

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

30 years of **actually** improving life

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

FEATURED TOPICS

What's going on?

- **Announcements:**

- Election Results
- We are looking for college and department stewards
- Winter Tabling
- Open Letter to the University of Guelph

- **Reminders**

- Support for Teaching assistants and sessional lecturers
- Reminder to Unit 1 Members
- Hiring questions?
- RBC PayEdge
- Please provide an alternative email address in our members portal
- Track your hours!
- Become a member in good standing (MGS)

Learn more about...

- **Appointments for Sessional Lecturers**
- **Benefits:** know your benefits and claim up to \$600/\$1300 (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: Announcements

ELECTION RESULTS

CUPE3913's elections ended, with all Executive Members running uncontested. The 2026-2027 CUPE3913 Executive Team was acclaimed, per our bylaws, with our new Executives starting on May 1st.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Scott Duchesne
President

Amanda Wuth
Vice President-Internal

Grace Goderre
Vice President-External

Michael Yu
Unit 1 Steward

Evren Altinkas
Unit 2 Steward

Saira Asif
Finance Officer

Stephen Donnelly
Grievance Officer

Shruti Nadkarni
Equity Officer

Ahmed Mahmood
Health & Safety Officer

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Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

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What's going on: Announcements

ELECTION RESULTS

CUPE3913's elections ended, and our 2026-2027 CUPE3913 stewards were acclaimed, per our bylaws. Or new Stewards will be starting on May 1st.

Additional Steward positions remain vacant. If you're interested in being a steward for the 2026-2027 term, please contact Scott Duchesne at president@cupe3913.on.ca

STEWARDS

Sara Wilmshurst
Dept of History

Alessia Ursella
School of Languages and
Literatures

Negar Sabouhanian
CCMPS College Steward

Madison Gara
School of Computer Science

**Mohammadreza
Riyazat**
College of Engineering
Steward

Giselle Schmitz
CSAHS College Steward

**Bitā
Baradaranhezaveh**
Department of FRAN

Natasha Vogel
Department of Psychology

Anshu Beri
OAC College Steward

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What's going on: Announcements

ELECTION RESULTS

CUPE3913's elections ended, and our 2026-2027 CUPE3913 stewards were acclaimed, per our bylaws. Our new Stewards will be starting on May 1st.

Additional Steward positions remain vacant. If you're interested in being a steward for the 2026-2027 term, please contact Scott Duchesne at president@cupe3913.on.ca

A graphic with a colorful geometric background in shades of blue, purple, and orange. At the top, the word "STEWARDS" is written in large, bold, purple capital letters. Below this, there are nine white rounded rectangular boxes arranged in a 3x3 grid. Each box contains the name of a steward in bold black text, followed by their department or affiliation in smaller black text. At the bottom center of the graphic is the "CUPE 3913" logo in purple, with the tagline "Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph" in small black text below it.

Okila Elboeva Dept Food Agricultural Resource Economics	Krishani Sinhalage Dept of Animal Sciences	Vivian Ly School of Environmental Sciences
Farah Al Qudsi Dept of Food Science	Dilrukshi Kombala Liyanage Dept of Plant Agriculture	Evan Spangenberg OVC College Steward
Ross Minichiello University of Guelph Humber Steward	Michael Tam GH Business	Justine Tishinsky GH Kinesiology

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What's going on: Announcements

WE ARE LOOKING FOR

COLLEGE & DEPARTMENT STEWARDS (UNTIL APRIL 30)!

We are looking for people who are able to work with a team and are passionate about making UofG a better place for TAs and Sessionals.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS LISTED BELOW!

These positions come with semesterly honoraria of \$100 for department stewards and \$200 for college stewards. The time commitment is a few hours per month.



ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE

[OVC College Steward](#)

Department of Biomedical Sciences
Department of Clinical Studies
Department of Pathobiology
Department of Population Medicine

LANG SCHOOL OF BUSINESS:

Department of Economics/Finance
Department of Hospitality & Tourism
Executive Programs

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

Geography
Political Science
Sociology and Anthropology
Collaborative International Development
Studies

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH-HUMBER:

Early Childhood Studies
Family and Community Social Services
Justice Studies
Liberal Studies
Psychology

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Food Agricultural Resource Economics
Food Science
Animal Science
School of Environmental Design and Rural
Development

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING:

Civil, Environmental, and Water Resources
Engineering
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Interdisciplinary Engineering
Mechanical Engineering

COLLEGE OF COMPUTATIONAL, MATHEMATICAL, AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES:

Department of Chemistry
School of Computer Science
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Department of Physics

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT: president@cupe3913.on.ca

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What's going on: Announcements

WINTER TABLING

Swing by our winter tabling in the University Centre on Wednesday, February 25 and March 18, from 10 AM–2 PM. We've got coffee and would love to see you there!

W26 Tabling

**February 25,
March 18**
10 AM to 2 PM
University Centre



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What's going on: Announcements

BENEFITS & CLAIMS ANNOUNCEMENT

CUPE 3913
Uniting Academic and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

BENEFITS & CLAIMS ANNOUNCEMENT

Hi everyone,

As you may know, we have been experiencing issues with our current benefits software provider since September of last year. We are currently in a process of transition to a new benefits software provider. We are looking at late February as a general 'go live' range for the new system. We will keep you update on our progress. In the meantime, we are asking members to hold off on submitting non-urgent claims until then, if you can.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at president@cupe3913.on.ca.

Cheers,

Scott Duchesne, President

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What's going on: Announcements

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

An open letter to the University of Guelph:

On Wednesday January 14th, despicable acts of hate were committed on the campus of the University of Guelph in which students drew racist emblems and anti-LGBTQ+ statements on t-shirts at an Ontario Agricultural College sanctioned event.

The University of Guelph is a place of employment and education, and one that many of us call home. It is unacceptable to create, permit or enable an environment in which individuals – be that students, staff, or faculty – feel comfortable engaging in such heinous actions and minimizing them to avoid accountability. Nobody should ever feel that their safety is threatened, or that belonging to an equity-seeking group precludes them from safely existing.

Committing acts of hate requires a perception of immunity from consequences. A culture of white supremacy widely exists across the University of Guelph campus and has been tacitly condoned by Administration by their lack of concrete action. CUPE 3913 calls on the University of Guelph to:

1. Review and revise *Policy 1.6 Students Rights and Responsibilities Policy* to have a clear, zero-tolerance protocol with immediate removal and expulsion of students from campus who have committed acts of hate in addition to the permanent cancellation of events in which alleged acts of hate were condoned;
2. Launch an investigation into the systemic perpetration of these acts, including identification of baseline biases and prejudices held by involved parties;
3. Develop and mandate meaningful anti-racism and anti-hate educational programs for all members of the University of Guelph community from upper administration to the student body.

The calls for action and accountability above are not exhaustive. We believe they are a minimum starting point to address the systemic racism, homophobia, ableism, and transphobia that have propagated in an environment where students believe acts of hate are acceptable, even welcomed. We remind Administration that the University of Guelph is a diverse community working collaboratively with shared goals of furthering education and research – not a community that serves Administration.

Sincerely,

CUPE 3913 Executive Committee

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What's going on: Reminders

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND SESSIONAL LECTURERS

As CUPE 3913, we stand with our members and offer our assistance to those affected by acts of hate. You are not alone in your feelings and concerns. Hate crimes have risen significantly in Canada over the past few years. Hate is never acceptable.

You have the right to a physically and mentally safe place of work, and we are here to advocate for you. If you have any concerns about your safety in the workplace, please do not hesitate to contact us at: president@cupe3913.on.ca

If you are in need of additional support, please be aware that as a member of CUPE 3913 you have benefit coverage that can be used for mental health support. More information on your CUPE 3913 benefits are available here:

- **Unit 1 members:** <https://cupe3913.on.ca/Members/Unit-1-TAs/Benefit-FAQs>
- **Unit 2 members:** <https://cupe3913.on.ca/Members/Unit-2-Sessionals/Benefit-FAQs>

Additionally, a range of mental health services are available through the community: wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/mental-health-and-well-being and student-specific services are available through Student Wellness Services: wellness.uoguelph.ca

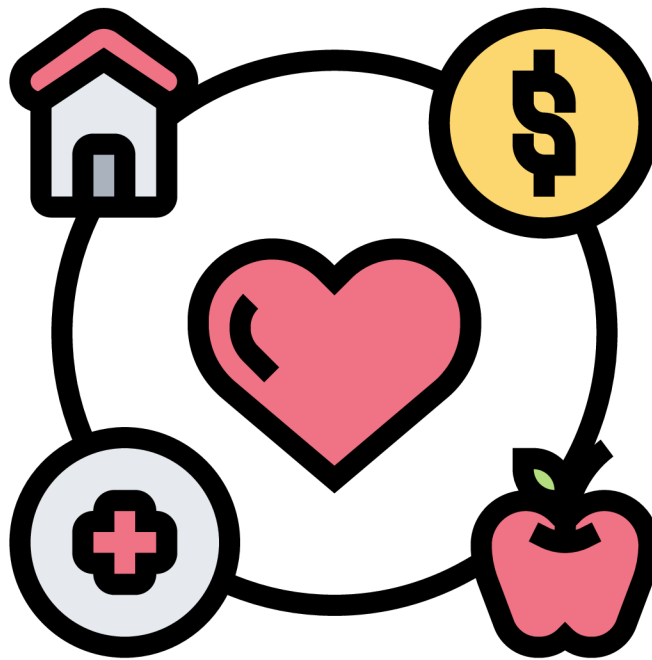
We all have a part in combatting hate. Here are some resources to learn about combating acts of hate and unconscious biases available in Guelph.

What's going on: Reminders

REMINDER TO UNIT 1 MEMBERS RE: BENEFITS

Are you a Unit 1 member planning to submit a claim for health benefits? If so, please read this important reminder.

Unit 1 members need to first submit their claims to their primary insurance provider (which is usually the GSA benefits plan).



Once assessed they can **then make a claim with CUPE** for the uncovered amount.

The Explanation of Benefits needs to be submitted along with their claim documents.

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What's going on: Reminders

HIRING QUESTIONS?

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HIRING?

Do you feel like the **hiring policies weren't followed**, or someone with **less experience** or **who didn't meet the qualifications** was **hired over you?**

Hiring questions are time sensitive and must be dealt with ASAP!

Please contact our labour relations coordinator, Jeff, to ask questions.

DO NOT WAIT!

You can reach Jeff at
labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca

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What's going on: Reminders

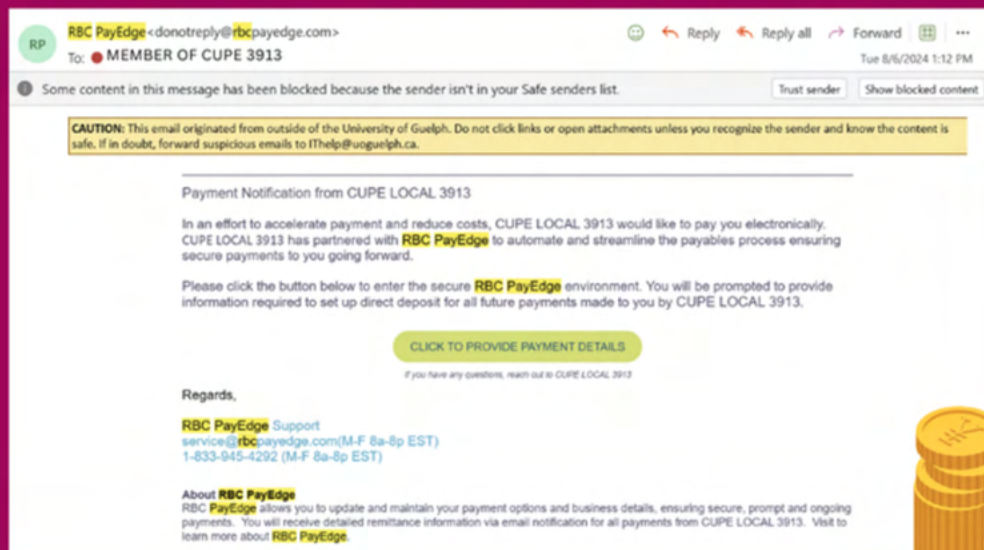
RBC PAYEDGE

RBC PAYEDGE

CUPE 3913 manages direct deposit through RBC PayEdge. If you file a claim with us, you will receive an email like the one below.

This email is legitimate. You are required to click the link in order to input your information to receive your payment.

We have heard from many members inquiring about the legitimacy of these emails, so we are putting out this statement to advise all members that these emails are indeed coming from us.



We would like to remind members that as of Fall 2024, CUPE 3913 is now paying out benefits claims through direct deposit. To register, you need to input your information to RBC PayEdge when prompted. If you receive the above email, **it is legitimate.**

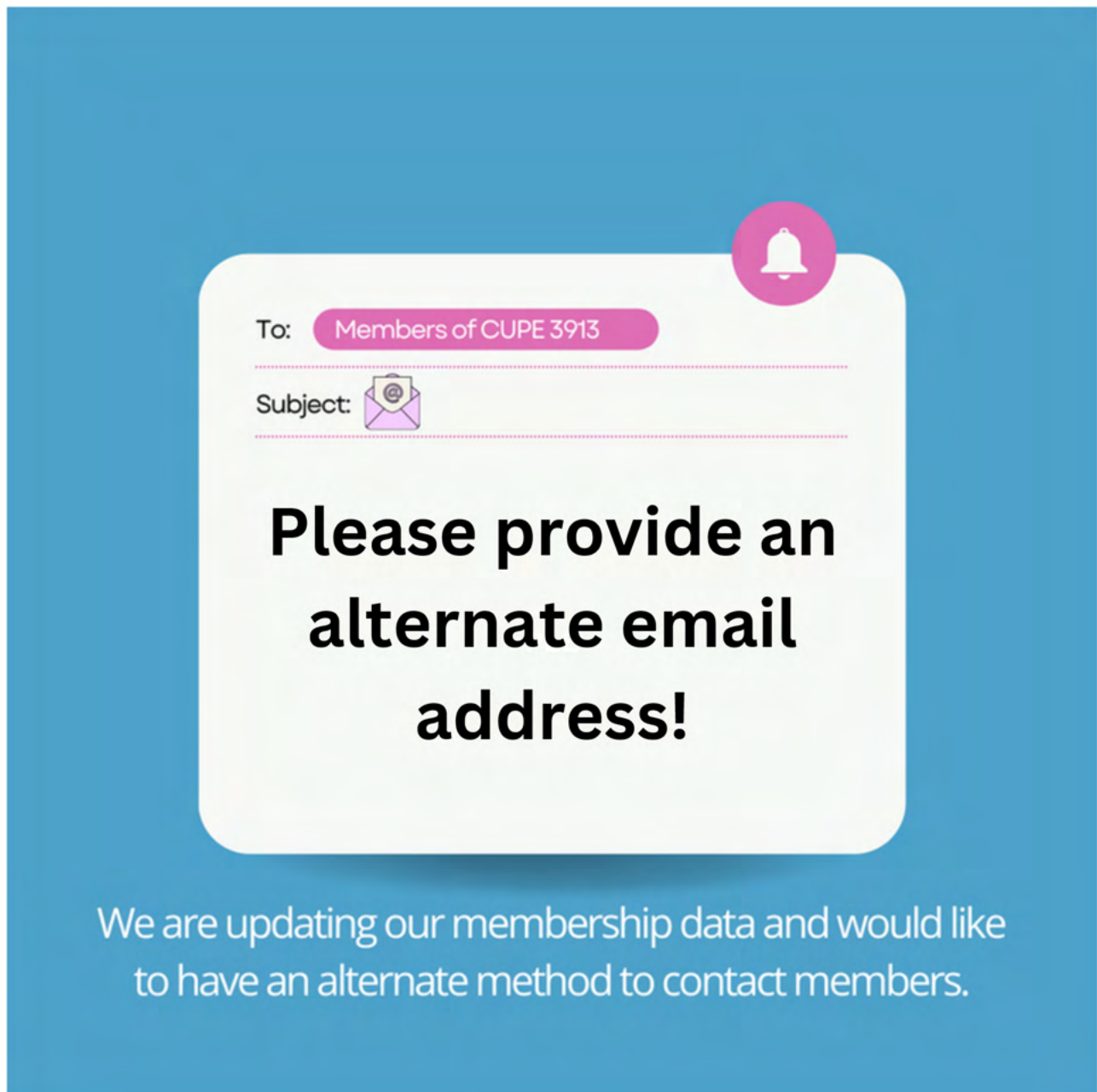
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What's going on: Reminders —

PLEASE PROVIDE AN ALTERNATE EMAIL ADDRESS IN OUR MEMBERS' PORTAL!



We are asking members to provide an alternate, **non-UofG email address** in our members portal so that we can continue to contact you in case we lose access to UofG's system. Please input alternate email addresses in your account at cupe3913.on.ca. Thanks!

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What's going on: Reminders

TRACK YOUR HOURS!

reminders!



CUPE 3913 would like to remind members to track their hours to prevent over-work.

If you are approaching the maximum number of hours allocated in your contract, contact your supervisor so hours can be re-allocated or overtime can be negotiated.

Remember that Unit 1 members (TAs) can spend a maximum of 24 hours/week on teaching duties.

To download CUPE 3913's hours-tracking spreadsheet, visit the link below.



Or visit:
<https://cupe3913.on.ca/Members/New-Members/Hours-Tracking>



Please make sure to track your hours for the Fall 2025 semester to prevent over-work. Please visit cupe3913.on.ca/Members/New-Members/Hours-Tracking, to access CUPE 3913's hours-tracking template, and make sure to review your contract and Collective Agreement to make sure you know your rights.

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What's going on: Reminders —

BECOME A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

Become a Member IN GOOD STANDING

BECOME AN ACTIVE MEMBER AND VOTE ON IMPORTANT
ISSUES FOR TAS AND SESSIONAL LECTURERS!



VISIT [HTTPS://CUPE3913.ON.CA/MEMBERS/UNIT-2-
SESSIONALS/BECOME-A-MGS](https://cupe3913.on.ca/Members/Unit-2-Sessionals/Become-a-MGS)

Would you like to become an active union member and gain the ability to vote on issues that are important to TAs and sessional lecturers? If so, please become a Member in Good Standing by filling out the form at the above QR code or by visiting:
<https://cupe3913.on.ca/Members/Unit-2-Sessionals/Become-a-MGS>

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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.

One candidate may have strengths in one area while another candidate has strengths 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 Sept 15**
- 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, prescription, and mental health claims

UNIT 2 (Sessional Lecturers):

- Any expense under the Income Tax Act 118.2(2) up to \$1300, 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?



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.

Partner code: 1E716

www.fordpartner.com

What about the Financial Assistance Fund (FAF)?

Formerly, Unit 1 members (TAs) experiencing financial hardships could apply for up to \$500 in financial assistance per academic year.

Unfortunately, due to the University's failure to pay members in a timely manner in the F24 semester, the FAF has been exhausted for the duration of the academic year. CUPE 3913 has filed a grievance with the university to recoup some of this money, but unfortunately this is a time-consuming process, and we don't expect this fund to be available again until September 2025. Discussions are ongoing with the university to resolve this issue.

HAVING MONEY PROBLEMS?



Take advantage of CUPE 3913's discounts

Discounts on Online Psychotherapy Services

Offered by Dr. Ana Bahamonde, Psy.D., in both Spanish and English. Dr. Bahamonde is registered with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) and provides individual therapy using a client-centered, goal-oriented approach.

Additional information on therapy types, resources, Dr. Bahamonde's professional background, and therapeutic approach can be found at <https://br2heal.ca/>. Services also include **coaching, career counselling, and clinical supervision for psychotherapists** — offerings that may be of particular interest to CUPE members.

CUPE members are eligible for a 15% discount on their first three sessions by indicating the coupon BR2HEAL-CUPE3913 during the initial assessment or first session.

If you have any questions, contact Dr. Bahamonde directly at br2heal.ca@gmail.com or (647) 629 1751.



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



Support Resources for Graduate Students

The University of Guelph Graduate Student Association has partnered with several new service providers and wellness partners to host wellness events and workshops:

<https://gsaguelph.ca/wellness-events-and-workshops/>

Tara and Melissa of MintOT are occupational therapists, supporting graduate students in functioning and thriving. They also run small support groups and large group sessions.

To learn more, or sign up for a workshop, visit the GSA's wellness events and workshops page.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STAFF CONTACT

Executive

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Scott Duchesne

Vice-President Internal

Amanda Wuth

Vice-President External

Grace Goderre

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Michael Yu

Unit 2 Steward

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Oliveira

Grievance Officer

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Health & Safety Officer

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Staff

Labour Relations
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Jeff Cornelissen

Admin & Finance
Coordinator

Shelly Sarkisian