



FALL 2019

THE INSTRUCTOR

Welcome Message

Karen Harper, President

Hello CUPE 3912 members! I am now writing to you as president. Our wonderful new communications officer, Larissa, has put together our informative newsletter. A big thank-you to Steve for all his work as president for 6 years! The rest of the executive and our CUPE National rep, Mary Fougère, have also been very helpful and supportive in my first few months as president.

Coming to this position from communications officer rather than a vice-president gives me a different perspective. My focus remains membership engagement, especially leading up to our next round of bargaining starting in August 2020. We are starting a campaign to educate our members about our working conditions and how they compare with other universities in Atlantic Canada. We are combining this with a membership drive as we are introducing a new form of membership – find out more from your executive and staff!

You have lots of opportunities to find out more about your union at upcoming orientations and our next General Meeting. Also stay tuned for informative workshops during Fair Employment Week in mid-October, which we are organizing with the Dalhousie Faculty Association and the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers.

In the next few months I hope to do the rounds of your offices at all university campuses (even Truro!) to meet as many of you as I can. Feel free to contact me at any time to talk about issues such as bargaining, health and safety, equity and diversity.

I hope to see you soon!

In solidarity,

Karen Harper, president.cupe3912@gmail.com

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Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting: Please join us at our AGM on **Friday November 15, 2:00-4:30 pm in Room 224 in the Dalhousie Student Union Building (SUB)** (poster on page 9). This meeting is particularly important as we will be holding elections.

Fair Employment Week Workshops: In collaboration with the Dalhousie Faculty Association and ANSUT, we will be hosting a range of workshops from **October 17-23 (See flyer on page 10)**.

Did You Know?

As a member of CUPE 3912, you or your child can apply for a **bursary or scholarship for attending university, trade school or community college** from CUPE NS or the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL).

“Forcing trained, competent researchers and scientists to live from paycheque to paycheque is a terrible waste. Skilled yet precarious academics represent a huge untapped potential. Institutions need the means to hire these people to do what they trained for: to teach, to conduct research, and provide service to the community.”

- Brenda Austin-Smith
Canadian Association of Colleges and Universities (CAUT)

Thanks to Steve Cloutier

Rory Leitch, Vice-President, Saint Mary's Language Centre

The CUPE 3912 executive would like to invite all CUPE 3912 members to extend warm best wishes to Brother Steve Cloutier, who has resigned as President of CUPE 3912 after nine years of dedicated service to the CUPE executive. Steve joined the 3912 executive in 2010, when he was elected as recording secretary. He then spent two years as the VP for Saint Mary's. Steve was elected President in September 2013 and served in that position until April of 2019.

During his years of dedicated service to CUPE 3912, Steve has been a vigorous defender of CUPE members, both in his efforts to bargain for stronger Collective Agreements for each of the 3912 bargaining units, and in identifying and attempting to remedy violations of our Collective

Agreement rights through the grievance process. In addition, as president of 3912, Steve's major priority has been to modernize the structure of the local and increase communications within the membership. Communications are an enormous challenge for CUPE 3912, and Steve has initiated several key initiatives in this area, including the creation of liaison positions within the local and the introduction of an up-to-date electronic Collective Agreement ratification process. Steve has also worked very hard to create a long-term financial planning strategy for the local and to add much needed stability to the position of President in our local. While we know that he will be sorely missed, we can thank Steve for his work in creating an executive board structure that will allow us to continue our work going forward. Thank you, Steve – *cura ut valeas*.

Domestic Violence Leave in Nova Scotia

By Shiva Nourpanah, Provincial Coordinator, Transition House Association Nova Scotia, Part-time Faculty, Saint Mary's University

Domestic violence is a complex crime which has often complicated and lasting impacts on the victim and her surrounding environment. More than "just" physical harm, domestic violence may involve mental health issues, child protection services, housing problems or even homelessness, legal complications and criminal charges, financial implications, and the disruption of family and work life. Domestic violence is known to impact the workplace: many abusers stalk and harass their victims at, on the way to and from their place of work, and we have witnessed several extreme cases of domestic homicide at the workplace over the past years. Thus, employers are encouraged to put in place policies that address domestic violence in the workplace.

All these issues take time and resources to address, and we are seeing more and more jurisdictions acknowledging this reality by passing legislation which provides for some form of paid and unpaid leave, for victims of

domestic violence. At the federal level, the government has included five days of paid domestic violence leave and ten unpaid days. Nova Scotia has joined several other provinces including Ontario and New Brunswick to legislate domestic violence leave as of 1st Jan 2019 as follows:

Domestic violence leave can be taken by an employee who is experiencing domestic violence or whose child (under 18) is experiencing domestic violence. The employee may take up to ten intermittent or consecutive days per calendar year. The employee may also take up to 16 consecutive (continuous) weeks per calendar year. Up to three days of the leave must be paid by the employer. To qualify for domestic violence leave, the employee must have worked with the employer for at least three months¹.

¹ Retrieved from <https://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights/leaves.asp#domestic-violence> on 21 August 2019

This online education module developed by the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women provides more information:

<https://lae.znanja.com/lms/course/view/644683/0>

For free, confidential advice on how to support someone whom you suspect may be experiencing domestic violence, please call 1-855-225-0220

Or contact a transition house or shelter for abused women in your area: www.thans.ca

CUPE-Nova Scotia Round-up

By Clare Heggie, TA, Dalhousie Studley Campus

There have been lots of exciting campaigns led by CUPE locals across Nova Scotia this year! Here's a round-up of some of some of the initiatives our brothers and sisters across the province have been working on.

CUPE 1867, Nova Scotia's Highwayworker's Union, is currently advocating for a safe, twinned and public highway for Pictou-Antigonish. The provincial government has plans to build and operate the new Pictou-Antigonish twinned highway as a public-private partnership (P3) under a 30-year contract with a private consortium. CUPE 1867 has been leading a public education campaign that explains why publicly owned and maintained highways ensure government accountability and safe roads. Important details, such as how quickly after a snowfall that roads must be cleared, have not been made public. Reports by auditor generals in other provinces have found that private companies took longer to clear roads and used significantly less salt and de-icing materials than publicly maintained roads. CUPE 1867 is asking supporters to contact their MLAs and advocate for a publicly owned twinned highway. You can do so at <https://safehighwaysns.ca/>.

CUPE Convention

I was fortunate to be able to attend the CUPE NS Convention in Membertou from May 26 - 29th. This report summarizes some of the key happenings. Key discussions:

1. Bill 148: Bill 148, and its implications for CUPE and other workers, was discussed by several speakers. A roundtable shared progress so far in fighting Bill 148 and what the Bill means for bargaining.
2. Federal election: The upcoming election was discussed by several speakers, including MLA and provincial Nova Scotia NDP leader Gary Burrill. The role of CUPE in political advocacy was discussed.
3. Strategic Planning for Bargaining: A panel shared a presentation on strategic planning for bargaining from the CUPE National Bargaining Conference held in Saskatoon.
4. Domestic violence in the workplace: A panel on domestic violence in the workplace was presented. This panel was very informative. It discussed how to support co-workers who may be experiencing violence, workplace safety in relation to domestic

violence and your rights as someone who has experienced violence.

Resolutions of Interest

1. Resolution 15: Lobby the government for paid leave for victims of domestic violence and assist locals in creating language for collective agreements to protect victims of domestic violence while at work.

2. Resolution 26: Lobby the HRM police to stop the practice of carding.

3. Resolution 32: Send a letter of support to CUPE National Aboriginal Council for their fight with the federal government to take action on: Safe drinking water for First Nations Communities, Justice for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, Indigenous education and honouring for residential school children and Passing bill c-369 for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation AND Encourage local to do the same.

What CUPE 3912 Does for You!

We negotiate collective agreements that provide our members with job security, including protection from arbitrary changes to wage and working conditions. We make sure that provisions of the collective agreements are followed.

We are preparing to return to bargaining in 2020, so expect a bargaining drive, with updates and opportunities for provide input in the new year. Our wages remain among the lowest in Canada – an active and unified membership is our best chance at improving our situation!

In instances where the employer violates the collective agreement, a **grievance** may be filed to resolve your issue. If you have questions about this process or the collective agreement, contact the Vice-President for your institution.

In addition to standing up for our members' rights, we also support other unions, knowing that we will get their support when we need it. Solidarity is the fundamental belief of the labour movement.

We provide a political voice on campus, across the province, and in Ottawa. We are affiliated with CUPE National, CUPE Nova Scotia, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, and local and national labour congresses. Every year we send members to labour conferences, courses, and workshops like the CAUT Council and the Halifax Labour Council Troublemakers' Workshop. Participating in one of these workshops is a great way to become more involved in our local and in the labour movement more generally.

Teaching Assistants: Know Your Rights!

Being a teaching assistant is a valuable experience: you develop teaching and

communication skills. It is also an important contribution to the quality of education at

Dalhousie: you use your educational background to help others learn. All TAs are members of CUPE 3912 and therefore guaranteed a number of rights and services outlined in our collective agreement. These include:

- A safe, harassment-free, non-discriminatory workplace
- Union representation and grievance handling, in the event of a dispute
- A priority system for TA positions
- A maximum workweek of 14 hours and an average workweek of ten hours
- The right to overtime pay for agreed-upon additional hours

- The space, facilities, services, and equipment necessary to do your job

At the start of every term, you should discuss with your supervisor what your responsibilities will be. Use the Workload Agreement Form at the back of the collective agreement to make this discussion official and documented.

www.3912.cupe.ca/documents/ta-guide/

If you are working too many hours, the first step is to talk to your supervisor. In many cases this will resolve the problem. If they are not willing to adjust your workload, contact the department head about your problem (either in person or through email). If that does not solve the problem contact a Union representative.

CUPE 3912 – Good News

By David Banoub, CUPE 3912 Part-time Liaison

This write-up is to keep members up-to-date on our and our members' activities and accomplishments.

Matthew MacLellan was one of the three recipients of MSVU's Teaching Excellence Awards. In addition to this, Dr. MacLellan has also recently published his translation of Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval's *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century* with Bloomsbury Academic; as well as an article: "Indigenous Infopolitics: Biopolitics as Resistance to White Paper Liberalism in Canada" in *Theory and Event*, volume 21, No.4.

Catherine Baillie Abid and Shiva Nourpanah recently launched a new book that they co-edited, *Refugees and Forced Migration: The Canadian Perspective, An A-Z Guide* from

Nimbus Publishing. All author royalties from the book will be donated to the Halifax Refugee Clinic.

Dr. Nourpanah was also awarded SSHRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship with the Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence at the University of Guelph.

Bruce Cameron Reed published the second edition of *The History and Science of the Manhattan Project* with Springer press.

Active member Lindsay Pattison has left Halifax to take up an LTA at the Simon Fraser University.

Congratulations to all.

Happy trails to CUPE 3912 volunteer and Communication Committee member, Bonita

Squires, as she prepares to move to Vancouver. Thank you for your contributions to our local and our newsletters.

We held several events over the summer. In June we had a well-attended family picnic on a sunny Saturday afternoon. In July, members marched alongside other labour

unions in the Halifax Pride Parade. In August we had a well-attended pub night.

If you have an accomplishment, publication, or event you would like shared with members, please notify Dave Banoub (part.time.liaison.3912@gmail.com).

Meet Your New Communications Officer

Larissa Atkison



Larissa is an Adjunct in Political Science at Dalhousie and currently teaches in Political Science. She is committed to fighting for fair compensation and working conditions for precarious academics, and is excited to be involved in community building with CUPE 3912. Come out and join her and other members at 3912 events and workshops throughout the year!

What We've Been Up To! CUPE 3912 Recent Photo Album



We kicked off the summer with a picnic in Point Pleasant Park!



We supported member Shiva Nourpanah at her book launch on refugees and forced migration.



We met with NDP Candidate Christine Saulnier to share our concerns about contingent academic employment.



We were proud to march with CUPE-NS and represent our Local in this year's Halifax Pride Parade!



We started this semester with an informative CUPE 101 workshop.



We also held a successful workshop on LGBTQ2SIA inclusion in the classroom, in collaboration with South House.

Volunteers Needed

CUPE 3912 is looking for members in all departments to act as **Departmental Representatives**. These positions will help to better connect members with each other and with the CUPE 3912 executive. This will be a fairly limited time commitment. No union experience is necessary; training will be provided by your VP and through optional workshops from CUPE NS.

At MSVU we need a representative for the university's Harassment and Discrimination Policy Subcommittee and a representative for the Safety Committee.



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

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Dalhousie University

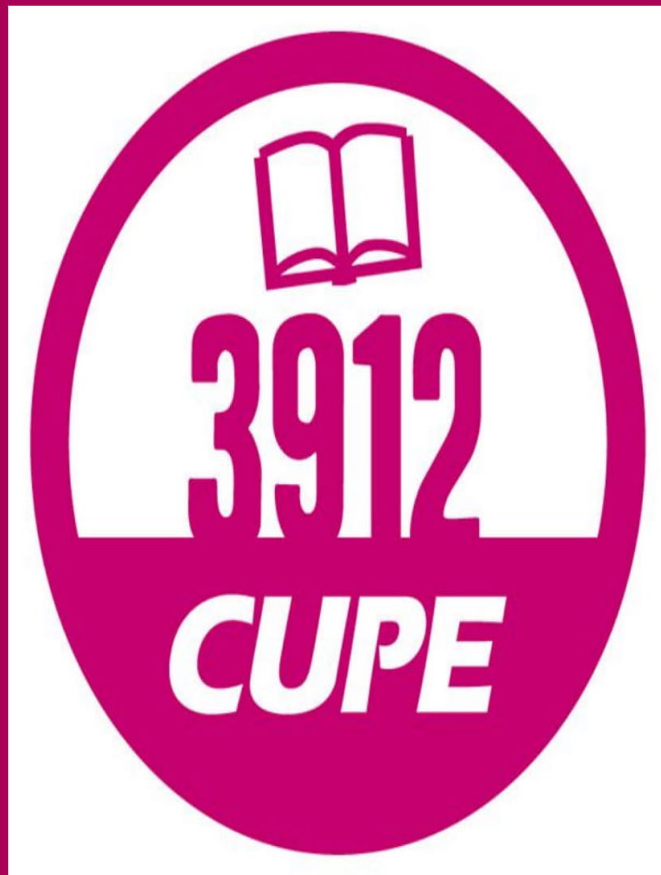
Halifax, NS B3H 4H8

General Meeting

This meeting will include: the election of a treasurer, a VP for TAs at the Studley Campus, a VP for SMU, and two trustees; proposals for by-law amendments; and the selection of our 2020 bargaining teams.

Friday November 15, 2019
2-4:30pm

Dalhousie
Student Union Building, Room 224



Fair Employment Week Events:

Plans and Pitfalls: Long-term Research on Short-term Contracts

October 17th, 5-7pm

Saint Mary's University (TBA)

Benefits for Contract Academic Staff in Halifax: Exploring the Possibilities

October 18, 2019 at 3-5 pm:

Dalhousie University, SUB 307

STRIKE! What to Do When Your Union Calls a Strike

October 23, 6:30-8:30pm

Dalhousie University, SUB 307

