

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024

FEATURED TOPICS

What's going on?

- **Winter Tabling Dates**
- **What's Your Number?** - as we head into presenting our monetary proposals in bargaining, we want to know how much debt you are collecting semesterly?
- **Monetary Proposals**
- **Strike Mandate Vote**
- **Coffee and CUPE3913**
- **Winter Membership Meeting Recording**
- **Election Information**
- **Labour and Us - Student Led Workshop Series**
- **Benefits Processing**

Learn more about...

- **Bargaining Updates**
- **Appointments for Sessional Lecturers**
- **Benefits:** know your benefits and claim up to \$600/\$1200 (Unit 1/Unit 2)
- **Special Discounts for CUPE 3913 members:** car and home insurance, Ford & Lincoln vehicles
- **Student Wellness Support Resources**
- **Contact information**

What's going on

WINTER TABLING DATES



Our tabling will continue on in the winter semester! If you have any questions about the union, bargaining, benefits, or any inquiries, come find us in the UC Courtyard during the times of 10:00am-2:00pm on the following dates:

- Wednesday, January 31, 2024
- Wednesday, February 14, 2024
- Wednesday, February 28, 2024
- Wednesday, March 13, 2024
- Wednesday, March 27, 2024

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?



We already know that between wages and stipends, most grad students still can't afford the basics.

Add up your tuition, rent, groceries, internet, cell phone, transportation, medications, mental/health care, and entertainment costs, and it's likely that you are racking up debt every semester.



What is the gap between your stipend and TA pay and your baseline living costs? CUPE3913 thinks the university should know. Fill out the google form!

<https://forms.gle/K2nycpojE2pWUFqc6>

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What's going on

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** (i.e. proposals that involve money)

CUPE3913 is highlighting four key points we are bringing forth in the bargaining table.

1. 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**.

2. 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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What's going on

MONETARY PROPOSALS CON'TD

3. 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.

4. 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**

What's going on

STRIKE MANDATE VOTE VS. STRIKE VOTE

What is a strike mandate vote?

- Essentially a strike mandate vote, is a vote from the membership ***showing their willingness to strike***
- This vote is used in bargaining to put pressure on management (in this case the University) through a show of our solidarity. It's not only important that a lot of members vote, but that a lot of members vote 'yes'.
- ***Strike mandates demonstrate our willingness to strike for better conditions.***



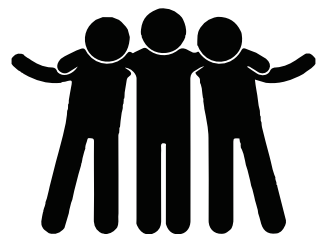
Is a strike mandate vote different than a strike vote?

- **Yes!** A strike vote is a crucial part of the formal and legal process that leads to an actual strike.
- It is important to note that international members have the same right to strike as domestic members; striking will not affect their status in any way.



Why do I have to vote twice?

- Unions like CUPE3913 use different tactics to safeguard members' rights and interests; strike mandates and a strike vote are two key methods.
- Both tactics help us advocate for our rights and interests. Both have different outcomes, but they serve the same purpose.



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What's going on

COFFEE AND CUPE3913



Come and find us at Branion Plaza on **February 7th from 10am-2pm** with the Lady Glaze Truck for free coffee, information about bargaining, our monetary proposals, and what you can do to put pressure on the university!

WINTER MEMBERSHIP RECORDING



For members that could not attend the Winter Membership Meeting, please see the recording link **here**!

Be sure to come out and attend our Spring Membership Meeting

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What's going on

CUPE3913 ELECTION INFORMATION

The Union expects all members who wish to run or vote in the election to be familiar with the election's timelines, deadlines, and regulations.

- An Election Guide has been uploaded to the **CUPE3913 website**
- All deadline times are in Eastern Standard Time

ELECTION TIMELINE

- **Nomination Period:** January 24 - 31
- **Campaigning Period:** February 1 - March 1
- **Voting Period:** March 4 - 18
- **Results Announced:** March 19

OPEN VS. CONTESTED POSITIONS

- **'Open'** positions refer to those positions in which the member currently in that position will not be running in the election, or to positions that are not currently staffed.
- If by the end of the nomination period there is only one (1) candidate running for a position, that candidate will be automatically acclaimed into that position.
- Open positions are not included on the election ballot.
- **'Contested'** positions are those in which there is at least two (2) candidates running for that position.
- **'Contested'** positions will be included in the election ballot.
- All candidates running for Union positions (contested or acclaimed) will be asked to meet with the president and at least one (1) other Executive member between February 5 and 19.

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What's going on

CUPE3913 ELECTION INFORMATION

HOW DO I VOTE?

- You **MUST** be a **MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING** to vote in an election.
- Please scan the QR code to be able to vote

WHAT POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

- There are many positions on the Executive Committee, College Stewards, Department Stewards, and Caucus Chairs that are still to be filled.



If you are interested in running, please read over the election guide.

Any questions can be sent to the president (president@cupe3913.on.ca) or the elections officer (elections@cupe3913.on.ca)

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What's going on

LABOUR AND US: STUDENT LED WORKSHOP SERIES

Join four PhD students, through five workshops this March, culminating in a performance in April 2024. Open to all, especially student workers and those interested in worker solidarity, no prior experience required!

- Explore themes of worker's theatre, union solidarity, and the experiences of student workers.
- Engage in multiple roles, from creative contributions to behind-the-scenes support.
- Your input is crucial - help tailor the workshops to address the issues that matter to your community!

Fill out the form to stay connected and give feedback by clicking the link or scanning the QR code <https://forms.office.com/r/x4FaAYFxy3>



Supported by the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation, CUPE 3913, and the Experiential Learning Fund

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What's going on

BENEFITS PROCESSING

With the launch of the new website, we want to address some important information to our members:

- The address remains the same <https://cupe3913.on.ca/>
- Your login is your uoguelph or guelphhumber email address
- Members will be required to change their password during their first login.
- Please update your member profile and add family members if needed

Claims

- To submit a claim,
 - Select "My Account"(top right)
 - From the pulldown menu select the type of claim that you would like to make(ie: Unit 1 claim, EFAF claim or Unit 2 claim)
 - Select "New Claim" Enter the claim information, click next
 - On the next page upload your claim documents and click submit.
- We have changed the structure of the benefits plan
 - **Unit 1 members:** the limit of \$300 for vision & \$300 for mental health has changed to \$600 in total for vision/mental health claims. Members can use the \$600 for either expense and for any amount up to \$600.
 - Mental health claims are now being reimbursed at 100%.
 - **Unit 2 members:** the limit of \$1000 and \$200 for prescriptions has changed to \$1200 for any medical expense currently covered under the benefits program.
- EFAF claims are now being processed through the members portal. We are no longer processing EFAF claims via email.
- EFAF application forms are no longer required.
- **Unit 1 -** please be reminded to ***submit health claims first to their primary insurance provider*** (CanadaLife through the GSA), and be sure to submit an "explanation of benefits" when submitting your claim to CUPE

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RESUMING BARGAINING

We have resumed negotiations with the university in the middle of January. We are in the process of presenting our **MONETARY** proposals to the university in the next bargaining meetings. Similar to last semester, the university has been slow to respond to our proposals. We plan to increase pressure on the university as we present out monetary proposals.

STATEMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY'S INCORRECT POST

On Friday January 26, the University of Guelph posted a CUPE3913 Bargaining Negotiations update claiming that the Union called for a strike vote this week. This is factually incorrect, and the update has been removed. We have requested a statement of correction and an apology from the University.

Any information pertaining to a Strike Mandate Vote or Strike Vote will be posted on the CUPE 3913 website, our official social media platforms, and via email blast directly from the bargaining team and/or the Executive Committee.

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Learn more about...

CUPE 3913

We are bargaining a new Collective Agreement on behalf of TAs and Sessional Instructors

We believe that the University is enacting changes that will reduce the quality of education at UofG, and the quality of life of its TAs and Sessionals

The changes we are proposing will help address these issues:

Improving wages and education for all our members

- Tuition reimbursement
- PhD Completion Fund
- Pedagogical training



Improving Job Security for Sessional Instructors

- Improved Right of First Refusal
- Shortlisted for faculty jobs

Expanding health benefits

- More money for mental health issues



Addressing exploitation of International students

- Higher wages to offset high tuition

The graphic above demonstrates the four main focuses of our proposals we are bringing to the table with the university. If you have any questions about bargaining, the proposals we are bringing forth, or how you can get involved, please do not hesitate to contact us!

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CUPE3913 BARGAINING TIMELINE



During the whole bargaining process, we are going to be updating the members through social media, emails, and bargaining blasts that will summarize what went on during the bargaining meeting.

It is our goal to be as **TRANSPARENT** as possible to our members and to ensure members we are doing our best to bargain for a better collective agreement.

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Learn more about...

APPOINTMENTS FOR SESSIONAL LECTURERS

We often receive questions regarding appointments to positions involving open competitions for sessional lecturers. This information is general and does not specifically speak to appointments for TAs or positions that hold **Right of First Refusal (RoFR)**.

Please refer to Appendix F of our Unit 2 collective agreement to see how competing RoFR's are decided upon. When there is an open competition for a sessional lecturer position and two or more candidates apply and the qualifications are demonstrably equal, then the most senior candidate should receive the appointment.

As per Article 11 of our collective agreement, before the hiring, a selection committee must establish a rubric for evaluating applicants' application. The rubric will be specific for the position and could include things like education, publications, previous teaching experience in the area, other work experience, seniority points, etc.

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Learn more about...

APPOINTMENTS FOR SESSIONAL LECTURERS

One candidate may have strengths in one area and another candidate has strength in a different area. On the rubric, the areas would be scored for each applicant. If two candidates are relatively equal, then the most senior candidate should receive the offer. If a lower senior candidate is demonstrably more qualified, as per the rubric, then the lower senior candidate would receive the job offer.

If you believe you should have received an offer but did not, feel free to reach out to our Labour Relations Coordinator, Jeff at **labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca**.

We can discuss your specific concern and we can contact the University for more information around that specific hiring decision. It is worth questioning if you have questions regarding hiring.

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Understanding CUPE 3913's Health Benefits

Grad students have benefits through the GSA; as workers, Units 1 and 2 are entitled to **additional benefits* offered by CUPE 3913:

- Supplemental health benefits **cover the academic year** (Sept 1-Aug 31); **claims must be submitted by Aug 31**
- Members are entitled to benefits for up to 1 year following their last work assignment
- Must use GSA benefits before you access your CUPE benefits
- Claims can be made through our website
 - FAQs re: how to submit a claim online + more info on benefits are also available on our site
 - Questions? benefits@cupe3913.on.ca

UNIT 1 (TAs and GSA-1s):

- \$600 total for vision and mental health claims

UNIT 2 (Sessional Lecturers):

- Any expense under the Income Tax Act 118.2(2) up to \$1200, including
 - Dental
 - Prescription drugs
 - Vision care
 - Physiotherapy
 - Massage therapy
 - Chiropractic
- Prescription drugs

EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN YOUR ROLE AS A WORKER? WE CAN HELP

Our Labor relations Coordinator is here to advise you

Reach out to Jeffrey Cornelissen
labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca to discuss the
issue and get insights into possible solutions.

Some things to know about resolving work issues

The earlier you contact us, the better

If an issue has arisen, contact us as soon as possible with the pertinent details so that we can offer you guidance on how to proceed.

You are in charge of all decisions

There are many ways a work issue can be resolved; we can lay out your options so that you can make an informed decision that works best for you. However, only *you* will decide what will happen.

EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN YOUR ROLE AS A WORKER? WE CAN HELP

One option is an informal resolution

The Union can bring the issue to the Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations (FASR) in the hopes that it will be addressed appropriately. We will discuss with you how we will present the problem to FASR to ensure your comfort. Note that we are able to settle the vast majority of issues through this route.

Another option is to file a grievance

If the matter is more serious or is not resolved appropriately through the informal route, we can file a formal grievance (though only if this is a route that you choose).

What is a grievance?

A grievance is a complaint put forth by the Union articulating that the employer has acted (or failed to act) in a way that violates the Collective Agreement. A grievance by the Union on behalf of the member.

Find more information about grievances and the grievance process on our website [here](#).

HAVING MONEY PROBLEMS?



Apply for the Emergency Financial Assistance Fund (EFAF)

Unit 1 members (TAs) experiencing financial hardships may apply for up to \$500 in financial assistance per academic year. To be eligible, you must have had a work assignment within the past year

How do I apply?

- Visit our website at cupe3913.on.ca, login, and under the “my account” tab you can submit an EFAF Claim



Take advantage of CUPE 3913's discounts

Car and home insurance

CUPE members receive a discount at Economical Insurance AND can win 1 of 36 cash prizes of \$5,000 when you call for a quote.

www.nationalbrokers.com or call 905-597-3390

Discounts on Ford and Lincoln vehicles

CUPE members are part of the Partner Recognition X-Plan Vehicle Pricing Program that gives you special pricing on many makes and models.

www.fordpartner.com



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

Responding to Students in Distress

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STAFF CONTACT

Executive

President

Scott Duchesne

Vice-President Internal

Alyssa Banaag

Vice-President External

Alexis Fabricius

Unit 1 Steward

Kathleen Nolan

Unit 2 Steward

Kyle Novak

Grievance Officer

Kimber Munford

Health & Safety Officer

Ahmed Mahmood

Equity Officer

Safia Mahabub Sauty

Staff

Labour Relations

Coordinator

Jeff Cornelissen

Admin & Finance

Coordinator

Shelly Sarkisian