



CUPE LOCAL 3906

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES - MCMASTER ACADEMIC & RESIDENCE WORKERS

Tel: 905-525-9140 ext. 24003 Fax: 905-525-3837 Email: staff@cupe3906.org

McMaster University, Kenneth Taylor Hall B111, 1280 Main St W, Hamilton, ON, L8S 4M4

Annual Executive Reports

April 7, 2025

President (Mason Fitzpatrick):

Dear Members,

It has been one of the great pleasures of my life to serve as your President since coming into the role in a by-election in September 2024. Since that time, our local has faced a number of challenges and emerged victorious from each of them, with prospects for further victories on the horizon.

The largest challenge we faced together was Unit 2 bargaining, which proved to be a difficult group to organize given the lack of cohesive in-person social groups that generally exist in a workplace between co-workers. There were some pockets that could be tapped into, but with a largely atomized workforce with high turnover, new organizing strategies had to be adopted to bring the workers to a level of agitation and unity to win the gains we were hoping for. Furthermore, Unit 2's wages were shamefully far behind Sessional Faculty at other Universities in Ontario, making wages the biggest issue of bargaining.

By focusing on individual member-to-member contact and relying on TAs and other workers to do the work of mobilizing Unit 2 members, we managed to have multiple 1-on-1 conversations on the phone and in-person after classes with every single member and guided them through an escalating set of structure tests that consisted of a petition, a strike vote, a strike pay sign-up and finally a sign-up for picketing times and duties. A majority of members were signed up for picketing duties before a no-board had even been filed, giving us enough strength at the bargaining table to win 25% in wage increases over 5 years. While we did not make the desperately needed gains on job security, the economic victories will put us on par with other Universities and set us up for increased focus on non-economic issues in the next round of bargaining.

I hope that the future members and leaders of the local look back on this round of bargaining and learn from how this one went. If the 2029 bargaining team ever finds this report, I would



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urge them to take research on class times and locations very seriously and dedicate time to this in advance of the start of the semester. A list of where Sessionals will be and when is critical in order to have a quality in-person organizing conversation. I would also recommend shortening the time between escalations and structure tests. While we were able to re-organize quite well after the turnover in the Winter semester, many of the Sessionals working in the Winter were not working in the Fall and so did not participate in the Strike Vote. Compacting the process will maintain a stronger group and allow for a potential strike at a more strategic moment.

Another major fight we took on was at the electoral level, with multiple past and current executives running as candidates. Only one of our endorsed candidates was elected, but we hope that supporting candidates who have a degree of loyalty to our local will increase our political influence.

To the incoming executive, I would recommend honing in on member-to-member contact with Unit 4 and building a strong group of organizers within the bargaining unit before everyone

leaves for the summer. It is appearing as though bargaining will continue into the fall, so a strong group of organizers on the inside will be critical once things reshuffle. The goal should be an organizer in every building that is able to share information and organize meetings within each area team. We have done lots of work connecting with these workers already and I believe that we are capable of organizing strong job actions that will yield the best contract in the province, if not the country.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your President and I will carry the experiences and memories with this Local wherever I go. I am sure that the next executive team will be even stronger.

In solidarity,

Mason Fitzpatrick



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Vice President Internal (Rand Clayton):

Hello, everyone!

When I became VP I had the following goals:

- Modernize CUPE 3906's communications by continuing my work with the Cliq and Discord management
- Be a very active part of the communications committee
- Work closely with the president and VP External to build connections with other relevant parties at McMaster such as other unions, the GSA, and MSU
- Prioritize building solidarity within the union between members and units
- Be an active part of the CAT

I was part of the communications committee and CAT like I said I would be. The CAT has had a particularly wild year being formed from multiple other committees and working groups then having to mobilize people for two bargaining units. In terms of communications work, I was notable to do as much for our Discord server as I wanted to with all my other VP duties. Cliq, a tool for internal exec communication, also proved to be not great. I have made notes of where the union seems to be falling short on communications, both internal to exec and between exec and membership, to pass on for the next exec.

Building connections between our local and other relevant parties ended up looking different than I thought it would. I came into this role hoping to connect CUPE 3906 with other relevant parties on campus but an opportunity arose for more Hamilton-wide labour organizing. I joined a small group of people from different CUPE locals in the greater Hamilton area in restarting the Hamilton & District CUPE Council (HDCC). The HDCC has successfully gotten off the ground with five affiliated locals and regular meetings. CUPE 3906 members involved in the HDCC have filled important leadership and committee roles which has strategically positioned us to be a prominent voice in Hamilton area labour organizing.

As for building solidarity within our local, I think we had a great year. I had such a fun time planning and executing our new monthly drop-in socials. I greatly appreciated meeting so many people across different units and departments in the university and learning more about our membership. Both the serious and silly conversations contributed to the union and will make it into my recommendations for the next executive team. I know I definitely want to continue hosting these drop-in socials and suggest planning more in-person events next year, especially ones involving free food.

Despite the interruptions of multiple snap elections, I feel like this year was a good start to



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regaining some things we lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for being along for the ride!

In solidarity,
Rand Clayton

Vice President External (Oluwadamilola Babatunde):

Dear CUPE 3906 Members,

My name is Oluwadamilola Babatunde, a Masters student in the English and Cultural studies Department.

I have served as the Vice President External, and I have consistently served in the best interests of our local, within the local and other unions. My report since I assumed office in October is as follows:

- One of my key responsibilities as the local's Vice president external is to build and sustain a strong network between our local and other locals in the region. To achieve this, I have been engaged with other locals or external relations, ensuring a good relationship and maintain a good standing with them, attending labour meetings such as the HDLC and HDCC and attending conferences like the OUWCC, YOW, and the likes. As a liaison person between the local and sister local unions, I ensure to the keep the local in the loop of what other locals are doing through active communication.
- I have been actively engaged in several local committees to participate and organize public events. This includes our drop-in socials, international day's event, women and gender safety training event and attending other events to represent the union, ensuring maximum participation and engagements. As an active member of the Communications, Benefit, Women and Gender, International and Contract action committee, I ensure the welfare, equity and diversity of our members and spontaneous communication of the local to our members. I help in the planning of different events within the local committee.



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➤ While all required office hours and union meetings are duly observed, I ensure our members concerns are catered for, guiding their welfares, addressing the issue of systemic racism and discriminations within the local, maintain inclusion and diversity of our members, given a racialized individual myself.

Regards,

Oluwadamilola Babatunde

Vice President External.

Recording Secretary (Bonnie Evans):

Fellow Members of the Executive and General Membership,

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Recording Secretary the past several months. I am putting my name forward for re-election at this AGM, and I would like to continue making positive changes in this role to better support our executive, staff, committees and working groups. I will have significantly more time to dedicate to the union over the summer and into the fall, and I hope to refine some of the processes within this position's purview while the local is undergoing other changes. At this, I feel I have met and exceeded the expectations of this position. I have:

- Taken accurate and detailed minutes for our Executive, General Membership, LMC, and Annual meetings
- Sent re-cap emails offering action items and providing a useful overview of important meeting details to executive and staff members
- Sent timely reminder emails to executive members surrounding the above action items to ensure their completion
- Re-formatted minutes and report templates in accordance with new branding designs adopted by the local
- Attended Hamilton CUPE Council meetings, and have also been designated as a voting member at these meetings
- Participated in Unit 2 and Unit 4 canvassing and mobilizing through the Contract Action Team



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- Participated in ongoing socials and steward events for the local to stay abreast of members' priorities and hopes for the union

The Recording Secretary has several tasks ahead for the coming year. There is an upcoming switch from our current e-mail and file sharing software (Zoho) to another system, and the RecSec will be vital in ensuring that minutes are well-organized in this new system. As Unit 4 continues to form their first CA, it is vital that every member of exec be invested in member engagement and organizing, so should I not be re-elected, I would highly encourage the future RecSec to stay involved with the CAT and other committees to ensure that we have a local focused on supporting our membership and advocating for postsecondary workers at large.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Evans

Secretary Treasurer (Saba Khorasani):

It has been a privilege to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE 3906 over the past several months. Taking on this high-pressure and fast-paced role has been both challenging and rewarding. With a strong academic background in finance and several years of relevant professional experience, I've worked to ensure that the Local's financial operations remain accurate, timely, and fully compliant with CUPE's standards and legal requirements.

Key responsibilities during this term included:

- Performing monthly union dues reconciliations and submitting required remittances
- Processing expenses and reimbursements in a timely and organized manner
- Handling statutory deductions, employer taxes, and preparing financial documents for the relevant parties and our accountant
- Managing payroll, staff payments, and monthly honoraria
- Delivering accurate and timely reports to CUPE National, Trustees, and the Local



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These tasks required not only precision and time management, but also adaptability in the face of unpredictable situations. Despite the complexity and volume of responsibilities, I am proud to report that all financial duties were fulfilled without error or delay on the Treasurer's side.

In addition to managing routine financial obligations, I applied my background in finance to improve internal systems and promote more transparent decision-making. My goals included updating financial documentation, reducing administrative bottlenecks, and creating clearer lines of communication around budgeting and reporting. These improvements helped make monthly tasks, reporting, and committee support processes more efficient and accessible.

I also worked closely with the Benefits Committee and various working groups to offer tailored financial assistance and ensure timely processing of claims and reimbursements. Responding quickly to the Local's needs, while keeping up with core duties like CRA remittances, T4s, CUPE per capita payments, and audit preparation, required constant re-prioritization and problem-solving.

This term, I initiated several changes to improve stability and reduce delays during high-volume periods:

- Implemented consistent QuickBooks data backups to prevent data loss
- Explored more efficient tools and workflows for high-volume administrative tasks
- Designed a scheduling model to help manage recurring and incidental responsibilities with fewer disruptions
- Developed a support process for onboarding committee chairs into financial procedures to distribute administrative responsibilities more evenly
- Implemented a more structured and traceable documentation system for expense tracking and approvals

These changes reflect a long-term commitment to strengthening the infrastructure that supports both daily operations and the broader strategic work of the Local.

Serving as Secretary-Treasurer has been an invaluable learning experience and a deeply



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meaningful opportunity to support our union's work. I believe I have met and exceeded the expectations of this role by combining technical precision with a consistent commitment to CUPE 3906's values of transparency, solidarity, and member-focused governance.

I am seeking re-election to continue this work. If given the opportunity to serve another term, I will focus on:

- Developing more robust backup systems and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for recurring financial processes
- Establishing clearer internal prioritization systems to manage administrative overload during peak periods
- Creating accessible training and reference materials to support financial autonomy within committees and working groups, particularly around financial requests and timelines

I also recommend continued efforts to strengthen strike-readiness procedures, streamline reimbursements and cost-share processing, and embed financial transparency into member communications and reporting. Building redundancy into our accounting systems and promoting financial literacy across the executive and committees will help reduce pressure on this demanding role and support the long-term resilience of our Local.

I am grateful for the support I've received from fellow executive members and our staff throughout this term. The Treasurer's job is not only administrative, it is strategic, fast-paced, and deeply connected to the union's capacity to act decisively, communicate clearly, and earn the trust of our members. I hope to continue serving with the same level of care, professionalism, and commitment in the year ahead.

In solidarity,

Saba Khorrasani

Secretary-Treasurer

Lead Steward, Unit 1 (Rebecca DeWael):



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Having been Lead Steward of Unit 1 since November of 2023, I've deeply enjoyed the opportunity to work with other members of the executive and our staff to work to engage with our membership. The Steward Network is, in my opinion, the most affirming aspect of CUPE 3906, and really shows how collective action comes first and foremost from people hoping to improve the lives of the people around them. Being at McMaster, and especially as a graduate student in the humanities during severe austerity measures, can be incredibly demoralizing and make you feel pretty jaded about post-secondary education, but being with like-minded folks in this local makes envisioning a better future feel so much more possible. I'm grateful for my time as Lead Steward of Unit 1, and while I won't be re-offering for an executive position, I'm excited to join the rank-and-file membership to continue the local's efforts.

The Lead Steward of Unit 1 is responsible for the following:

1. Coordinate department stewards.
2. Convene and chair at least one Stewards' Council meeting each academic term.
3. Act as a liaison between the stewards and the Executive, ensuring that the views of departments and respective units are passed on to the Executive committee.
4. Ensure that each department is represented by at least one steward from each unit, and where this is not possible, act as steward for that department/unit.
5. Oversee the Grievance Committee together with the other Lead Stewards.

Regular Business

I regularly attend Grievance Committee meetings, sharing the chair role with the other Lead Stewards. As grievances are privileged, I cannot share the details about that committee here, but I've played a role in meeting with members, discussing grievance processes, and working with other Grievance Committee members to ensure that these grievances are solved.

I also participate regularly at Executive Committee meetings and motions. A large focus of the Executive Committee this year has been continuing the efforts of the ideas we put together at our three-day Visioning and Strategic Planning sessions last summer, including ensuring that our



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goal of improving onboarding processes for new exec members is met.

I am also an active member of the Benefits Committee, Bylaws Committee, and Contract Action Team, and hope to continue to do so as much as my capacity allows after my tenure as Lead Steward of Unit 1 ends.

U1 Steward Network

The Steward Network convened 3 times since my last report, with a large focus on the ways that stewards can work to support the other members in their department, especially since each department is so different. I've been thinking a lot about this, and, as I'll explain more later in this report, hope to continue to think about with whomever takes on this position.

There are currently 43 stewards in the Unit 1 network, representing a variety of departments, including departments who have historically not had representation. Recruiting more stewards should be a priority for the entire executive; we had shifted our attention, rightfully, to the Contract Action Team this term, but I don't want that committee to take away from our attention to the stewards network.

Recommendations

1. Steward Recruitment

As the local shifts its focus back towards member engagement, we have the opportunity to recruit more members to the stewards' network, which would allow us to have a stronger position for future rounds of bargaining.

Recommendation: Bring steward nomination forms to every social event/meeting that is hosted by the local in order to allow members to reach out; email all members in departments that don't currently have stewards to advertise the position.

2. Steward Training

As we recruit more stewards, more training will have to take place to ensure that they are well-equipped for the position.



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Recommendation: Continue to adapt the onboarding materials for incoming stewards, and host training opportunities for them at least once an academic term. Training should cover things like an overview of the Collective Agreement, how to talk about workers' rights with members, how to have organizing conversations, and basic grievance processes.

3. Steward Engagement

Maintaining the Stewards Network's engagement with their respective departments and with the local more broadly is critical for it to work. This Network is one of the best resources that the local has to spread and gain information, and it's pretty underutilized as it stands.

Recommendation: Increase the frequency of the Unit 1 Stewards Network Meetings, potentially to once a month. We are required in our bylaws to host one Stewards' Network Meeting an academic term, but that infrequency leads to collective conversation with the network only happening once every few months. More regular meetings would mean that threads of conversation could be followed up on, and relationships could build between stewards to strengthen the network. We could then dedicate one of these meetings each academic term to meeting with all four of stewards' networks together.

4. Steward Resource Banking

Stewards need a lot of resources to do their job well, and if we could collectively have a space (i.e., a shared Google drive) where information could be banked, it would be easier for stewards to do their job.

Recommendation: Make a resource bank! This could include resources like hours tracker templates, resources for organizing and hosting department socials, and some email templates for members to respond to supervising instructors, etc. I've started putting some of this together in the WorkDrive, but the work would have to continue.

5. Departmental Resource Banking

One of the main issues that comes up in Stewards' Network Meetings is now different



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each department handles TA (and RA-in-lieu) positions. In some departments, TAs are expected to prepare presentations for tutorials, in others they are provided; in some departments TAs are given grading keys, while in others they have to create their own. This difference isn't necessarily a violation of the collective agreement, since each discipline requires different modes of teaching, but it leads to TAs sometimes struggling to get settled into positions. As stewards, we have the opportunity and resources to potentially improve this. This will also allow us as Lead Steward to understand what is "normal" in a department so we can notice strange, potentially grievance-worthy occurrences.

Recommendation: Support stewards in each department in creating a resource bank of

standard hours of work forms, and teaching and grading resources used for previous iterations of the course. This would allow incoming students to not start from scratch when taking on a position in a course they've never taught before, and means that the resources and knowledge that previous TAs has doesn't go to waste when their contract ends.

6. Get more swag

The local has the ability to order and distribute a lot of great swag for our members, and I think we've greatly underutilized this ability. How cool would it be to have the campus covered in pink to show the employer we're here and our membership is organized? *Recommendation:* Order lots of swag in bright pink; black tshirts are boring. It would also be cool to have swag specifically marking folks as execs or stewards, like hoodies with our positions on them somewhere. Being able to give something to our stewards in addition to their honorariums would be great, and it would make them easy to spot in the wild. Further, while the notebooks worked out great for Fall 2024 orientation, pairing it with a tote bag or some other type of swag would have been really nice.

Lead Steward, Unit 2 (Dr. Hamed Afshari):



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I have been serving as the Lead Steward for Unit 2 (U2) sessional lecturers at CUPE 3906 since November 2023. 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.

Bargaining Process for U2 Collective Agreement (2024-2025)

Throughout 2024, CUPE 3906 worked diligently to renegotiate the expired collective agreement for U2 members, which had lapsed in August 2024. Beginning in March 2024, CUPE staff and executives, including myself, started reviewing the existing agreement. I participated in a series of meetings to ensure the expectations of U2 members, gathered through an online survey, were reflected in the negotiations. Starting in September 2024, I, along with other bargaining members, attended meetings with the employer to discuss member priorities, including improving salaries and benefits.

During the bargaining period, I personally communicated with over 100 U2 members, either in person or by phone, to update them on the outcomes of ongoing meetings and the picketing process. In March 2025, we successfully reached an agreement with the employer, which included a 25% wage increase for the minimum payment for U2 members over the next five years.

Key Achievements as Lead Steward for Unit 2:

- 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

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



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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 the existing collective agreement, and considering possible amendments to support U2 members during the 2024 bargaining process.

Plans for 2025:

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 bargaining process in summer 2024. In April/May 2024, I aim to organize a social event to communicate with U2 members about the bargaining process and address areas in need of improvement.

U2 Steward Network:

Since January 2024, 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 plan to hold a steward meeting in April 2024 and encourage stewards to organize a social event for U2 members in April/May 2024.

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:



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1. Steward Training

The bargaining process for the U2 collective agreement in summer 2025 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 2025.

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.

Hamed Afshari, PhD

Lead Stewards for U2 Sessionals

Lead Steward, Unit 3 (Dr. Bitá Pourhabari):

Dear CUPE3906 Members,

My name is Bitá Pourbahari, a postdoctoral fellow in the Materials Science and Engineering Department. I have served as the Chief Steward of Unit 3, and I have consistently endeavored to serve the best interests of our postdoctoral members within the local community. My report for last year is as follows:

- One of the key responsibilities of the chief steward is to build and sustain a strong network of stewards. To achieve this, I have been actively working with our members to increase the number of Unit 3 stewards.
- I have actively engaged in several local committees to fulfill my responsibilities and



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safeguard the rights and benefits of U3 members from various perspectives. These include the Postdoc Support Fund Administration Committee, the Grievance Committee, and the Benefits Committee. By consistently attending committee meetings, I worked to maximize our members' advantages, ensuring they received robust support during financial difficulties and emergencies. In the Grievance Committee, I collaborated with staff representatives to discuss and resolve grievance cases, aiding in the decision-making process. Within the Benefits Committee, I participated in budget planning for union benefits and the approval of benefit claims submitted by members.

- Furthermore, we have made changes to the development postdoc fund. A survey was sent out to all postdocs, and based on their feedback, laptops have now been included in the development fund. We received positive feedback from the postdocs regarding this change.
- Additionally, a proposal for a \$1,000 fund to cover the costs of an end-of-year lunch gathering was approved. The event took place at Phoenix, and it was a wonderful opportunity for postdocs to connect and celebrate.

Regards,

Bitia Pourbahari

Lead Steward, Unit 4 (Caleb Smolenaars):

It has been a pleasure serving as your Lead Steward Unit 4 this past year. Since being elected as the first Unit 4 Lead Steward in Fall 2024, I've focused on establishing the foundations of the role while supporting Unit 4 members in the absence of a first Collective Agreement. With no formal steward structure or grievance procedure in place yet, much of my work has centered on acting as a liaison between members and the executive, documenting workplace concerns, and supporting the ongoing Unit 4 bargaining process.

Workplace Issues and Health & Safety



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Throughout the year, I've worked closely with our CUPE 3906 staff, Employee/Labour Relations, and University Health & Safety to address several urgent concerns reported by members. These included:

- Health and safety hazards like mould, bed bugs, and lady beetle infestations
- Reports of sexual violence in the workplace
- Concerns about reprisals and employer conduct, especially during the statutory freeze period

I encourage members to continue submitting UHS Hazard Reports to document health and safety hazards and reaching out to the future Lead Steward Unit 4, staff, or myself (pending successful election as Vice President) for support with other workplace concerns.

Unit 4 Bargaining Support

Many of the Lead Steward Unit 4 duties have overlapped with roles on the Bargaining Team and Contract Action Team (CAT). These included:

- Supporting member-facing actions at training and social events, distributing swag, and collecting petition signatures
- Creating and distributing materials to mobilize members

I encourage the next Lead Steward Unit 4 to continue working closely with the Bargaining Team and CAT to build strong relationships with members.

Committees

Like all Lead Stewards, the Lead Steward Unit 4 is expected to participate and co-chair the Grievance Committee. I have also found that participating in as many other committees as possible is incredibly helpful for being successful in the role. To support my role, I participate in the:

- Communications Committee (taking the lead on Unit 4 related communications)
- Grievance Committee
- Unit 4 Bargaining Team (elected prior to becoming Lead Steward Unit 4)
- Contract Action Team (CAT)

I encourage the next Lead Steward Unit 4 to continue participating in these committees (whenever possible) and any others they deem relevant to the role.



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Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as the first Lead Steward Unit 4! I hope to continue CUPE 3906's important work as Vice President and I can't wait to work with the new Lead Steward Unit 4 during the transition. Let's keep involving more Unit 4 voices!

In solidarity,

Caleb Smolenaars (they/them)

Lead Steward Unit 4

Equity Officer (Oluwakorede (Korede) Ologun):

Outline of the Report

1. Introduction
2. Key Activities and Initiatives in 2024-2025
 - a. Dispute Resolution Work
 - b. Equity Education & Training
 - c. Safe Forum for Concerns
 - d. Collaboration with External Organizations
 - e. Committee Involvement
3. Challenges and Lessons Learned
4. Future Goals and Recommendations
 - a. Expansion of equity training and awareness campaigns
 - b. Enhancing collaboration with external partners
 - c. Strengthening policy advocacy
5. Conclusion

1. Introduction



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Dear Members of CUPE 3906,

It is my honor to present this annual report as your Equity Officer. Over the past year, our union has taken critical steps to uphold fairness, inclusion, and accountability in our workplace and community. The Equity Action Committee (EAC) has been at the forefront of these efforts, working to resolve conflicts, organize educational initiatives, and advocate for stronger equity policies.

This report highlights the challenges and successes of our work over the past year, including the resolution of a major dispute within the Political Action Committee (PAC), the application of equity training, and the planning of safe spaces for marginalized members. We have also engaged with external organizations such as the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) to expand our reach and impact.

While progress has been made, there is still much work to be done. Discrimination and systemic barriers do not disappear overnight—they require continuous effort, learning, and accountability. As we move forward, I encourage all CUPE 3906 members to be active participants in building a union where equity is not just a policy, but a lived practice.

"Equity is not just a policy — it is a commitment to fairness, inclusion, and collective progress. This year, we have taken significant steps to uphold these values, from resolving disputes to fostering education and collaboration. But the work does not stop here. As a union, we must continue to listen, learn, and act to create a truly inclusive and just environment for all our members." – Korede Ologun, Equity Officer, CUPE 3906

This report is structured into four sections:

- a. Key Activities and Initiatives in 2024-2025
- b. Challenges and Lessons Learned
- c. Future Goals and Recommendations
- d. Conclusion

Thank you for your engagement, your advocacy, and your commitment to making CUPE 3906 an equitable and inclusive space for all. I hope that you will enjoy reading our Annual Report this year.

In solidarity,



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**Olakunle Korede
Ologun Equity
Officer, CUPE
3906**

2. Key Activities and Initiatives in 2024-2025

A. Dispute Resolution Work with the Political Action Committee (PAC)

One of the significant responsibilities of the EAC this year was handling a dispute resolution case within the Political Action Committee (PAC). The dispute arose following a PAC meeting, where claims of harassment and racism were made.

Resolution and Outcome

- i. The EAC facilitated an independent review and engaged all involved parties.
- ii. The PAC was directed to resume its regular functions under EAC oversight.
- iii. The Equity Officer, President, and a staff member were assigned as observers for the next three PAC meetings to ensure compliance with equity principles.
- iv. A formalized intake process for harassment and racism complaints was introduced on the CUPE 3906 website.

Impact & Reflection:

- v. This case underscored the importance of proactive education on equity and respect in union activities.
- vi. It highlighted the importance of educating committee members on anti-discrimination policies to prevent conflicts from escalating.

B. Equity Education & Training Initiatives

Education remained a key priority this year, with a focus on anti-discrimination training



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and awareness programs. The Equity Officer prioritized equity-focused education and skill-building through workshops and training sessions.

Training Completed by the Equity Officer

As part of professional development, I participated in two CUPE Union Education Program workshops on August 14, 2024:

1. Anti-Harassment and Bystander Training (OLS)

- a. **Content:** Strategies for intervening in harassment cases in workplaces and union spaces.

2. Challenging Racism (OLS)

- a. **Content:** Understanding systemic racism and developing action plans to combat discrimination.

Action Taken After Training:

- b. Drafted an equity event calendar that included a training roadmap for CUPE 3906.

C. Safe Forum for Concerns

The EAC serves as the primary vehicle for implementing equity initiatives within CUPE 3906. One of the few planned events so far is the Safe Forum for Concerns.

- i. **Date:** April 3, 2025
- ii. **Time:** 10 AM - 2 PM
- iii. **Venue:** MUSC Room 214
- iv. **Objective:** A confidential drop-in session for equity seeking groups and members facing discrimination or harassment.
- v. **Features:**
 1. Private consultation
 2. Resource distribution on anti-harassment policies
 3. Snacks and beverages provided



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D. Collaboration with Policy Work

The EAC expanded its outreach by working with local equity-focused groups.

i. Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) Engagement:

- Attended their AGM in October 2024 to build partnerships.
- Explored potential projects to enhance racial equity in Hamilton.
- Proposed initiatives include leveraging HARRC's reporting platform for CUPE members.

E. Committee Involvement

i. Budget Committee Participation:

The Equity Officer served on the Budget Committee. As a member of the Budget Committee, I helped ensure that equity initiatives were appropriately funded. Also, funding was secured for training, event planning, and external collaborations.

ii. Bylaws Committee Leadership:

As the Chair of the Bylaws Committee, my primary focus has been ensuring that the union's bylaws remain relevant, fair, and effective in serving our members. The Committee has worked diligently to review, refine, and strengthen policies that impact CUPE 3906 members, particularly those from equity-seeking groups.

By ensuring that our bylaws reflect the realities and challenges faced by members, the Committee plays a critical role in shaping a more inclusive and just union. This work will continue to evolve as we strive to make CUPE 3906's policies more responsive and equitable for all members.



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3.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite our achievements, there were several challenges:

Engagement Gaps:

- a. While members showed interest in equity discussions, active participation in EAC remained a challenge.

Limited Event Execution:

- b. Only the Safe Forum for Concerns has been successfully planned from the EAC's annual plan.
- c. Additional events need stronger participation from the union members.

4. Future Goals and Recommendations

Looking ahead, the EAC should prioritize:

a. Expanding Training and Awareness Campaigns

- i. Increase accessibility to CUPE's Union Education Program resources.

b. Enhancing Collaboration with External Partners

- i. Solidify our relationship with HARRC to offer joint training and workshops.
- ii. Partner with other community groups to address systemic equity barriers.

c. Strengthening Policy Advocacy

- i. Ensure that equity-related clauses are incorporated into union agreements.



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5. Conclusion

This year has been a foundational period for advancing equity within CUPE 3906. Through training, dispute resolution, event planning, and policy work, the Equity Action Committee has made meaningful contributions toward fostering an inclusive environment.

Looking ahead, improving participation, expanding training efforts, and fostering stronger collaborations will be key priorities. With a clear roadmap and the support of union members, we can build a stronger, more inclusive CUPE 3906 in the coming year.

I extend my gratitude to all members, executive leadership, and external partners for their support. Let's continue to work together for a fairer and more equitable union.

In solidarity,

Equity Officer, CUPE 3906

International Officer (Kusum Bhatta):

Yearly Report: International Committee

The International Committee primarily serves non-citizen members, providing a forum for building community, making new friends, and discussing common interests. It serves as a space for conversations on life, work, and studies as an international student. The committee also focuses on critical issues such as immigration while fostering a sense of belonging through fun activities like craft nights, movie nights, and sharing international cuisine.

Throughout the year, the committee held **monthly meetings** and hosted a **yearly drop-in session in March**, allowing members to engage, connect, and discuss key issues affecting international students.

One of the highlights of the year was the **South Asian Heritage Month Celebration** organized



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by the International Committee. This vibrant event featured engaging speaking panels, incredible performances, and a showcase of diverse South Asian cuisines. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and honor the rich traditions of South Asian culture. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and made this event such a success!

Another milestone event was **Beyond Representation: Crafting Inclusive Professional Spaces**, which focused on creating equitable and welcoming work environments. This event was a tremendous success, thanks to the incredible contributions of facilitators **Bemiga, Renee, and Dr. Akin Taiwo**, who shared their expertise and passion for fostering inclusivity. We also extend our gratitude to all attendees for their participation in advancing our union's commitment to inclusive professional spaces.

A recurring topic of discussion in our meetings was the **rising anti-immigrant sentiments and racism**, often manifesting as passive aggression and microaggressions. Addressing these challenges remains a priority for the committee, and we plan to **run more events to raise awareness and combat these issues in our community**.

In the upcoming year, the International Committee will continue to advocate for international members, particularly in addressing **systemic racism and discrimination** faced by non-citizens. We are actively planning more events to **raise awareness and provide actionable steps to combat these issues**.

We also have an upcoming **event scheduled for April 2025**, with its **budget and proposal already approved at the GMM**. This event will further our efforts in promoting inclusivity and addressing key challenges faced by international students and workers.

In solidarity,

Kusum Bhatta

Chair, International Committee

Benefits and Advocacy Officer (Kyle Morrison):

Dear Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for selecting me to serve as your Benefits and Advocacy Officer these past few years. It has been an honour and a privilege to work for you



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and I look forward to passing the torch. In keeping with my promises made last year I have worked to institute several changes and have outlined my recommendations for the incoming benefits officer.

Unit 1

Unit 1 has remained relatively consistent since we made changes to the health care spending account in 2023/2024. At this time I would not advise any substantial changes however an annual review of funds is still prudent. UHIP continues to be our most heavily used fund and a review of the Reproductive Health Fund may be needed in August. All other Unit 1 benefits remain stable and in good standing.

Unit 2

Unit 2 has just completed bargaining and we have seen a continued surplus in the health care spending account for Unit 2. It is strongly advised that we review this fund and consider an additional increase to the maximum entitlement. We also now have the funds to establish a gender affirmation and reproductive health fund by September 2025. While talk was underway to increase the amount members are able to claim as part of their PDF, we have seen this fund breaking close to even each year. As before we will continue to top up members' tech claims at the end of the year however we may wish to consider removing the 200 cap on tech items going forward.

Unit 3

Unit 3 has made good use of the PDF but still has accrued a surplus last year. With employer contribution amounts set to increase again this year we may wish to consider increasing this amount again to reduce the surplus. A review of the GAF/RHF is also prudent to ensure this money is spent.

Unit 4

Unit 4 will require a review once a first contract is established.

Finally, since coming into office, I have worked to streamline and organize Professional Development applications to ensure a quick and timely approval process and transparency



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between our members. I would like to further thank all the members for their continuous support while we process these applications. Reviewing applications in a fair and consistent manner is a long process. The Benefits committee meets on a monthly basis to review Unit 3 applications. Unit 2 applications are addressed at the end of each term. We try to process it as quickly as possible as long as the application is complete. We value you and we will continue making the process more efficient moving forward.

In Solidarity,
Kyle Morrison
Your Benefits Officer

Health and Safety Officer (Mahnaz Tajik):

Health and Safety Officer Annual Report – April 2025 AGM

As the Health and Safety Officer for the executive committee, my role is to ensure the occupational health and safety of our members. This involves serving as a resource for members, utilizing my expertise to identify and mitigate hazards, revising the health and safety clauses in our Collective Agreement, and participating in the University Central Joint Health and Safety Committee (CJHSC)

This report outlines my activities and contributions since my election in November 2024.

I began my role as Health and Safety Officer by reading the CUPE 3906 by-laws, meeting with former officers, and learning about CUPE's responsibilities related to the position.

Coordination of CUPE 3906 JHSC Appointments

My primary responsibility has been enhancing CUPE 3906's understanding of McMaster University's Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs). I focused on attending to the meetings and get involved with departmental committees.

To strengthen this, I plan to complete JHSC certification and WSIB Part 1 training through CUPE Ontario Education in June. I will also coordinate introductory health and safety courses and certification programs for interested members.



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Engagement in CJHSCs and Member Communication

The CJHSCs meet monthly and include worker representatives from SEIU 2, UNIFOR 5555, CUPE 3906, as well as management representatives from various human resources departments.

I participate in these meetings as a representative of CUPE 3906. During these three months I advocated for multiple initiatives, including:

- CUPE 3906 representation in Housing and Conference Services JHSC.
- Ensuring Unit 3 representation in CJHSC.
- Addressing temporary hazardous conditions in laboratory workplaces.
- Reviewing and suggesting updates to Risk Management Manuals and emergency protocols.
- I also addressed and followed up on incident reports involving CUPE 3906 members

Additional Activities

During this term, I supported Unit 1 orientation presentations, provided steward training. I also participated in monthly executive meetings, contributing to discussions on campaigns, strategies, and organizational improvements. Also, I conducted an inspection of the TSH building's 4th and 5th floors, where we assessed various safety measures, including fire exits, emergency lighting, the condition of walkways, and shelving units. During the inspection, we identified several hazards, such as blocked emergency exits, insufficient signage for evacuation routes, loose electrical wiring that could pose a fire risk, and unstable shelving units that were improperly secured and overloaded.

To enhance safety, it is essential that these issues are addressed promptly by ensuring all emergency exits remain clear, improving signage for better navigation during emergencies, securing or replacing hazardous wiring, and properly anchoring shelves to the walls while ensuring they are not overloaded beyond their weight capacity. Regular checks should also be conducted to ensure shelves remain stable and safe for use.

In 2024, we addressed an incident involving a Unit 1 TA who sustained a severe injury after a fall at the university, which resulted in a concussion. The TA was unable to continue working, and while compensation was provided, there have been unresolved issues regarding her case. Notably, the university did not provide an incident report, delaying our ability to respond appropriately. We are actively following up on why the incident report was not received and



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addressing any procedural gaps. Additionally, we are assisting the Unit 1 member in resolving her concerns and ensuring her rights are upheld. As CUPE and Health & Safety representatives, it is our responsibility to support our members and ensure all incidents are properly reported and addressed. We have filed a grievance to determine the cause of this oversight and to prevent future occurrences.

We received a complaint from two Unit 1 TAs in the Kinesiology Department regarding restricted access to the main elevator. This elevator, crucial for students moving between labs and other department areas, requires a request submission and the completion of safety courses for access, causing significant inconvenience. This is especially problematic for students requiring special assistance. The restriction appears to be due to the elevator's location in a hallway between multiple labs. Additionally, the lack of updated health and safety information leaves students uncertain about whom to contact for incident reporting. We are investigating whether a recent inspection has been conducted and have reached out to the responsible Health & Safety personnel to address these concerns.

Furthermore, the absence of easily accessible first aid kits in the main hallway poses a risk in emergencies, as students must traverse a considerable distance to access them. We are actively pursuing a resolution to ensure students have appropriate access and are informed about health and safety procedures.

I recently met with the Health and Safety office at St. Joe's Hospital, Charlton Campus, to discuss concerns about McMaster TAs and RAs working in hospital labs. The discussion led to an agreement where I will be recognized as the Health and Safety Officer at CUPE 3906. Consequently, incident reports from the hospital will now be sent directly to us, allowing us to better support our members. Additionally, I will attend the monthly health and safety meetings to discuss health, safety, and ethical issues affecting our members.

Future Recommendations

To further enhance health and safety and align with CUPE 3906's goals, I recommend:

1. Enhancing recruitment strategies to ensure robust representation on all JHSCs.
2. Establishing accountability mechanisms for JHSC members, including report-backs.
3. Utilizing the developed orientation materials for efficient onboarding.



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- 4.Expanding the officer's role to address workplace-produced pollution.
- 5.Maintaining regular health and safety meetings for JHSC and general members.
- 6.Initiating periodic reviews of hazardous waste management protocols to ensure they align with current best practices.
- 7.Promoting awareness campaigns to educate members about common workplace hazards and preventive measures.
- 8.Collaborating with external health and safety organizations to bring in fresh perspectives and training opportunities.
- 9.Advocating for increased mental health support and resources within the workplace.
- 10.Developing a feedback system where members can report safety concerns anonymously, ensuring prompt action and resolution.
- 11.Organizing workshops focused on ergonomic safety, especially for workstations that may lead to repetitive strain injuries.
- 12.Maintain regular communication with Health and Safety office at the hospitals (General hospital, St. Jose hospitals and Juravinski hospital) for updates and more cooperation

Conclusion

It has been an honor to serve as the Health and Safety Officer during these short month. I am committed to continuing my efforts to build a safer and more informed community.

In solidarity,

Mahnaz Tajik

Health and Safety Officer

healthandsafety@cupe3906.org

Undergraduate Officer (Elissa Cunningham):

Hello friends!



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It's been an honour being a part of the executive team and being in the role of undergraduate officer. It's been an amazing experience meeting so many of you and working for CUPE 3906. I hope to be re-elected and continue the role after the AGM!

Since stepping into the role in September here's an overview of the work done:

1. Held an undergrad drop-in event to connect with members and answer inquiries.
2. Attended the monthly drop-in socials to support other exec members and talk to members.
3. Helped with TA orientations for Unit 1.
4. Attended scheduled GMMs and executive meetings.
5. Regularly checked and responded to emails from members.
6. Canvassed and supported Unit 4 during bargaining.
7. Helped with the contract action team (CAT)

My main recommendations for the role moving forward are to continue facilitating events for members as it is a great way to connect, support, and answer any questions that may come up. In addition, also being a part of the CAT to stay updated and help with mobilizing Unit 4 as they are in the process of bargaining.

In solidarity,
Elissa Cunningham

Additional Reports

Women & Gender Rights Committee (Kusum Bhatta):

The Women and Gender Rights Committee is dedicated to promoting gender equity in the workplace, on campus, and in the Hamilton community. Open to anyone who identifies as women and are members of the local, the committee engages in various initiatives aimed at achieving equity for anyone who identifies as a woman, particularly in male-dominated spaces.

Throughout the year, the committee met monthly to engage with its members and welcome new participants. This regular engagement ensured that voices within the committee were heard, and meaningful discussions around gender rights and equity took place.

A key initiative was hosting a **Drop-In Session with Snacks**, providing an informal space for



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members to connect and discuss ongoing issues related to gender equity. Additionally, the committee successfully passed a proposal for an upcoming initiative scheduled for **April 2025**, with its budget being approved by the **General Membership Meeting (GMM)**.

The most significant event hosted by the committee this year was the **Women, Life, Freedom** event. This gathering featured a panel discussion and a book circle, focusing on women's oppression and the ongoing revolutions led by women around the world. Through this event, the committee amplified the voices of women advocating for justice, equality, and systemic change.

The upcoming year will see continued efforts in **hosting educational sessions, advocating for policies that promote gender equity, and providing safe spaces for dialogue and action.**

In solidarity,

Kusum Bhatta

Chair, Women and Gender Rights Committee