

2026 AGM Report for Hamed Afshari, Unit 2 Lead Stewards - March 2026

Lead Steward Report for Unit 2, CUPE 3906

I have been serving as the Lead Steward for Unit 2 (U2) sessional lecturers at CUPE 3906 since November 2023. The Lead Steward's role involves coordinating union activities, supporting stewards, and ensuring effective communication and organization across departments. During this time, I have worked closely with the CUPE 3906 executive and staff to address issues affecting U2 sessional lecturers at McMaster University. The support I received from CUPE staff was invaluable in helping me carry out my responsibilities in this role. I attended most executive meetings, grievance committee sessions, monthly General Membership Meetings (GMM), and bargaining-related meetings.

Attended Bargaining Process for 1280 Collective Agreement (2026)

Starting January 2026, I diligently worked with other CUPE 3906 execs to renegotiate the expired collective agreement for 1280 members. During the bargaining period started from January 2026 until March 2026, I attended several meetings with CUPE 3906 executives and others to discuss member priorities, including improving salaries and benefits. We could renegotiate the items and reach at a new agreement that guaranteed improvements on wages and other benefits for 1280 members.

Write Lead Steward Unit 2 Handbook (2026)

I wrote the U2 Lead steward Unit Handbook and saved it on Zoho drive, so CUPE staffs and executive members can read it. The U2 Lead steward Unit Handbook includes following items that are my main activities for this role in 2025-26 academic year:

Core Responsibilities

- **Weekly:** Hold office hours and respond to emails.
- **Monthly:** Attend executive and membership meetings; submit reports.
- **Per Semester:** Help with orientations, run steward meetings, ensure training, and manage steward support (including honoraria).
- **Annually:** Participate in planning/training, update the handbook, and write an annual report.

Steward Coordination

- Lead and manage the **Stewards' Council** (meet at least once per term).
- Recruit new stewards and maintain updated membership lists.
- Support stewards in their duties (posting materials, engaging members).

Meetings & Engagement

- Organize council meetings to share updates, promote training, and identify workplace trends.
- Handle logistics like booking spaces, providing food, and enabling hybrid access.

Training & Support

- Encourage and coordinate steward training (CUPE and local).
- Provide informal, locally relevant training.
- Ensure stewards understand responsibilities and have necessary resources.

Communication & Data

- Share member contact lists responsibly (protect sensitive data).
- Maintain accurate records (e.g., steward tracking document).

Department Support

- Encourage use of **\$200/semester social budgets**.
- Help stewards organize events and access union materials.

Administration & Honoraria

- Track steward participation and coordinate payments with the Secretary-Treasurer.

Committee Involvement

- Participate in the **Grievance Committee** (confidential, refer complex issues to staff).
- Optionally engage in other committees (e.g., Labour-Management, Benefits, Communications).

Sessional Orientation (Major Responsibility)

- Plan and coordinate union participation in orientations (especially for Fall).
- Communicate with departments (starting in June), schedule sessions, and recruit presenters.
- Prepare materials (slides, scripts, handouts, swag).
- Ensure presentations are welcoming, informative, and well-organized.

Key Achievements as Lead Steward for Unit 2 on 2025-26:

1. Coordinated U2 departmental stewards
2. Convened and chaired at least one Stewards' Council meeting each academic term
3. Acted as a liaison between the stewards and the Executive, ensuring department and unit concerns were communicated to the Executive committee
4. Ensured that each department was represented by at least one steward per unit; where this was not possible, I served as the steward for that department/unit
5. Oversaw the Grievance Committee alongside other Chief Stewards
6. Hired three new U2 stewards and trained them

Regular Responsibilities:

I regularly attended grievance meetings, participated in executive meetings and votes, and contributed to the Raise the Floor working group. I was actively involved in the U2 bargaining committee and supported CUPE staff in creating a survey to address the main concerns of U2 members. I filled out the survey several times, offering feedback on areas for improvement.

In addition, I made a concerted effort to connect with U2 members—face-to-face, by phone, and via email—to emphasize the importance of the collective agreement, educate them on their rights and benefits, and highlight areas needing improvement. I worked to educate members on the upcoming U2 collective agreement bargaining process, which is scheduled for summer 2024. I conveyed the key concerns of U2 members, including job security, seniority, and wage increases, to CUPE staff. I also helped develop a 10-minute survey addressing these concerns.

Since November 2023, I have consistently attended all grievance meetings and supported U2 member cases. I spent additional hours at the CUPE office, reading and responding to emails, studying grievance reports came from U2 members at McMaster University.

Plans for the rest of 2026:

I intend to continue participating in CUPE 3906's executive functions, subject to my availability. This includes attending monthly executive meetings, GMMs, steward network meetings, grievance committee sessions, and other duties as needed. I also plan to assist CUPE 3906 staff with the U1 bargaining process in summer 2026.

U2 Steward Network:

Since January 2026, I have focused on recruiting U2 stewards. I have sent numerous emails to U2 members and shared my contact information. As a result, I have engaged in conversations with several members, explaining their role as stewards, and referred three individuals to the U2 Steward application. I hold a steward meeting in March 2026 and reviewed the main duties of a U2 steward in that meeting.

If you're interested in becoming a steward for your department, please reach out via email at leadsteward_sessionals@cupe3906.org. I remain committed to recruiting stewards and fostering greater union participation. If you believe the collective agreement is not being upheld, please don't hesitate to contact me at leadsteward_sessionals@cupe3906.org.

Recommendations for the Next Term:

1. Steward Training

The bargaining process for the U2 collective agreement in summer 2026 will be a primary focus. As such, training U2 stewards on the current collective agreement and areas identified for improvement through the survey is crucial.

Recommendation: Plan steward training for the spring/summer.

2. Fall Orientation

Orientation is a valuable opportunity for education and the integration of new members.

Recommendation: Work with the steward network to ensure CUPE 3906's presence at department orientations in Fall 2026.

3. Increasing Participation in Underrepresented Departments

Recruiting and building union participation in departments with low representation remains a key goal, especially in departments with limited participation in the online survey.

Recommendation: Organize regular brainstorming sessions for stewards facing similar challenges. Coordinate outreach efforts such as tabling, social events, and member-to-member phone banking to increase engagement.