Welcome
Karen Harper, Communications Officer

Hello CUPE 3912 members! I hope you are enjoying the new look of our newsletter as much as I am. For this we can thank our Education and Newsletter Committee (Communications team) – Erik Nelson, Marcia Ozier, Julie Quinn and particularly Bonita Squires, who has put this newsletter together in a new format. They are also working with me to facilitate communication activities in the union, starting with our PICNIC on June 10!

Although not as visible, the CUPE 3912 executive work a lot behind the scenes to ensure our rights as workers, particularly through grievances and now with collective bargaining. Contact them anytime if you are experiencing any problems with your work environment.

I hope you find time to look through the newsletter, where you will find valuable information on our collective bargaining, expectations for TAs at Dal and teaching resources. Also check out the advertisement for a part-time liaison position with our union, and of course information on our picnic! Another item of interest is the production of a documentary film on contract academic staff; Gerry Potter will be interviewing some of our members this summer for this film. One of my own particular interests is how contract academic staff conduct research and how they can maintain their research career; I am working with CAUT on this issue – contact me if you are also interested in becoming involved.

Whether you are teaching, conducting research or just taking a break, enjoy the spring and see you at the picnic!
The CUPE Executive has committed itself to keeping (or at least trying to keep) members updated concerning the ongoing bargaining process. Obviously, any updates can’t get into too many details. In the give and take of the bargaining process, an update in the morning may be out of date by the afternoon. Things can happen that quickly in bargaining. We can update members on the status of the process: where we are in the process and the tenor of the negotiations.

Currently three of our bargaining units are out of contract: Mount St. Vincent part-time faculty, Dalhousie part-time faculty and teaching assistants, and St. Mary's part-time faculty. We have a fourth bargaining unit within the local (the teachers at the St. Mary's Language Centre), but they ratified an agreement last year.

Your collective bargaining committees are comprised of our CUPE representative (Karen MacKenzie), our CUPE 3912 President (Steve Cloutier), the vice-presidents from each institution and members at large except for Dalhousie. For more information about each university’s Collective Agreement, please go to the Collective Agreements page under the Documents tab on our CUPE 3912 website at 3912.cupe.ca.

Mount Saint Vincent University

*Bargaining Committee:* Karen MacKenzie, Steve Cloutier, VP MSVU (position currently vacant), Alex Mielnik, Pat O’Neill

We have been in negotiations with MSVU since late in April. We’ve had seven bargaining sessions so far; the conversations so far have been good if a bit heated at times. To this point discussions have been about important language issues within the collective agreement such as evaluations, precedence, and access to facilities. It is common practice to discuss language issues first and then discuss all financial issues (which are often the most contentious) until the end. So far we have achieved what the bargaining committee feels to be good changes to the language of the collective agreement. With financial issues not yet discussed but on the horizon, it would be premature to make any kind of comment concerning finances. We are committed to improving the financial condition of our members and creating a greater parity with other part-time faculty in the region and across Canada.

Dalhousie University

*Bargaining Committee:* Karen MacKenzie, Steve Cloutier, Carmel Forde (VP Dal part-timers), Cameron Ells (VP TAs Sexton), Erik Nelson (VP TAs Studley), Daryl Hayes (VP Truro)

The bargaining committee has met with the Dalhousie team and exchanged proposals. There has been some initial discussion but we are still early in the process so there has been no progress to report as yet.

Saint Mary's University

*Bargaining Committee:* Karen MacKenzie, Steve Cloutier, Phil Bennett (VP SMU), Karen Harper (Communications Officer), Julie Quinn

We neither have met with SMU yet nor have dates set. Delays like this are not unusual in
labour relations. We're not sure why we haven't heard from SMU yet, but they are in the process of finding a new Vice-President, Academic and Research (who is responsible for bargaining with the unions on campus). The bargaining committee is finalizing the proposal document.

Bargaining Committee Spotlights

Bio - Steve Cloutier

I mainly teach in the English departments at St. Mary's and Mount St Vincent, although I have recently begun to teach in Cultural Studies at MSVU. I hold a BA from SMU, an MA from the University of Windsor (Ontario), and a PhD from the University of Leicester (UK) although I lived in Northampton. My main research interests lie in 20th Century British literature (especially that of the two world wars) and Marxist theory. I have been President of the local since September 2014. Before that I spent a year as Recording Secretary for the local and then moved on to spend a year and a half as Vice-President for SMU.

Bio - Karen Harper

I am a part-time instructor and an independent scientist with an active research program and students of all levels. I have taught in biology, geography and environmental science/studies departments for over ten years at all three major universities in Halifax. I have been an adjunct professor at Saint Mary’s University and Dalhousie University since 2006. Prior to my arrival in Halifax, I was a tenure-track regular professor at Laval University, which I left for family reasons.

I conduct a lot of research, publishing papers, writing grant proposals and supervising graduate and undergraduate students, almost all unpaid, but I occasionally find some paid contract work. I have a particular interest in the issue of part-timers doing research as I believe it is important for part-timers but also for universities to maintain the crucial link between teaching and research. I am on the Saint Mary’s negotiations team but I also coordinate all three teams by chairing the Umbrella Committee. I will do all I can to ensure we get real positive change for our members at all three institutions.

Bio - Alex Mielnik

Hello. I come to university instructing from my former career (35+ years) in Human Resources/Labour Relations (i.e., Director, HR, Manager, etc). I’ve been the chief negotiating spokesperson for almost 100 Collective Agreements in both the private and public sectors as well as appearing at several arbitrations, employment standards hearings, Human Right tribunals and countless grievances.
Currently, as a member of the MSVU negotiating team, my objective is to act as a resource for reaching a mutually acceptable agreement, which is paramount as otherwise it is indicative of the parties’ failure to understand collective bargaining. After all, we have to work together to further our mutual interests.

Reaching a settlement that recognizes the importance of part-time faculty to the business model of student instruction that has been adopted by most universities is the goal of which both we and the universities must not lose sight.

Bio - Erik Nelson

I am a first year PhD student in the Dalhousie Philosophy Department. I did my Master’s degree at Concordia University in Montreal, where I had my first experiences volunteering and working for a union. I first became involved in student politics through the 2014/2015 student strikes, playing an active and sometimes organizational role in protesting the ways in which the provincial government and the university administration was implementing an austerity program.

In 2015, after the undergraduate students voted against further striking, the graduate society in my department decided to take this opportunity to highlight the ways in which graduate students and teaching assistants were paid below poverty level wages, faced intense job insecurity, and often worked more hours than we were paid for. The philosophy graduate society overwhelmingly voted to hard picket classes in the department for a day and use this symbolic action to educate professors and undergraduate students about the struggles we faced as students and employees of the department. These actions put me in close contact with TA/RA union (TRAC) at Concordia and I helped organize a delegate system that would have volunteers from each department act as the eyes and ears of the union. I volunteered as a delegate myself, designed tools to help TAs better keep track of hours, and helped facilitate better communications between the union and its members by putting up posters and flyers around the university.

I learned a lot from these experiences about the ways in which unions can help their members. We were able to bring the hiring practices of my department in line with the collective agreement by filing a successful grievance. I asked to join the executive of CUPE 3912 because I think that unions are the best tool for improving the working lives of their members. I hope to continue to build on my experience and be an effective advocate for Teaching Assistants at Dalhousie.

Bio - Patrick O’Neill

My own interest is Academic Freedom -- I was chair of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee at CAUT for most of the nineties. My argument at the table was that were there serious deficiencies to the current wording in the contract, and we ended up making major improvements. We have a variety of other good changes, but we
have not touched on financial matters. We can hardly wait (!).

I taught at Acadia for as a full-time Professor until 2003, and Professor Emeritus, then moved on to teach ethics in the school psychology program at Mount Saint Vincent until the present. I look forward to see you all as the battles start and finish.

Bio - Julie Quinn

Hi everyone! I am a member of the negotiating committee for the Saint Mary’s branch of CUPE 3912 I have served on the committee for the past year as we prepare to renegotiate the Part-time Collective Agreement. I am part of a four person team including Karen Harper (Communications Officer), Phil Bennett (Vice-President Saint Mary’s University) and Steve Cloutier (Union Precedent).

I am apprehensive and excited to finally be approaching negotiations. This will be my first experience at the negotiating table, but I have been a part-time professor for the past 11 years and this is my seventh consecutive year teaching in the Psychology Department at Saint Mary’s.

During this time I have been amazed and saddened at the precariousness of the part-time position; my own experiences with vertigo in the Winter semester have brought home to me the necessity of job security and some kind of health coverage as basic rights that every worker should be able to count on. We invest so much of our time, energy and expertise with so little to show in return. This is why we work together to secure our future as educators, researchers and mentors.

Opportunities for CUPE 3912 Members

Karen Harper, Communications Officer

Interested in getting more involved in the labour movement? Or just want to learn more about issues that concern unions?

There are opportunities available to all CUPE 3912 members with CUPE, the Halifax Labour Council or other organizations including courses on conflict resolution, health & safety, parliamentary procedures, stewarding and public speaking. Courses are no cost to members as CUPE 3912 will cover all costs.

Fall events include Labour Day, CUPE National Convention, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Convention and a Troublemakers Conference. I attended last year’s Troublemakers Conference on internal communication.

If you are interested in finding out more or attending any of these events or others, please contact me at:

communications.cupe3912@gmail.com
**AGM Highlights - March 10th, 2017**

After brief reports from our president and other executive members, including an update on negotiations (which had not yet started at that time), most of the meeting focused on elections of the CUPE 3912 executive. The new Executive Committee for the year 2017-2018 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Steve Cloutier</td>
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<td>Secretary Treasurer</td>
<td>Steph Bland</td>
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<td>Recording Secretary</td>
<td>Tatiana Rossolimo</td>
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<td>VP SMU</td>
<td>Phil Bennett</td>
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<td>VP MSU</td>
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<td>VP Dalhousie Part time instructors</td>
<td>Carmel Forde</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP Dalhousie TAs Sexton campus</td>
<td>Cameron Ells</td>
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<td>VP Dalhousie TAs Studly campus</td>
<td>Erik Nelson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications Officer</td>
<td>Karen Harper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sergeant-at-Arms</td>
<td>B. Hattie-Longmire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustee, 3 years</td>
<td>A. El Nabbout</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Language Centre Representative</td>
<td>Rory Leitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative for Truro Campus</td>
<td>Daryl Hayes</td>
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Leigh-Ann MacFarlane has recently stepped down from the position of VP MSVU because she has secured a permanent full-time position at the Teaching and Learning Centre at MSVU.

Congratulations Leigh-Ann

Leigh-Ann MacFarlane has recently stepped down from the position of VP MSVU because she has secured a permanent full-time position at the Teaching and Learning Centre at MSVU.

and thank-you for all your hard work with CUPE 3912!!

If you are interested in being the new VP MSVU or would like more information, please contact:  

*president.cupe3912@gmail.com*

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**Did You Know?**

Members on the precedence list can get funds for **Professional Development**

- up to **$500** at MSVU and SMU
- up to **$300** at Dal

Check the **Collective Agreement** at your institution and contact your VP for more details.

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Part-time faculty at **SMU** can get **a free parking pass**!

Just bring your contract to Facilities Management at SMU

For more information:  

[www.smu.ca/about/facilities-faculty-and-staff-parking.html](http://www.smu.ca/about/facilities-faculty-and-staff-parking.html)
Job Posting
Part-time Faculty Liaison

CUPE local 3912 has an opportunity for a motivated part-time faculty member who is interested in becoming more involved in the union that represents part-time faculty at Dalhousie, Mount St. Vincent, and St. Mary's Universities. Applicants should be outgoing and be able to talk to small/medium size groups of people. No previous work experience with unions is required.

Working with, and reporting to, the local’s Executive Committee, the goals of this position are to contact, educate and mobilize CUPE 3912’s part-time faculty. The liaison will develop and use e-mail lists to notify members of events, bargaining updates, etc.

The liaison is an employee of CUPE 3912 and, as such, will be asked to sign a contract for a set period of time decided by the Executive. While the liaison does have the opportunity to work independently, the Executive sets the primary goals, terms of employment, and the evaluation process.

The liaison must be a part-time faculty member at Dalhousie, Mount St. Vincent or St. Mary's and a member in good standing of CUPE 3912. Any necessary training will be provided by CUPE.

While the time commitment will vary as issues dictate, the expected time commitment of the position is 10 hours per week.

Liaison Job Duties:
1. Be responsible for coordinating effective communication between the Executive of CUPE 3912 and its membership.
2. Organize meetings with members either individually or in groups to provide information or obtain feedback.
3. Organize meetings between the vice-presidents (or other members of the Executive) and the membership.
4. Recruit stewards and collaborate with the vice-presidents to facilitate regular meetings of the stewards at the different universities.
5. In co-operation with the communications officer, develop educational and promotional materials such as ads, posters, and pamphlets and arrange for their distribution.
6. Provide a monthly written report to the Executive.
7. To meet with the President on a monthly basis to review activities of the previous month and to establish the priorities for the upcoming month.
8. Attend executive meetings at the discretion of the executive.
9. Attend CUPE 3912 general meetings.

Salary:
Hourly rate will be $21.52

Application deadline:
July 1st, 2017

Submit Application to:
cupe3912@dal.ca
A Better Experience for Dal TA’s and Markers
Cameron Ells

Was it good for you?
Would you do it again?
What would make it a better experience?

Let us know.

As a Teaching Assistant or Marker for a Dalhousie University course, did the hours worked correspond with the hours you were paid? Were the number of hours worked, similar to what was reasonably expected before the course began? Did you end up providing more time, effort, and services than you expected at the beginning of the course? Did you seem to have a choice? Were you adequately paid or compensated for these extra hours and services that you provided?

Let us know.

Those providing Teaching Assistant and Marker services for Dalhousie University courses, do so automatically within the scope of the Dalhousie University – CUPE 3912 Collective Agreement. TA and Marker service providers are automatically covered by CUPE 3912 representation. Their membership in CUPE is effectively automatic, even if there is no specific effort to join the union.

Before services for a specific course begin to be provided by Dalhousie University Teaching Assistants and Markers, they are to make and sign agreements based on the Teaching Assistant Duties Form. This form is in Appendix C of the Dalhousie University – CUPE 3912 Collective Agreement. Are there TA’s and Markers without a signed hardcopy of their agreement? Let us know.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor / Instructor of Record to assign duties that can reasonably be completed within the assigned hours (for which payment is made). The total agreed to number of paid hours, and their breakdown by each of the types of services being provided, is to be documented on this form. It is to be signed by the course Instructor of Record (Supervisor) and the Teaching Assistant or Marker. Each is to keep a hardcopy of the signed form; as is the Department.

Are there TA’s and Markers without a signed hardcopy of their agreement? Let us know.

Dalhousie University committed in good faith to consistently documenting work load expectations, which are tangibly reflected in the payments received by Teaching Assistants and Markers. However, the “grassroots” implementation of these relationships varies between departments, and faculties, and instructors. These forms and agreements are not always being used. Let us know.

Let us know of more examples, where the Teaching Assistant Duties Form was not used, or where what happened differed significantly from the initial reasonable expectations. Help to improve the working experiences of more Teaching Assistants and Markers. We are CUPE 3912; representatives of Teaching Assistants and Markers on this issue to Dalhousie University.

Let us know.

cupe3912@dal.ca
Teaching and Learning Centres
There to Support Instructors and TAs

There are Teaching and Learning Centres at each of the universities. They provide support and professional development to instructors so be sure to check out what each university below has to offer!

**Dalhousie University**
https://www.dal.ca/dept/clt.html

Resources are available for part-time and limited term instructors at the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT); they offer services such as short courses, workshops, learning communities, and individual consultations.

The CLT also offers resources to TAs, including a Teaching Assistant Enrichment Program, a Certificate in University Teaching and Learning, workshops, and consultations.

There will be two Orientations in September: TA day will be held on September 12th (all day sessions in the SUB), and a new orientation for Part-time Academics will be held on September 14th, 3-5:30pm in University Hall. Details will be available on the CLT website later on in the summer.

**Mount Saint Vincent University**

The Mount Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) participates in the offering of a teaching orientation session specifically for part-timers, which reviews common university procedures, policies and resources. Even if you have taught at the Mount before, this is a great refresher to start the semester off.

Throughout the year the TLC offers a range of professional development workshops and teaching-related events that all faculty and staff are welcome to attend. One-on-one consultations are available by appointment for assistance with the development of teaching practices, response to student evaluations, development of teaching dossiers and any other aspects of your teaching.

Leigh-Ann MacFarlane is the Educational Developer in the TLC who can assist you with your teaching needs. As a recent CUPE 3912 VP and part-time faculty member, Leigh-Ann is familiar not only with the Teaching and Learning component but also the unique situation faced by part-time faculty.

You can contact Leigh-Ann and the TLC staff at TLC@msvu.ca.

**Saint Mary’s University**
http://www.smu.ca/academics/studio/welcome.html

Saint Mary’s University holds an orientation for ALL new faculty – part-time and full-time – for two days in September. Their Studio for Learning and Teaching provides curriculum support, technology consultations and workshops.
Teaching Blues: A Night for Solidarity with our Teachers

On January 27th CUPE 3912 hosted a rousing night of blues music at Bearly’s House of Blues to show our solidarity with our fellow teachers in the NSTU in their conflict with the McNeil Liberals. CUPE 3912 strongly opposes the government’s anti-union and anti-teacher agenda, and we wanted to show our support for our brothers and sisters in the NSTU.

The band was lead by CUPE 3912 member Dr. Rory Leitch and his band The Blue Devils. Next to Rory is NSTU music teacher Shirley Jackson on Tenor Sax.

Who are the ~3,000 members of CUPE local 3912?

- part-time faculty at Dalhousie, Saint Mary’s and Mount Saint Vincent Universities, including clinical instructors and lab demonstrators
- teaching assistants and markers/demonstrators at Dalhousie University
- instructors at the TESL Centre at Saint Mary’s University

CUPE 3912

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Phone: 902-494-8872
Email: cupe3912@dal.ca
Office Hours: 8:15am - 1:00pm, Wed & Thurs