

# CUPE 3906 Unit 1 (TAs and RAs in lieu) Bargaining Bulletin #3

13 October 2016

Your bargaining team met the Employer on October 4th, 5th, and 12th after receiving the Employer's "Offer for Settlement" at the end of September.

The parties concentrated on Article 22 (The CUPE 3906 Dental Plan), Article 12 (Hours of Work) and Article 13 (Postings and Appointments).

After a lot of discussion, the Parties were able to talk through changes to the **dental** article that the Union feels will not negatively affect member's coverage, the cost of coverage, nor the administration of the plan itself. We are pleased that the Union's demands for these safeguards were heard by the Employer, and the parties are still working on the fine details of the contract language.

We also discussed the Hours of Work and Postings and Appointments articles in more depth with the Employer. While the discussion was useful, a few points are still contentious in these articles, and the Employer will not move from their position on a couple of points that impact **Job Security and Working Conditions**. This includes:

- **JOB SECURITY:** the Employer is refusing a priority posting process. This involves first access to additional TA/RA (in lieu) work through a clear and predictable hiring process for 5th and 6th year PhD students who are past their guaranteed funding period, and other current members (including Master's student members and current Undergraduate members. In this model, these members would have the opportunity to be awarded positions before they are posted to all students.
- **WORKING CONDITIONS:** the Employer is refusing reasonable protections on limitations on the number of courses that can be included in a 1-term, 130-hour appointment. The Union would like to have limitations on the number of different courses that can comprise a 130-hour appointment, because some members are finding that they have to prepare to TA, mark, etc., for 3 (or more) courses in one academic term.
- **JOB SECURITY:** the Employer is refusing protections that would prevent the reduction in the number of hours for guaranteed TAs/RAs (in lieu) within

a department during the life of the Collective Agreement. The Union would like to have a commitment from the Employer that departments cannot reduce the funding (i.e., number of guaranteed hours of work) they offer to incoming PhD and Master's students from year-to-year.

While negotiations on monetary are ongoing, we can report that the Employer's latest **WAGE** offer (see: reverse) does not cover inflation, nor does it do much to address ongoing increases to costs the vast majority of members incur as students (e.g., tuition and supplemental fees). Notably, the Union is still seeking to close the wage gap between Classification A and B TAs so that **Undergraduate TAs** receive more equal pay for equal work as per the members' endorsements at our GMMs.

Finally, the Union has yet to receive a detailed response from the Employer on our proposal to protect against **OUTSOURCING** (e.g., unpaid volunteer positions, peer marking, and third-party, non-McMaster tutoring).

The Employer has offered October 31st and November 2nd as the next bargaining dates. We are committed to meeting with the Employer at the soonest opportunity to continue talks, and hope to return to the table before the end of the month.

We still need your ongoing participation and support to get the best deal possible! To get involved or to see past bulletins, please visit our websites, [www.bettermac.ca](http://www.bettermac.ca) or <http://cupe3906.org>.

**Join our Bargaining Support Committee for fun events and solidarity! E-mail [bargainingsupport@cupe3906.org](mailto:bargainingsupport@cupe3906.org).**

## Other Questions?

**Drop by our office** – Kenneth Taylor Hall B111

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## The Issues:

ISSUE	CURRENT LANGUAGE	UNION PROPOSAL	EMPLOYER RESPONSE
TA Guarantee	4 years (PhD); duration of the program (Master's)	4 years plus priority posting for upper year PhD students. Enhanced access to available work and more transparent priority posting process for current members.	Withdrawn concessions to automatic guarantee. Not agreeing to priority posting process.
Working Conditions	No limitation on number of courses TA must teach in a term to meet appointed hours	Limit departments to appointing no more than 2 courses per 130-hour term appointment.	Not agreed to a reasonable limit on the number of courses assigned to TA per 130 hour assignment.
Dental Plan	Employer administered plan; pays \$26.75 per month per member	Union and Employer working on alternative model of administering the plan. The Union is making sure that the cost per member doesn't increase, the coverage for members doesn't decrease, and that the administration of the plan is not in jeopardy.	
Wages	Graduates: \$41.80/hour; Undergraduates: \$24.00/hour	Increases of: Graduates: 1.25% per year for 3 years; 2.5% per year for 3 years for Undergraduates.	Increases of: Graduates: 0.75% per year for 3 years; Undergraduates: 1.25% per year for 3 years
Mental Health Support	None, except in instances of workplace violence	Full access to the Employee Family Assistance Program (enjoyed by most other employees).	Agreed.
TA Support fund (for Emergency situations)	\$0	The Union tabled modified language for a \$30,000 per year fund administered by the Employer. We are awaiting the Employer's response.	
Health Care Spending Account, UHIP Rebate and Childcare	\$202,700 per year	\$225,000 in 2016, up to \$275,000 per year.	No new money.
Academic Freedom	None	Union proposed language to mirror protections for Unit 3 members. The Employer refused. The Union withdrew its proposal to move bargaining along.	
Length of agreement	5 year agreement	3 year agreement.	Agreed to 3 year agreement.

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