

# CUPE 3906 Unit 1 TAs and RAs (in lieu)

Bargaining Bulletin #2 - 8 September, 2016



The Union met with the Employer on August 31st and September 1st, 2016. We have made progress on a few issues, including Union Representation, the Grievance Procedure and Health and Safety. Happily, the parties have also made progress on improvements to pregnancy and parental leaves for TAs and RAs (in lieu). The Employer is also investigating the feasibility of coverage for TAs and RAs (in lieu) in the Employee Family Assistance Program—a program that is meant to provide free access to resources such as referrals and/or counselling for Employees in crisis beyond what is available under OHIP or UHIP.

Negotiations on the key priorities for a **#BetterMac** identified by our members in bargaining surveys and consultations (i.e., funding, increased benefits, and mental health support) are ongoing.

Notably, **the Employer is still seeking concessions to job security and benefits.** The Employer has not changed its position on the guaranteed funding period. They maintain that the term “guarantee” is a misnomer, and have eliminated or altered all references to guaranteed TAs in the Collective Agreement in favour of language that reflects short-term appointments. This model of uncertain, non-committal funding is far from what members mandated as the Union’s position on job security—i.e., the extension of PhD guaranteed TAs to a 5th year of study.

Accepting the Employer’s claw-backs on administration and per-member funding of our **dental plan** would mean that we will have to cover more members with less money and fewer resources. These concessions jeopardize the continuation of this 25-year-old plan at worst, and will result in more expense to members for worse coverage at best. We are committed to maintaining and improving this very important benefit for our members.

Finally, we are concerned about the Employer’s resistance to **protections against discipline and discharge due to poor or inconsistent student**

**evaluations.** The Employer believes that it has a right to discipline, dismiss, or fail to reappoint you based on your teaching evaluations. The Union maintains that student teaching evaluations should be used as a resource to improve teaching, not as a mechanism for discipline. Several progressive institutions protect TAs and RAs by limiting the use of student evaluations to pedagogical purposes; we feel that such protections belong at McMaster.

You’ll find an updated **summary** of where the Parties stand on various proposals on the back of this sheet.

We have more bargaining dates scheduled for mid-September. **We will be looking for your participation and support in our ongoing negotiations for your TA and RA (in lieu) contract. Watch for our e-mails, meetings, events and “asks” for your opportunity to support your Union and make a #BetterMac possible.**

## Your Bargaining Team:

Graham Baker (Religious Studies)  
Liam Midzain-Gobin (Political Science)  
Lis Melo (Chemistry)  
Hadi Eslami (Business)  
Joshua Feather (Engineering)  
Marguerite Marlin (Political Science)  
Sarah Wahab (English and Cultural Studies)  
Caroline Fram (Work and Society)  
Sarah Shoker (Political Science)  
Brad Walchuk (Staff)  
Mary Ellen Campbell (Staff)

## Other Questions?

**Drop by our office** –Kenneth Taylor Hall B111  
**Email us** – [staff@cupe3906.org](mailto:staff@cupe3906.org)  
**Call us** – 905-525-9140 ext 24003  
**Visit our website** – <http://cupe3906.org>  
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CUPE 3906 - Unit 1 - TAs & RAs (in lieu of TAs)  
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## The Issues:

ISSUE	CURRENT LANGUAGE	UNION PROPOSAL	EMPLOYER RESPONSE
TA Guarantee (PhD students)	4 years	5 years	No automatic guarantee. Move from guarantee to year-by-year appointment.
TA Guarantee (Master's Students)	Duration of Program	Status quo: Guarantee for duration of program	No automatic guarantee. Move from gurantee to year-by-year appointment.
Dental Plan	Employer administered plan; pays \$26.75 per month per member	Status quo with increased Employer contriubtions	Employer unwilling to administer dental plan; Employer seeks to discontinue per-member contribution
Wages	Graduates: \$41.80/hour; Undergraduates: \$24.00/hour	Increases of: Graduates: 3.5% per year over 3 years Undergraduates: 7.5%, per year over 3 years	Increases of: Graduates: 0.75%, 0.75% and 0.6% over 3 years Undergraduates: 0.75%, 0.75% and 0.6% over 3 years
Mental Health Support	None, except in instances of workplace violence	Full access to the Employee Family Assistance Program (enjoyed by most other Employees)	Employer researching feasibility and cost
TA Support Fund (for Emergency situations)	\$0	\$60,000/year	\$0
Tuition Rebate	\$0	Dollar-for-dollar rebate fixed to tuition increases	\$0
Academic Freedom	None	Extends to research, teaching and public comment	Academic freedom not for TAs and RAs (in lieu)
Health Care Spending Account, UHIP Rebate and Childcare	\$202,700/year	\$250,000 in 2016, up to \$300,000 year	Money for funds wrapped into money for dental coverage (unclear)
Length of agreement	5 year agreement	3 year agreement	2 year agreement

# #BetterMac