

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

BARGAINING UPDATE JAN 2024

Winter 2024 Bargaining: Monetary Proposals

- As we are returning to the bargaining table, we would like to inform members that we are presenting our second phase of proposals to the administration: **MONETARY PROPOSALS**
- As usual, if you have any questions about bargaining, please contact the team at bargaining.committee@cupe3913.on.ca. **Below we will highlight key points we are bringing to the bargaining table.**

Wage Increases

- In 2019, the Ontario government passed Bill 124, which suppressed public sector wage increases, limiting workers like us to increases of 1% per year for three consecutive years.
- Shortly afterward, we experienced an unprecedented time of economic precarity and inflation, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We are **bargaining for wage increases** that **reflect our lost income over this time**, as well as a general **cost of living adjustment** and continuing **annual wage increases**.

Graduate Financial Assistance (Tuition Reimbursement)

- Tuition fees have **increased by ~150% for international students** and **~38% for domestic students** for over two decades (since 2002-2023), while inflation has increased by ~53% and the cost of a 1 bedroom apartment in Guelph has nearly doubled over the same time period.
- Meanwhile, base stipends have not kept pace with inflation, nor have TA wages, which experienced only a 38% increase in the same time frame.
- We are **bargaining for a tuition reimbursement of ~\$1200/semester for domestic students and ~\$3000/semester for International students to address rising inflation and help bridge the gap between International and domestic student fees**. This reimbursement will be tied to increases in tuition.

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Reducing Graduate Student Workload

- Members have reported an increasing reliance from departments on bargaining unit work (TA and Sessional Lecturer positions) to generate income included as part of the guaranteed stipend for incoming students.
- Some departments require students to work as many as three 1.0 TAs per year (totalling 420 working hours) to access their guaranteed stipends.
- We are **bargaining to set a cap on the dollar amount of guaranteed stipends that can come from TA or Sessional Lecturer work.**

Mental Health Benefits

- The University's Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of mental health, yet our coworkers are consistently struggling.
- We are **bargaining for a mental health fund** that our members can use for **mental health care** and **prescription medications.**

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