

Report Chief Steward Unit 2

One year ago my classes went online and we all went home from campus. As the implications of the pandemic became clear, involvement with CUPE3906 as chief steward for sessional faculty and hourly-rated music faculty became a part of my goals for how I would spend the pandemic year – helping ensure the rights of contract faculty were not forgotten amid adaptation to online course delivery and remote work. I can say after one year I am proud of what the CUPE3906 team has been able to accomplish for Unit 2 members:

A new collective agreement

As chair of the Bargaining Support Team from August – December 2020, the bargaining team connected to the important issues of the membership and vice versa. Eventually a one-year agreement was reached for Unit 2 through navigating the collective bargaining process online in which the credible threat of strike had to be reimagined.

New benefit: Paid training for sessional faculty

One of the new benefits arising from the new collective agreement are some new paid training opportunities for Unit 2. Quick, go get paid training!:

<https://cupe3906.org/sessionals-unit-2/training-fund/>

Ongoing benefits: Professional development fund, health and dental coverage

I helped oversee the delivery of regular benefits to the membership, and can report these continued to be delivered in relatively uninterrupted fashion despite closure of the CUPE3906 union office on campus. Thanks to Zobia, Kyle, Francesca and Chris for their help getting money out to members and administering these benefits this past calendar year!

Settlements for various individual grievances

From September to December 2020 I chaired the grievance committee. This was a big year for grievances as the transition to remote work and the employer's interpretation of this lead to new grievance issues for Unit 1 particularly. In Unit 2 we continued to be involved in issues arising from the restructuring of the McMaster English Language Development program (MELD). While some individual grievances were positively resolved certain major grievances arising this past year will find resolution in the upcoming months with upcoming arbitration/mediation dates for policy/scope issues in MELD beginning in April.

Election of a new bargaining team

We have elected a new bargaining team who will enter once again into negotiations for a new collective agreement for Unit 2. I look forward to supporting them in this work. Congratulations on your election.

Clarification with McMaster over EI top-ups and taking parental leave

We hope to announce a better understanding with McMaster over the administration of parental leave benefits for Unit 2 members. Stay tuned for future announcements.

It has been my pleasure to serve the local as Chief Steward Unit 2. I am unable to continue in this role in 2021-2022 due to my own changing employment status. Thank you for allowing me to hold the chair during this interesting year for our local, and thank you to my colleagues at the local for your ongoing support and assistance throughout this year.

Sylvia Nickerson