

The CUPE Scoop

OUR UNITS

Unit 1

Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants (in lieu)

Unit 2

Sessional Faculty, Hourly-Rated Sessional Music Faculty, and MELD Sessional Faculty

Unit 3

Post-Doctoral Fellows (excluding Health Sciences)



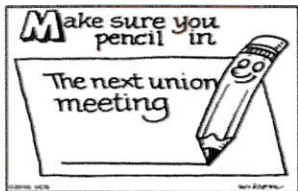
Welcome (Back) to the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3906

Welcome to your union - the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3906. Many of you might be asking 'what is a Union?,' especially if you're newly employed here. A union is an organization that has been formed by workers to represent their rights and interests to their employers, in order to improve your working conditions or wages.

CUPE Local 3906 is your union, and we've proudly represented academic workers at McMaster University since 1979. We are divided into three units: Unit 1 (TAs/RAs in lieu), Unit 2 (Sessional Faculty and Hourly Rated Sessional Music Faculty) and Unit 3 (Post-Doctoral Fellows).

General Membership Meeting

September 22nd at 12:30 in MUSC 311/13



Find Us!

KTH B111

www.cupe3906.org

Twitter: @cupe_3906

McMaster Works Because We Do!

One of the main things that we do is negotiate and enforce a collective agreement for each of our three units. A collective agreement is a legally binding employment contract that outlines all of the benefits, rights, and responsibilities of union members, as well as the responsibilities and obligations of the Employer (McMaster University).

On a day-to-day basis, we serve as the eyes, ears and voice for our members who have concerns about their employment at McMaster.

This will be a busy year for us, as your Union will be bargaining new agreements for Unit 1 (Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in lieu) and Unit 3 (Post-Doctoral Fellows) at the end of this academic year.

Of course, we do more than just bargaining. We also support the Hamilton community, and have made donations to Hamilton Food Share, the United Way, the Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre, and we support a variety of other progressive causes in Hamilton.



Unit 3 (Post Docs) Update

By: Rasmi Kokash, Chief Steward (Unit 3)

Aloha Postdoctoral fellows,

Welcome to MAC! A new academic year, whether its your first or continuing professional endeavour at McMaster University (MAC) in Canada. These are remarkable opportunities for your professional and personal development. Equally important, a wonderful occasion to engage and contribute to the community you are members of.

All MAC postdoctoral fellows, except those in Health Sciences, are members of CUPE 3906-Unit3 (also called Local 3906). The Local offers you various ways of support and help as you settle in your new job and/or be familiar with your rights as MAC employees. It also offers you remarkable opportunities to voice your professional needs that importantly formulate- the Unit 3 collective agreement- that the Local regularly negotiates its terms with MAC, the Employer, on your behalf. Soon, a new bargaining round will take place and you are invited to voice your opinions and needs. On the agenda, are issues pertinent to healthcare coverage, reduced public transportation fares, and support on temporary work-permit related immigration proceedings.

Much more, we warmly invite you to join us in the multitude of leisure social occasions and events that we plan for you, attend the General Members meeting (GMM), join any of our community committees, and propose new initiatives and ideas to us. Please join and contribute to our active community and collectively solidarity.

Unit 1 (TAs and RAs) Update

By: Ali Soufiani, Chief Steward (Unit 1)

Welcome to all Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in lieu (those whose RA work is part of a graduate guarantee), and welcome back for those of you who worked at McMaster last year. CUPE Local 3906 is the Union for all TAs and RAs (in lieu), regardless of what department you're in or whether you're an undergraduate or graduate worker. CUPE represents you in your employment relationship with McMaster, while the MSU or GSA represents you in your relationship as a student. This means that you have a voice in issues such as workload, wages, and employment benefits, and have the largest union in the country in your corner.

This is an important year for TAs and RAs in lieu as it is a bargaining year, meaning that your Union will be re-negotiating your collective agreement with McMaster. A collective agreement is an employment contract, and it covers a variety of arrangements with McMaster, and is negotiated by a committee of elected TAs/RAs in lieu. You'll be hearing a lot of about bargaining this year, and you'll be electing your bargaining committee at our October General Membership Meeting.

Effective September 1, 2018, the wages negotiated by your Union will rise to \$43.63/hr for graduate workers (Class A TAs) and \$25.30/hr for undergraduate TAs (Class B TAs). The collective agreement also contains a variety of other benefits, including no-cost mental health support and counselling (won in our last round of bargaining), a comprehensive dental plan, a health care spending account, and UHIP reimbursements for international student-workers.

We also encourage all members to be mindful of their workload and not to work more than the hours they have been allocated. We've developed a handy tracking sheet to help you with this. We also wanted to remind you that your collective agreement contains provisions that allow you to prioritize your academic work over your employment work.

Information about benefits, working conditions, the hours of work tracking sheet, and a copy of your collective agreement can be accessed through the following link:

<https://cupe3906.org/tas-unit-1/> ♦

Unit 2 (Sessionals) Update

By: Peter Graham, Chief Steward (Unit 2)

A big welcome to new and returning Sessional Faculty. This is a good time to visit CUPE 3906's website to review your rights under our collective agreement. Please tell me how your work is going. I'm always interested in hearing suggestions about how our local can help improve your working conditions. Come out to our local's monthly General Membership Meetings, held on the last Wednesday of every month.

I was pleased to see the strong support for our Unit 2 bargaining team last year. As Postdocs and TAs prepare to enter negotiations, I hope Sessional Faculty can help them mobilize support for a better contract.

Sessionals are provided with a number of benefits under the Unit 2 Collective Agreement, including a \$500/academic year Health Care Spending Account, and access to a Professional Development Fund. For more information, please visit: <https://cupe3906.org/sessionals-unit-2/> ♦

Health and Safety Update

James Watson, Health & Safety Officer

We take the health and safety of our members very seriously. Not only are we protected by provincial legislation concerning health and safety, but CUPE 3906 has also bargained important additional provisions to make our workplace safe, healthy and secure. Some additional health and safety benefits include: advanced protections for preventing and dealing with violence in the workplace, opportunities for certification, mental health resources and no-cost First Aid and CPR training.

We're here to address and help correct any workplace hazards that you might encounter. Hazards can range from ones that impact everyone – like slips, trips, and falls – to department specific hazards – like handling chemicals or working with electrical circuits. Sometimes hazards may be small, everyday things that add up over time. You are also entitled to proper ergonomic equipment, no-cost protective equipment, and proper lighting, ventilation and temperatures for your workspace.

The best way for getting involved with health and safety is through our Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC). These committees are a great place to develop your negotiating skills, learn about the health and safety process, and represent our members issues.

If you think you might want to get involved with the JHSC you can email healthandsafety@cupe3906.org for more details.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I want to extend a warm welcome to all of our new and returning teaching assistants (and research assistants in lieu), sessional faculty members, and post-doctoral fellows.

For those of you who are new to McMaster, I want to welcome you to your union, CUPE 3906 – a union that is committed to principles of social justice, that fights for a free, open, accessible and accountable post-secondary education system here in Canada and around the world, and that stands in solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere. This is our mandate that has been passed down through our local's bylaws, and one that I take very seriously as your President. I hope that you will feel at home in your union, and I hope you will work with us to continue moving McMaster forward on issues of equity and fairness in the workplace.

You will be hearing a lot about bargaining from us this year, because the Collective Bargaining Agreements ("CBAs") of Unit 1 (Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in lieu) and Unit 3 (Post-Doctoral Fellows) expire at the end of this academic year. If this is your first time in a union, this process may be unfamiliar to you, but it shouldn't be intimidating!

CUPE 3906 – a union that is committed to principles of social justice, and a union that fights for a free, open, accessible and accountable post-secondary education system here in Canada and around the world

We remain committed to improving working conditions, raising wages, fighting for social justice, and striving for a #BetterMac.

In solidarity,

Angie Perez- President

CUPE 3906

twitter: [@cupe_3906](https://twitter.com/cupe_3906)

Events and Important Dates

September General Membership Meeting (GMM)

Wednesday September 26th | 12:30 p.m. MUSC 311/13

Unit 1 and Unit 2 Dental Opt-Out Forms Due

Friday September 28th | KTH B111 – this is the absolute final date for opt out

Fall Social at the Staircase Theatre

Wednesday October 3rd | 7:00 p.m. 27 Dundurn St. North, Hamilton

October General Membership Meeting (GMM)

Wednesday October 31st | 12:00 p.m. (noon) Location TBD

Check out cupe3906.org for more details



Executive Position and Committee Updates

A look at some of the important committee work that your Union does

Equity Action Committee

The Equity Action Committee (EAC) is responsible for addressing equity concerns across campus and promoting activism both locally and abroad. We also host various events to encourage community building. For example, we offer our members safe spaces to share creative work (poetry, fiction, performance!) as part of a larger initiative titled, Healing With Feelings—events designed to meet new folks, engage with each other's creative works, and heal collectively from intersectional oppressions—and regular bi-monthly clothing swaps.

If you're interested in organizing events and have other ideas to make lasting impressions on campus, we are always seeking new members! Come help make

Mac a better campus for all! For more information, e-mail Joel: equity@cupe3906.org

Political Action Committee

The political action committee (PAC) is the political arm of the union. We work on issue based campaigns that affect our membership and the broader Hamilton community. If you are interested in getting involved in this work, please visit us or email politicalaction@cupe3906.org

Undergraduate Committee

The Undergraduate Committee primarily serves members that are in undergraduate studies, and provides undergrads a forum for building a community and learning more about what the Union does and how the Union serves its undergraduate members. The Committee focuses on providing events for undergraduate TAs and providing them a platform for discussing issues or simply having a break from work and classes. The committee is looking for new members, so if you think that this is something you'd like to be involved in, please don't hesitate to contact Christie, (undergrads@cupe3906.org) the undergraduate officer, for more information.

International Committee

The International Committee primarily serves members that are non-citizens, and provides a forum for building community, making new friends, discussing common interests, and talking about life, work, and studies as an International Student. The Committee focuses on issues such as immigration, but also has a lot of fun, including craft nights, move nights, and sharing international cuisine. Please email (international@cupe3906.org) for more information.

Benefits Committee

Chaired by the Benefits and Advocacy Officer, the Benefits Committee works to administer benefits-related tasks. This important committee helps to determine eligibility and entitlement to a variety of benefits plans administered by or contracted to the Union, including the Dental Plan, the Health Care Spending Accounts, and the Professional Development Funds. Please email benefits@cupe3906.org for more information ♦

Preparing to BARGAIN

Our strength is in bargaining collectively with the Employer to secure the best possible working conditions

Every few years, when a Collective Bargaining Agreement (or CBA) expires, our union elects a Bargaining Team that works with our collective guidance to establish key priorities (ie., wages, job training, funding levels, etc.) and to translate those priorities into a series of concrete proposals.

Once these proposals are approved at a General Membership Meeting (GMM), the Bargaining Team begins to meet

with the employer's Bargaining Team to negotiate a new CBA. This agreement is the contract that governs all of our working lives during our time here at McMaster, and it mandates things ranging from wage rates to benefits to our rights in the workplace. So you can see why we will be spending a lot of time talking about this: it's an incredibly important process, and it's crucial that everyone's voice be heard.

The Executive Committee, in cooperation with the Bargaining Support Committee, will be doing our best to make this process as accessible and transparent as possible, but the key to our success will be your decision to be part of it.

Elections to the Bargaining Team and our Bargaining Support Committee will happen at the October GMM. If you have an interest in either of these committees, or just have more questions about bargaining, don't hesitate to stop by our office to chat or contact an executive officer.

Collective bargaining has helped us to develop strong contracts, but we know that members need even more, notably 5th year guaranteed funding.

As we do every year, we use bargaining as another opportunity to build a #BetterMac.