree that you will be working overtime** and your supervisor needs departmental approval

This is not the job of our members. The University and its employees are tasked with this responsibility.

If you are being bullied or facing discrimination, please contact us immediately.

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**FACING DIFFICULTIES
AT WORK?**

WE CAN HELP!



1.

THE LABOR RELATIONS COORDINATOR WILL ADVISE YOU!

Reach out to Jeffrey Cornelissen (labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca) for simply having a conversation about the issue and getting insights into possible solutions.

2.

YOU ARE IN COMPLETE CHARGE!

There are many ways an issue can be resolved and you will decide which way you want to go. We may help guide you to the appropriate person, or can bring the issue to the University's attention.

3.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE INFORMALLY

-We will bring it up with the Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations (FASR) in the hopes that it will be addressed.

-We will discuss with you how the union will present the information to FASR so you are comfortable with it.

**The union is able to settle the vast majority of issues at the informal stage!!

4.

IF THE INFORMAL APPROACH DOES NOT RESOLVE THE ISSUE

-We will file a formal grievance with the permission of the person or people involved.

**DISCRIMINATION,
HARASSMENT, OR
OTHER ISSUES AT
WORK? THERE ARE
MANY WAYS WE CAN
HELP!**

Did you know that there are many ways that the Union can help you resolve your work issues? Check out some of the most common ways we are able to help TAs and Sessional Instructors. For more detailed information about the grievance process, click [here](#).

Discrimination and harassment are the most common issue at the workplace and a major concern for us. Every year, we help multiple members through a situation of discrimination and/or harassment. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you feel harassed or discriminated against, please reach out! Your Collective Agreement affords you a lot of protections when it comes to discrimination and harassment. For more detailed information about your protection against discrimination and harassment, click [here](#).

GET TO KNOW YOUR UNION

Each month, we introduce one of the many people that work behind the scenes of CUPE 3913 to protect your rights and ensure appropriate wages, job security, and fair work conditions. This month, we introduce Alessia, your International Teaching Assistant Caucus!

Alessia Ursella

International Teaching Assistant Caucus, School of English and Theatre Studies

Talk to me about: Your issues as an International person as well as any equity-related issue! I have been through a lot as an International student so I am highly aware of the extra challenges. Together with the other Caucus chairs, we work as a team to support all groups and provide a more equitable workplace environment.

I'm engaged in the Union because: I like to actively participate to shape how my workplace looks like. I also like to work to make sure the voice of others is heard. I started because a friend was part of the union and she introduced me to it: that was 6 years ago!! I'm still around because I believe in the opportunity that the Union gives me, and in the work done by the Union.

One thing I think students don't know about the Union is: Being involved in your Union is a lot more than just getting help for a specific issue. The Union offers many diverse initiatives! There are opportunities for everyone.



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SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR CUPE 3913 MEMBERS

BEING PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER CAN REALLY PAY OFF

There's strength in numbers — so reap the rewards! We've teamed up with Economical Insurance® to give group members the protection, service, and satisfaction you deserve — all at a discounted price.

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Call for a quote on car or home insurance from Economical®, and you could win 1 of 36 cash prizes of \$5,000. Don't miss your chance to save on insurance and win some extra cash in the \$5K Giveaway!

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CAR AND HOME INSURANCE DISCOUNT

CUPE members get discounts for Economical car and home insurances AND can win \$5,000! Call them for a quote or reach out to us if you have any questions.

FORD & LINCOLN VEHICLE DISCOUNT

CUPE has an account at Ford and Lincoln to get discounts on various vehicle models. Here is how the login page looks. Get in touch with us if you want to find out more!

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STUDENT RESOURCES

The following services are available to students. Virtual, phone and in-person appointments available as guidelines allow.

Student Wellness Services:

*All located in the J.T. Powell Building, on the first floor. 8:30am – 4:30pm (check online for individual services and hours)

Health Services – x52131

- Drop-In Clinic as well as booked appointments with doctors

Counselling Services – x53244

- Drop-in Counselling. Fall/Winter Mon to Fri: 1pm-3:30pm

Wellness Education & Promotion Centre – x53327

- Email to discuss training options and to book a training mentalhealth.training@uoguelph.ca

Student Support Network

- Peer-to-peer support. Fall/Winter Mon-Fri: 12pm-10pm wellness.uoguelph.ca/ssn

Accessibility Services – x56208

- Students requiring academic accommodations because of a disability (temporary or permanent)

*Current information on Student Wellness Services' hours and locations: wellness.uoguelph.ca

OTHER RESOURCES

Mental Health Training
morefeetontheground.ca

Feeling Better Now
feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph

AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES

Campus Community Police
Trent Building on Campus
x2000 or 519-840-5000; uoguelph.ca/police

Here 24/7 Crisis Line (Guelph or K-W)
1-844-437-3247 or
CMHA Crisis Line (Ontario) 1-833-456-4566

Text Crisis Line
Text UOFG to 686868

Good2Talk Crisis Line
1-86-925-5454

SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Sexual Violence Support Services on Campus (Non-Urgent)
x53020, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am – 4:30pm
svinfo@uoguelph.ca

Women In Crisis - 1-800-265-7233
24-Hour Crisis Support for Sexual or Domestic Violence. All genders welcome.

Guelph General Hospital Care and Treatment Centre for Sexual and Domestic Violence
153 Delhi Street, 519-837-6440 x2728
or call x2210 After Hours

Sexual Violence Support & Information
wellness.uoguelph.ca/sexual-violence-support

STAFF RESOURCES

Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

The EFAP is available to eligible employees and their immediate family members in need of confidential, professional counselling for personal, family, relationship, and wellness issues.

Access at any time: 1-800-663-1142 or contact the Manager of Occupational Health and Wellness at x5213

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STAFF CONTACT

Executive

President
Scott Duchesne

Vice-President Internal
Chris Hempel

Vice-President External
Alexis Fabricius

Unit 1 Steward
Farhan Chowdhury

Health & Safety Officer
Ahmed Mahmood

Finance Officer
Omid Norouzisafsari

Grievance Officer
Muhammad Awais

Equity Officer
Safia Mahabub Sauty

Past Executive Officer
Iftekhar Hussain
Chowdhury

Member Representatives
Parirokh Afzali
Olatunbosun Ayetan
Shahrear Kawsa Towhid
Fani Goltsios

Staff

Labour Relations
Coordinator
Jeff Cornelissen

Admin & Finance
Coordinator
Shelly Sarkisian

*Having questions about CUPE3913?
Contact a member of our Executive Committee or Staff, visit our [website](#), or click [here](#)
for further options to get in contact.*