



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

General Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: Dec 16

Time: 3:00 pm

Executive Committee

President:	Oluwadamilola Babatunde (she/her)
Vice President:	Kusum Bhatta (she/her)
Vice President External:	Javad Emadi
Secretary Treasurer:	Saba Khorasani (she/her)
Recording Secretary:	Rishav Jaiswal (he/him)
Lead Steward, Unit 1:	Zeinab Vosooghi (she/her)
Lead Steward, Unit 2:	Dr. Hamedhossein (Hamed) Afshari (he/him)
Lead Steward, Unit 3:	Dr. Bitra Pourbahari (she/her)
Lead Steward, Unit 4:	Mazen Afify (he/him)
Health and Safety Officer:	Mahnaz Tajik (she/her)
Benefits & Advocacy Officer:	Shabnam Fadaei Chatroudi (she/her)
Equity Officer:	Korede Ologun (he/him)
International Officer:	Samuel Ikueze (he/him)
Undergraduate Officer:	Elissa Cunningham (she/her)

Committee & Working Group Chairs

PAC Chair:	Vacant
Contract Action Committee:	Mitch Lupa and Caleb Smolenaars
Women and Gender Rights Committee:	Kusum Bhatta
Indigenous Solidarity:	Emily Howse-Hackl and Ayra Thomas
Communications Committee:	Vacant
Prisoners Solidarity:	Sonia Hill and Patricia Mills
Ouwcc:	Kyle Morrison

Trustees

exp. Fall 2025 audit: Zahra Tootonsab (she/her)
exp. Fall 2026 audit: Camden Church
exp. Fall 2027 audit: Kyle Morrison

Staff

Staff Representative: Brad Walchuk (he/him); and Mary Ellen Campbell (she/her)
Administrator Coordinator: Francesca Brugnano (she/her)



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Agenda

- 1. Roll Call of Officers**
- 2. Land Acknowledgement Reading of the Equity Statement**
- 3. Approval of the Agenda**

Mary Ellen Chairs

Mitchell moves the agenda, Dams seconds

Kyle: I move an amendment to the agenda to add the election of a Communications Committee Chair under elections.

Rand seconds

Mary Ellen: Any discussion on the amendment?

Mary Ellen: Seeing none, all in favor?

Mary Ellen: Any opposed?

Mary Ellen: The amendment carries.

Hosea: I move an amendment to remove the President election from the agenda.

Oyin seconds.

Mary Ellen: Any discussion?

Kyle: I strongly oppose this. Members were notified and came expecting an election. This supports continuity and transition.

Hosea: The bylaws require a vacancy before an election. The position is not vacant.

Diana: Can we confirm whether the President has resigned?

Dams: I have not vacated the position.

Mary Ellen: In that case, the election is out of order.

Kyle: I challenge the chair's ruling.

Brad: A challenge to the chair requires a two-thirds majority.

Kyle: This has been done before. Holding elections early allows smoother transitions.



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Mary Ellen: My ruling was based on the position not being vacant.

Dams: I will step down.

Brad: We will proceed with the vote on the challenge.

Brad: The challenge to the chair passes with more than two-thirds support.

Brad: The President election remains on the agenda.

Hosea: If the position is vacant, I withdraw my motion.

Brad: The motion is withdrawn.

Anna: I move to add a new business item to create a Palestine Solidarity Working Group.

Elias: Second.

Brad: Any discussion on adding the item to the agenda?

Mitchell: I support adding this discussion.

Onyemuche: What is the purpose of the working group?

Brad: That discussion will occur in new business. This vote is only to add the item.

Brad: Seeing no further discussion, we will vote.

Brad: The motion to add the item carries.

Brad: We will now vote to adopt the agenda as amended.

Amended agenda passes

Kusum chairs



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Approval of Guests

Kusum: We need a motion to approve two non-members to attend for committee reports.

Mitchell: I move.

Javad: Second.

Kusum: Any discussion?

Kusum: Seeing none, all in favor?

Kusum: The motion carries.

4. Reading & Approval of Previous Minutes

Mitchell move to approve the minutes.

Rand seconds.

Previous minutes approved

5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

6. Vice-President Updates

Kusum: The newsletter was shared this weekend. This is the first issue.

Members raised concerns about missing benefits deadlines. Each newsletter will now include unit-specific benefits information.

Events and committee updates will also be included.

Thank you to everyone who shared feedback. It will help improve future issues.

7. Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Saba: I'm presenting the financial report for November 2025. We started the month with about \$220,000 and closed with approximately \$173,000. Total assets are around \$3 million across operating and savings accounts, including about \$855,000 in the strike fund. Around \$900,000 is restricted for strike fund liabilities, and roughly \$2.27 million is allocated to member benefits across Units 1, 2, and 3, covering general benefits, dental, and PDF allocations. The largest payment this month was about \$90,000 to Broader Group, covering healthcare spending accounts and childcare benefits. We also made two



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solidarity donations: \$1,000 to OPSEU and \$1,281 to CUPE Local 1281 in support of YUFA. Overall, the local remains financially stable, with asset growth driven mainly by savings interest, while spending continues to align with union priorities. I'm happy to take questions.

Kusum: Thanks, Saba. I don't see any questions in the chat, so thank you for the report.

8. Communications and Bills

Kusum: Communications and bills were already summarized earlier. Brad and Mary Ellen, please let us know if there's anything else.

Mary Ellen: I don't have anything further to add.

9. Executive Committee Report : can be found on GMM website, addressed in GMM only if necessary: <https://cupe3906.org/gmm-materials/>

10. Conference Report: Racial Justice Conference-Precious Gauthier (Appendix A)

11. Reports of committees and delegates - *if applicable*

a. Steward Networks (**Chaired by: Zeinab, Hamed, Bitia, and Mazen**)

Zeinab: We held a Unit 1 Council meeting this week with around 80 to 90 stewards attending. Honoraria payments for the fall term are currently being finalized. We're also coordinating with programs for winter orientation participation, some are confirmed, and others are still pending.

Kusum: Thanks, Zeinab, and congratulations on your doctorate.

Hamed: We held a Unit 2 stewards meeting in late November. Most stewards attended or submitted reports. I reviewed FAQs around steward duties and member communication, submitted steward names for Fall 2025 honoraria, and I'm currently following up on grievances, mostly related to the Theatre Department. Anyone interested in becoming a Unit 2 steward should reach out to me.

b. Labour-Management Committee (LMC)

Kusum: There hasn't been an LMC meeting recently, so there are no major updates.

c. Committee Updates - *if applicable*

i. Bylaws **Committee (Chaired by: Vacant)**

ii. Equity Action Committee (**Chaired by: Korede**)

Korede: We're planning a book review event for January. We're also continuing to call for members to join the Equity Action Committee. Right now, participation is low, so we encourage anyone interested to email equity@cupe3906.org.



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iii. International Committee (**Chaired by: Samuel Ikueze**)

Sam: The food pantry program is still ongoing and has been very helpful for members. We encourage everyone to let others know who might benefit. We're planning a drop-in session in January, since the earlier one was postponed due to exams. The pantry will continue through December and January, and information will be shared through the newsletter.

Kusum: Thanks, Sam. Food insecurity is a serious issue, and there's no stigma in accessing the pantry. Members can reach out to Sam or any exec, and support will continue through the holidays.

iv. Communications Committee (**Chair Vacant**)

v. Women and Gender Rights Committee (**Chaired by: Kusum**)

Kusum: Bridget will be leading the committee soon following her recent election. Recent discussions around disability and accessibility resulted in newsletter content, and I want to thank the team for that work. Accessibility and anti-ableism are important lenses for how we share information. The next meeting is this Friday, and the poster will be circulated shortly.

vi. Indigenous Solidarity Working Group (ISWG) (**Chaired by: Emily Howse-Hackl and Ayra Thomas**)

Emily: We've been doing a lot of community support work for the holiday season, including supporting Land Back advocates and families in Six Nations. We're still accepting applications from Indigenous families in Hamilton and Six Nations for holiday financial support, with about ten spots available. We're also continuing to plan the Land as Kin conference, and a call for papers will be released soon, welcoming scholars, artists, and allies doing Indigenous work.

Ayra: I'll share the Zoom link for tomorrow's Land as Kin subcommittee planning meeting. Anyone interested in helping with planning is welcome to join.

Kusum: Please send posters once ready, and I'll include them in the newsletter.

vii. Health and Safety committee (**Chaired by: Mahnaz Tajik**)

Mahnaz: I'm following up on a member concern in Civil Engineering where workers are being required to purchase their own safety shoes. I'm working with the department and the university's joint health and safety structures to resolve this. I'm also coordinating with the Mindfulness Centre to schedule a mental health workshop and will share details once confirmed.

Shabnam: Benefits are running smoothly. I'm organizing a committee meeting, likely in mid-December, though I'll double-check dates to avoid conflicts and send confirmation to the committee shortly.



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- viii. Political Action Committee (PAC) (**Chair: Vacant**)
- ix. Prisoners Solidarity Working Group (**Chaired by: Sonia Hill and Patricia Mills**)
- x. Contract Action Committee (**Chaired by: Mitch Lupa and Caleb Smolenaars**)

Mitch: Since the last GMM, we held a bowling event and have been working on bargaining proposals. We're also planning a meeting later this week to finalize designs for new CUPE 3906 beanies. Anyone interested in joining the Contract Action Team or helping with design can message me.

- xi. Unit 4 Bargaining Committee
- xii. Hamilton & District Labour Council (HDLC)

Javad: I attended the HDLC meeting on November 27, which included elections for various positions. There were no major updates. The next meeting will be on January 20.

- xiii. Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC) (**Campus Rep: Kyle Morrison**)
- xiv. CUPE Council

Rand: The next CUPE Council meeting is on January 20 at 6 PM, and elections will be held then. I encourage more CUPE 3906 members to attend and get involved. Anyone interested can message me to be added to the mailing list.

Mary Ellen Chairs

12. Nomination, elections, or installations

- a. By law committee (Hosea Patrick, Kyle Morrison...)

Kusum: Thank you, and next we have nominations, elections, or installations. Brad or Mary Ellen, I'd like to hand it over to you for the elections.

Mary Ellen: Okay, so there was an addition to the bylaws committee. There is one vacancy. Members from any unit can serve. The committee reviews proposed bylaw changes and brings recommendations to the membership. There is a small honorarium. Are there any questions about the Bylaws Committee?

Brad: We do have two nominations received in advance. Folks can still nominate themselves or others during the calls, but Hosea Patrick and Kyle Morrison were both nominated ahead of time.

Mary Ellen: I'll open the floor. First call for nominations for Bylaws Committee member.

Mary Ellen: Second call for nominations.



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Mary Ellen: Third and final call. Seeing none, nominations are closed. Kyle, do you still stand?

Kyle: Kyle does not.

Mary Ellen: Hosea, do you still stand?

Hosea: Yes, I do.

Hosea is acclaimed as Bylaws Committee member.

b. President Election

Mary Ellen: Next we have the election of President. I want to thank Dams for her work in the role. I'll read the duties of the President as outlined in Article 5A of the bylaws. The President enforces the constitution and bylaws, presides at meetings, oversees the local's operations, reports to members, co-signs checks, acts as spokesperson, supervises staff, and serves as an ex-officio member of all committees. The honorarium is \$750 per month. Are there questions before nominations?

Mary Ellen: First call for nominations for President.

Kyle: I nominate Mitchell Lupa.

Mary Ellen: Thank you. We also received a nomination in advance for Kusum.

Mary Ellen: Second call for nominations. Third and final call. Nominations are closed. Kusum, do you accept?

Kusum: Yes, I do.

Mary Ellen: Mitchell, do you accept?

Mitchell: Yes, thank you.

Mary Ellen: Each candidate will have three minutes to speak. Kusum, you may begin.

Kusum: My name is Kusum. I've been with the local for almost four years. I started as a general member, then chaired the Women and Gender Rights Committee, served as International Officer, and am currently Vice President. I was a picket captain during the 2022 strike and have been consistently active. I've taken multiple CUPE trainings and regularly attend meetings. My priorities are communication, bargaining preparation for upcoming units, and strengthening collaboration across the local. I believe my experience and institutional knowledge position me well to serve as President.

Mary Ellen: Thank you. Mitchell, you may go ahead.



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Mitchell: I'm a second-year master's student and have been a member for about a year and a half. I currently co-chair Contract Action, sit on Grievance, steward in Labour Studies, and advise the Unit 4 bargaining team. I believe our union can be more democratic, transparent, and effective. My commitments include improving communications, financial transparency, prioritizing bargaining, strengthening education requirements for leadership, and encouraging accountability. The role of President is to listen and represent members, and I would be honoured to serve.

Mary Ellen: Thank you. We'll now take questions.

Rand: The Hamilton and District CUPE Council allows four voting delegates, but we often only have one or two present. Can you explain the purpose of the council and how you'd improve participation?

Caleb: What will you do to support queer and trans workers, given increasing hostility and policy rollbacks locally and internationally?

Kusum: On the District Council, participation historically fell under the VP External role, which has recently transitioned. Now that the role is filled, attendance should improve. As President, I'll encourage participation and attend when possible. On queer and trans solidarity, when harmful research was raised, the exec acted quickly, raised it at LMC, worked with affected members, and issued statements. As a woman of colour, I understand marginalization, and I'm committed to ensuring issues affecting queer and trans members are addressed through action, not just statements.

Mary Ellen: With consent, we'll extend questions for Mitchell's response.

Mitchell: On the District Council, it's important to stay connected to other locals, and I'd attend when possible. On queer and trans support, the best approach is to consult directly with those affected, center their voices, and ensure they guide the union's actions.

Mary Ellen: Ballots will be sent by email. Members will have at least 72 hours to vote. Please check your spam folders.

c. Communications committee chair

Mary Ellen: The Communications Committee maintains the website, prepares newsletters, and supports member communication. We are electing a Chair. First call for nominations.

Kyle: I nominate Caleb.

Mary Ellen: Second call. Third call. Caleb, do you accept?

Caleb: I do.

Caleb is acclaimed as Communications Committee Chair.



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Kusum Chairs again

13. Unfinished (old) business

a. Election Results from November GMM

Kusum: Next is election results from the November GMM.

Brad: At the November GMM, four delegates were elected to OUWCC. The elected delegates were Mitchell, Caleb, Anna, and Shivam.

Kyle: Was the second voting delegate decided?

Kusum: That decision is typically made among the delegates themselves.

b. Voting on proposed bylaw change Art 3(c) Appendix B

Kusum: Next we have voting on proposed bylaw change Article 3(c), Appendix B.

Brad: Notice was given at the last GMM. Bylaw amendments are not amendable but can be debated.

Kyle: This change reflects existing practice and clarifies that conference moderators should attend the conference.

Kyle move.

Mitchell seconds.

The motion carries.

c. Voting on proposed bylaw change Art 5(k) Appendix B

Mitchell move.

Kyle Second.

Brad: This clarifies duties of VP External without changing the role.

The motion carries and will be sent to National for approval.



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14. New business

a. McMaster Employee Discount Program – New Provider Coming January 2026

Brad: McMaster is changing its employee discount provider effective January 2026. The new provider is Perkopolis. This applies to all employees, including CUPE 3906 members. The link will be shared for information.

b. Childcare Cost Reimbursement in Policy Book Inclusion (Dams)

Kusum: Next is childcare cost reimbursement. Dams raised this at exec. Strategic planning meetings were full-day and childcare costs were not covered. The intent is to add policy language to reimburse childcare costs beyond GMMs.

Brad: Currently bylaws only cover GMMs and AGMs. A policy could extend this to other meetings and events.

Mitchell move to adopt a policy reimbursing childcare costs.

Bita Second.

Kyle: I support childcare reimbursement but want clarity on the policy language and scope.

Brad: Proposed language would reimburse reasonable childcare costs for elected or appointed members attending meetings or events.

Motion carries.

c. I move that we donate \$1000 to Food Not Bombs Hamilton, in support of their recent fundraising call for funds to purchase winter survival gear. (Anna)

Anna: I move that we donate \$1,000 to Food Not Bombs Hamilton to support winter survival supplies.

Elias: Second.

Mitchell: This is wonderful and I fully support it.

Onyemuche: Winter conditions downtown are harsh, and this support matters.

Motion carries.

d. Adoption of the following policy for the local policy booklet- "Whenever possible the local shall order from providers that uphold the core values of our union. This



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includes but is not limited to ordering Union made products, using unionized delivery services, and unionized production "

Kusum: Next is adoption of a purchasing policy prioritizing union-made products.

Kyle move.

Bitia Second.

Kyle: This ensures union funds support unionized workers.

Everest: What defines "core values of the union"?

Ozzy: I propose removing "core values" language and focusing specifically on union-made products.

Shabnam: Second.

The amendment carries. The amended motion carries.

e. Create a Palestine Solidarity Working Group

Anna move to create a Palestine Solidarity Working Group.

Elias second.

Mitchell: The group would organize solidarity efforts similar to other working groups.

Anna: Trade unions in Palestine have called for solidarity. Our local has previously supported Palestine through statements and coalitions. A working group allows coordinated action.

Kyle: I call the question.

Rand: Second.

Motion to cease debate carries. The motion to create the working group carries.

15. Other business

16. Good of the Union

Kusum: I want to acknowledge Dams' leadership as one of the few Black Presidents in recent years and thank her for her work.

Ori: Reactions in the chat felt disrespectful and against the equity statement.



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Diana: These are emotional topics. Disagreement is okay, but we should avoid booing or shutting people down.

17. Adjournment

Ozzy move to adjourn.

Mitchell Second.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:42 pm.



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Appendix A

Conference Report: Racial Justice Conference-Precious Gauthier

I want to say thank you for allowing me to go to the racial Justice conference. It was amazing, the people were great, the teaching was so uplifting, and I feel changed after participating. I'm going to try to share as much as I can because there was so much amazing information that I feel like I cannot put it all into this short write-up. The event had an amazing panel discussion with Theodore Syrette and Taysir Moonim, where they talked about the toll that racism takes in the workplace and how to respond to some of those incidents. They highlighted that some of the symptoms of racism in the workplace, taking a toll on someone, could look like:

- taking a step back or withdrawing
- being late for work often
- checking out because the team might be unsafe

For responding to racism in the workplace, specifically microaggressions, some of the things they shared for us to try are:

- taking 10 seconds to breathe before responding
- acknowledging to yourself and also allowing yourself to move through that moment and choose safety with your reaction
- asking the person who perpetrated the action what they meant by what they said, or the actions they initiated
- be sure to document everything
- also, one of the panellists said that it would be good for unions to make it very clear what the steps are to report these types of incidents

Later in the day were workshops, the one I participated in was mediating member-to-member conflicts. This included going through examples of workplace conflicts, and they gave us tools and allowed us to role-play scenarios. Situations that involve needing a mediator are ones that can be handled before taking it to management because it could cost either party their job, and it may be something that can be sorted out outside of that space. It is also important to recognize if the situation is something that should go to management and is not the responsibility of an employee.

All members have the option to have their steward or union representative be a mediator in a conflict. The tools for mediation that we were given were:

1. Following the four steps of the mediation process, which include:
 - a. beginning with introductions
 - b. asking questions and allowing each person to tell their story, and the question should be fact finding, and each participant should be given time and space to equally speak



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- c. 3rd, looking for common ground by identifying interests or ways that they can work together, this involves using open-ended questions during the mediation
 - d. And lastly, finding a resolution which should give choices and leave both parties satisfied, while not happy in all cases, but OK to live with the outcome because it does favour both parties equally, as well as establishing where to follow up would look like
2. Entering the mediation process should follow ground rules.
- a. The ground rules for resolving the conflict that the mediation process should follow include:
 - i. voluntary participation
 - ii. confidentiality
 - iii. proceeding into this without prejudice
 - iv. respect
 - v. equal voice
 - vi. open-mindedness
 - vii. willingness to share information
 - viii. and the decision by consensus



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Appendix B- Proposed Bylaws Changes (notice given at Nov 19 meeting)

**** New Language** Proposed for 3(c)**

Ouwcc Campus Representative

In the event that the OUWCC Campus representative for McMaster is a Local 3906 member, that member shall:

- Automatically attend the OUWCC conference as a delegate.
- Be encouraged to attend the post-secondary sector caucus at CUPE National convention and CUPE Ontario convention if they are elected to attend the convention by the general membership
- Work with the executive committee to implement ongoing sector campaigns

Updated Language Proposed for Article 5 (k)

for information purposes: proposed new language is **bold and highlighted while proposed removals are ~~struck through~~**

The VICE-PRESIDENT EXTERNAL shall

- i. Be the external liaison officer to the Local
- ii. **Automatically be** ~~sit as~~ **one of the Local's** delegates to the Hamilton and District Labour Council, Hamilton and District CUPE Council **(so long as they remain in the VP External position), and** where possible run for nomination as a delegate to conventions/conferences.
- iii. ~~They should~~ remain apprised to what is happening in the broader labour movement and where relevant report back to the executive committee and general membership