



SPRING 2021

THE INSTRUCTOR

Welcome from the President

Karen Harper

Hello CUPE 3912 members!

This welcome is the message from the president as our communications officer is currently vacant. A special thanks to the contributors to this newsletter and to Dave, our outreach coordinator, who put the newsletter together! Please join us at our Annual General Meeting when we will have elections for half of our executive positions including communications officer.

The content of our newsletter is mostly related to bargaining with some articles related to COVID to reflect our current situation of negotiations at all three universities during COVID. Articles were written by members of our bargaining teams and the bargaining support committee about our current working conditions to give context to our ongoing bargaining. Here you will find excerpts from my bargaining updates, information on professional development funds, analysis of the legal aspects of academic freedom, analysis of the financial situation of selected universities and an assessment of the results of the TA survey from last year. Note that opinions are from the authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect official bargaining positions. We also have bios of new executive officers and non-executive officers, a report on SMU Town Halls and a summary of the new CAUT/CUPE campaign "Education for All."

Feel free to contact me at any time to discuss these and any other issues.

In solidarity,

Karen Harper

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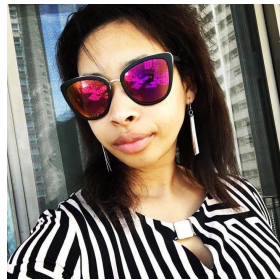
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Officers' Introductions

Fallen Matthews,
VP, Dalhousie,
Teaching Assistants, Studley Campus

Fallen is an Afro-L'nu writer and IDPhD candidate at Dalhousie University. Her research interests span artificial intelligence, gender studies, history, and sociology with a concentration in cinema and media studies.

Her projects explore film, religiosity, and economics. Activism, ancestors, and positionality cultivated her passion for justice and labour relations



which in turn led her to endeavours in student governance and advocacy; while her tenacity maintains her academic pursuits. Her writing has appeared in the *Journal of Comparative Media Arts*, *Model View Culture*, *Black Feminist Collective*, *Rigorous: A Journal by People of Color*, in addition to other periodicals and erotica anthologies.

She enjoys literary fiction, *The [original] Twilight Zone* series, and the misadventures of her cats.

Kim Robinson,
Membership Officer and Trustee

I am a part-time instructor at Saint Mary's University and have been contract teaching full-time since 2006. Prior to that, I worked for over a decade in a clinical capacity in the

Paul Manning,
VP, Dalhousie
Truro Campus

I am a postdoctoral researcher at Dalhousie University within the Faculty of Agriculture. My research focuses on the importance and vulnerability of biodiversity in agroecosystems.

As a CUPE3912 member, I teach courses in entomology, environmental studies, climate change, and research methods. I grew up in the



Annapolis Valley (Canning), completed my graduate studies in the United Kingdom, and have called Truro home since 2016. My favourite things: spending quality time with my wife and son, going for long walks, learning about natural history, reading, and taking art classes. I became involved with the CUPE3912 executive in November 2020. I joined to represent the concerns and interests of our Truro members, and to contribute to the collective well-being of our entire local and, crucially, the students we serve.

field of forensic psychology, both within the community and in a federal penitentiary. I teach mainly introductory level courses, but more recently I have become interested in

and have been teaching courses in a new approach in the field called positive psychology.

In addition to teaching, over the past several years, I have become more interested in the labour movement and have participated in a few ways. I attended the week-long school at St. F.X., Antigonish, hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress in 2018. I also attended the Canadian Association of University Teachers Council meeting in 2018

as an assistant to our delegate. This provided me with some insight to the both the process of the CAUT council and also to the experiences of contract faculty across the country. Lastly, I also served as one of three Trustees for local CUPE Local 3912 in completing three annual audits. Currently, I serve as Membership Officer and also continue in the role of Trustee. I have really enjoyed working with CUPE 3912 and look forward to continuing.

Annual General Meeting

April 16 at 2 pm, online

To RSVP for the meeting, contact our Membership Officer, Kim Robinson (kimrobinson1945@icloud.com), by April 14. A link will be sent to those who have RSVP'd prior to the meeting.

The meeting will include a bargaining update and the elections for:

- Vice President, Part-time Instructors Dalhousie, Truro Campus
- Vice President, Teaching Assistants, Dalhousie, Studley Campus
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Vice President, Instructors at TLC, SMU
- Vice President, Part-time Instructors at MSVU
- Communications Officer
- Trustee

If you are interested in standing for election for any of these positions please contact us. To be nominated, you must attend the meeting or submit your nomination beforehand to president.cupe3912@gmail.com

Nominations of members of marginalized groups are encouraged.

All members are welcome.

Survey Says . . . On Reducing TA / Marker “Family Feuds” with our Employer

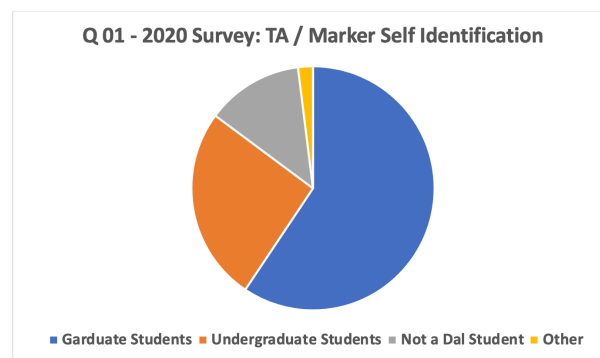
Cameron Ells, VP Dalhousie, Teaching Assistants, Sexton Campus

In February 2020, a CUPE 3912 online survey of current and recent Dalhousie TAs and Markers, had about 250 people, clicking responses (e.g. a number in the 0-7 range) to about 50 questions. The confidential results were reviewed, analyzed, and then influenced our collective bargaining priorities. These were endorsed by a CUPE 3912 member vote in June 2020 and were a basis for subsequent new CUPE 3912 Collective Agreement proposals, with our Dalhousie University employer.

There is a common CUPE 3912-Dalhousie University Collective Agreement – a contract – whose provisions cover academic services provided on all campuses by employees (i.e. Part Time Instructors, Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Markers). TAs and Markers are hourly employees. For some, our working conditions sometimes seem to resemble those of a contractor (e.g. paid a fixed fee for providing a service outcome, regardless of the number of hours worked).

While there is a common agreement, there are some dynamics in the TA and Marker working experiences that are not consistent in a workplace where the contract implementation is typically decentralized (e.g. by faculty or department); where each year there is a percentage of new supervisors (e.g. course instructors); and these supervisors have a varying capacity to authorize changes in the number of paid hours.

The hourly rates, since September 2019, for a TA (\$24.41/hour) and Marker (\$16.61 / hour) resemble those of a local unionized cook and assistant. The Halifax Regional Municipality is implementing a policy where in future contracts, service providers such as curbside solid waste removers, receive a “living wage” rate (e.g. \$21.80 / hour).



There are financial and other motivations for the TA and Marker services we provide. In addition to the hourly rate, there are other ways to increase the financial payment received, for the actual number of hours worked. A TA and Marker priority, expressed through the 2020 Survey results, regards reducing the opportunity for “mission creep” (e.g. a changing or expanded scope of work by the employer, without a corresponding change in the number of paid hours; or an originally underestimated number of hours by the employer, to do “the work” that is not corrected during the term of the contract). In December 2020, CUPE 3912 shared a Digital Duty Form with TAs, Markers, and Instructors:

<https://3912.cupe.ca/files/2020/12/Duty-Form-CUPE-3912-Version-1.0.pdf>.

The text is essentially that of a paper form in the Collective Agreement, with duties and numbers of paid hours, that is to be signed by TAs and Instructors. Having a writable PDF version, in a COVID world with less in person interactions, that could also be used

for Marker contract applications, can reduce the opportunity for Mission Creep.

Other Survey 2020 priorities included improving the timeliness, of when it is confirmed that TA's and Markers will be working upcoming courses; and greater transparency in the evaluation and decision making used in selecting preferred applicant candidates.

Professional Development Fund - Article 18.5

Carmel Forde, VP Dalhousie Part-Time Faculty

Our current collective agreement at Dalhousie contains an article outlining the abilities of members to acquire support for professional development. After discussion with the university, we have agreed to change a current constraint on members who apply.

While the university provides a fund that allows for financial support of up to \$500 in any one case, the awarding of such funds has been limited by timing. The current article states "To be eligible, the Part-Time Academic must be on the precedence list, **and hold an appointment at the time of the conference and/or event.** The bold section – a serious constraint that limits the time during which one can get expect access to funds – does not apply at this time.

Instead, we are currently working with a less restrictive form of eligibility: **one must be on the precedence list, and one must have taught within the past year.** This, we hope, will open the fund to many more members, as it is not required that a member be teaching whilst participating in the academic

conference or professional development opportunity.

Any member who wishes to attend a conference, or use the funds for travel, for registration fees, for accommodation, and other relevant costs, should apply to the dean of their faculty, since CUPE 3912 itself does not distribute funds, nor make determinations about who acquires the funds. The dean of your faculty will then submit the form to the VP for confirmation.

Since the fund is meant to support CUPE 3912 members who are presenting papers, or participating in panels at academic conferences, or some other relevant professional development event, the more information you provide about the event, the more likely you are to receive the maximum funding possible (\$500).

So, if you are a member with precedence, and plan to attend a conference or a workshop, here are some ideas about documentation that may be useful for your application. Providing the invitation to speak

(or to comment on a paper) at a conference, or a workshop will be useful. If it is possible, include the program (or tentative program) for the event.

Including the conference materials that are currently available - e.g. those that detail the registration fee (if you wish to claim it, or to reference it), the dates, the location, or a link that supports such information, will be useful to the administration. The conference or workshop title, whether or not it is international, national, or local, and then details about the cost of travel (plane/train/bus) and/ or accommodation should travel be necessary, will also help to support decision making. If you plan to drive, giving information about the distance and parking costs for the conference could also be useful.

Although CUPE 3912 has negotiated this article in the CA, and the temporary

arrangement is not yet firmly bargained for the next CA, we are hopeful that the current change will become permanent. Notice that for any applicant, the only way in which the union is involved is that a copy of names of successful applicants is sent to the union.

Good luck with your professional development application!

NOTE: Professional development funds are also available for part-time instructors at SMU and the Mount. Check your collective agreements (3912.cupe.ca/document.collective-agreements) or contact your VP for details.

Academic Freedom Inside and Outside the Academy Student Rating of Instruction/Student Evaluations of Teaching: Doing More Harm than Good Keith MacMaster, CUPE 3912 Bargaining Support Committee

Student Ratings of Instruction (“SRI”) (also known as Student evaluations of teaching (SET)) are used widely in hiring, promoting, disciplining, and firing university instructors. Universities generally treat SRIs as a primary measure of teaching effectiveness or quality. However, the usefulness of SRIs is suspect at best, and in many circumstances, the association between SRI and an objective measure of teaching effectiveness is negative. SRIs significantly negatively

impact instructors hired through contracts from unions such as CUPE3912.

In 2018, in the labour arbitration case *Ryerson University and The Ryerson Faculty Association*, the arbitrator, William Kaplan, ruled that SRIs cannot assess the most meaningful aspects of teaching performance and effectiveness. Kaplan stated that SRIs provide data about the instructor’s ability to communicate, the prompt return of assignments, the student’s enjoyment and

experience, and the course's difficulty or ease. Insofar as assessing teaching effectiveness is concerned, especially in tenure and promotion, SRIs are imperfect, biased and unreliable. SRI scores get averaged and compared with individuals, departments, and faculties, yet these averages establish nothing relevant or useful about teaching effectiveness. As such, Kaplan arbitrated that Ryerson could no longer use SRIs to measure teaching effectiveness for tenure or promotion.

In 2020, Kathleen O'Neil, in *Association of Part-time Professors of the University of Ottawa v University of Ottawa*, stated, "I fully accept the association's submissions about the impact of withholding seniority points on the lives and seniority rankings of members, who are engaged in inherently precarious employment as part-time teaching staff. It appears that the use of student evaluations at this university suffers from the same problems articulated in the Ryerson decision referred to above." However, she did not go as far as *Ryerson* and recommend banning SRIs and, in fact, dismissed this part of the grievance. She allowed another section based on the wording of the collective agreement, not based on *Ryerson*.

In *Douglas College v Douglas College Faculty Association*, a British Columbia arbitration refused to follow *Ryerson*'s recommendations. The arbitrator said:

"I acknowledge that there is literature questioning the validity of student evaluations and their effectiveness in assessing a faculty member's teaching capability. Whether I agree with it or not, the parties themselves have included student evaluations as a

component of a faculty member's evaluation in the Collective Agreement. If student evaluations are not to be used, then the parties may need to discuss an alternative evaluation methodology, as a peer evaluation in one class is ineffective as the sole source of someone's teaching effectiveness. The Employer's use of the class fill rates, in my opinion, is not relevant. Class fill rates can be low because of the course schedule, or many variables not relative to the instructor's style."

Several universities in the United States have banned or limited SRI impacts. The University of Oregon, Colorado State University at Fort Collins, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Kansas, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Southern California, and a University of California Berkeley division are researching SRI alternatives.

Following this trend, Simon Fraser University is researching alternatives. They state: "SET in itself is not a measure of student learning. It is better to think of SET as a tool for understanding the student experience. We recommend that faculty use SET as a tool to inform pedagogy, to find out what students believe is working in their classes and what is not, to discover how a new format or method was received. We recommend that TPCs and Deans not use SET for the biennial review process, as there is too much potential for bias."

Key Contributing Factors

Many topics and questions skew results. These can be grouped into five 'buckets:'

1. Sample size and self-selection bias

The most significant factor(s) in SRIs is the small sample size. Universities assume that the writings of a small minority represent the entire class. Research proves that it does not, and it may just be the opposite. Making things worse is the shift to online, anonymous surveys. Finally, the timing of surveys (before or after exams or papers) matters. Kaplan, in *Ryerson*, explicitly notes that “there is certainly no reason to believe that the views of responders can be extrapolated and applied to non-responders.”

2. Grades and course easiness

Research shows that grades (actual and expected) influence SRI scores. There is evidence that instructors will modify behaviour to increase grades to get a better SRI score. Moreover, how easy a course is will influence scores. Easier courses get better scores than courses with heavier workloads, even though heavier workloads are better for students.

3. Class features outside the instructor's control

The class size, format, course description, whether the course is mandatory or elective, whether it is first or second year versus upper-year, undergraduate vs graduate, influence scores. In most or all of these cases, the instructor has no control. Even more critical, a technical course generally gets much lower scores than a non-technical course. Students do not have the expertise to comment on course content and teaching methods and assignments, such as the questions that seek to measure the breadth of the instructor's knowledge, scholarship, curriculum choices.

4. Non-gender or racial instructor characteristics

There are specific characteristics of the instructor that seem to matter. How attractive they are or how 'hot' is a big influencer of scores. How likeable they are also matters. While likability may seem like a legitimately useful measure of teaching effectiveness, it may be more linked to how attractive they are rather than how likeable they are. Importantly for CUPE3912, contract professors get much lower scores than tenured professors.

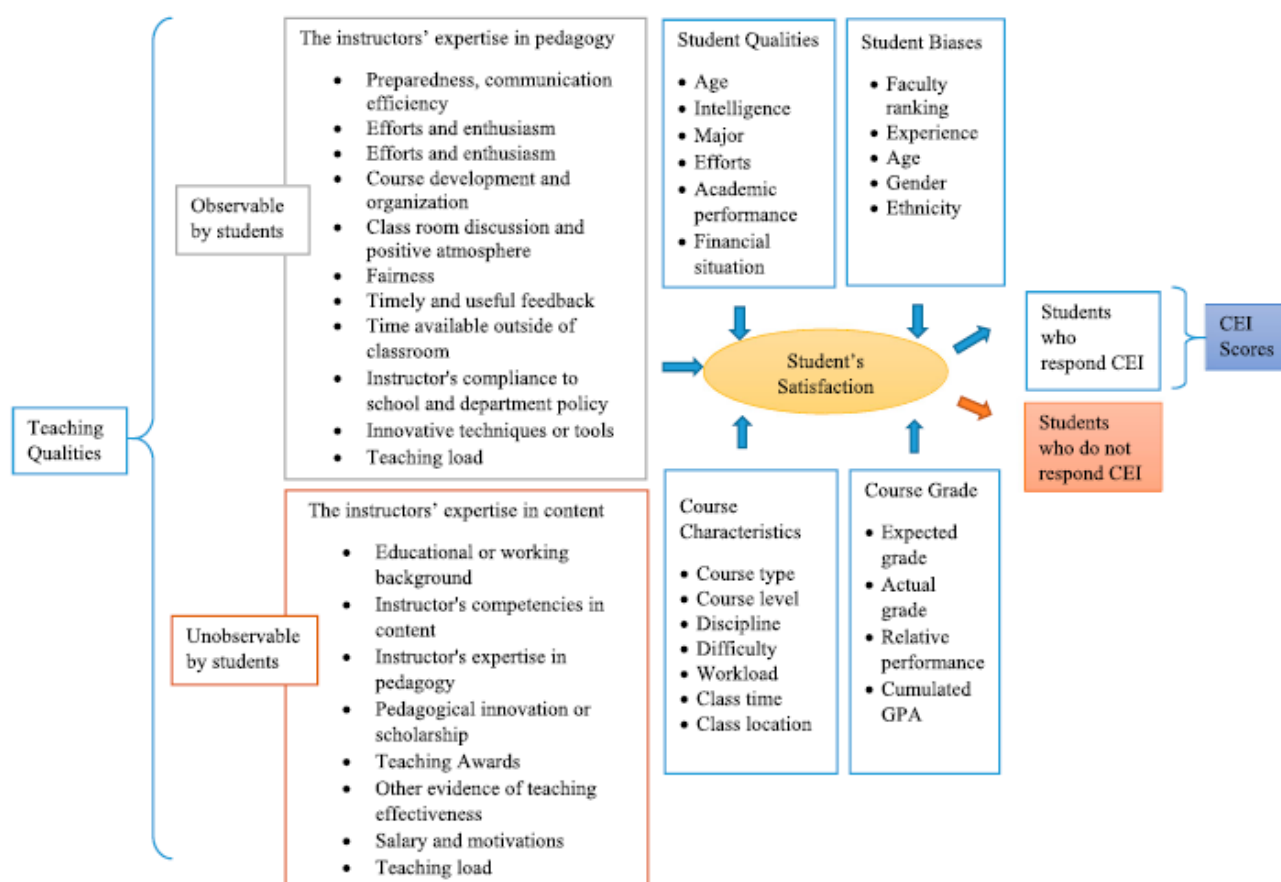
5. Gender and racial characteristics

Women tend to get lower scores in older academic studies. Racial evidence is very mixed, and very little research teases gender and racial effects. Much more research is required.

Conclusion and Alternatives to SRI

In sum, the evidence shows that SRIs should not be used to measure teaching effectiveness, nor for any hiring, disciplining, or firing decisions. There is no demonstrated value in comparing average results across course formats, levels, topics and disciplines. They should only be used by and for the professor (for their eyes only). While the *Ryerson* decision does not bind universities in Nova Scotia, it provides solid evidence for future negotiations.

Wang and Williamson (2020) provide a helpful framework:



We need to develop alternatives to the current SRI format. The best way to assess teaching effectiveness is to assess an instructor's teaching dossier critically. This dossier should be then complemented by actual teaching as an ongoing inquiry, experimentation, and reflection process. These dossiers should include a CV, the course syllabus, a comparison of the syllabus with syllabi of other courses at other universities, the textbook and assignments used, and other criteria.

Non-SRI information, such as whether a professor was asked to write letters of recommendation, should be used. If a student asks for a letter of recommendation, they most likely had very positive views on the instructor. Other items such as the number of job applications an instructor receives for a TA or RA position could be

conducting in-class peer evaluations using specially trained instructors.

Comprehensive teaching dossiers provide the necessary information to evaluate the

included. Together with peer evaluations, they help paint the most accurate picture of teaching effectiveness.

Selected References

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Reflections on a SMU Town Hall, March 24: Part 1

CUPE 3912 member

I attended this Town Hall remotely with 300+ attendees on the first Anniversary of the day SMU began delivering the academic program to students online (March 23, 2020).

There were two speakers: President, Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray and Vice President, Advancement, Erin Sargeant Greenwood. The proceedings were recorded. Most importantly, this was a very positive experience! You can enjoy the whole session by yourself.

Here are some of my personal recollections.

Dr. Summerby-Murray spoke to the entire SMU community of the special high quality and standing of St. Mary's University in the

context of higher education in Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada and globally.

The President spoke of SMU evolving together with strength and confidence, keeping the present momentum; he emphasized that "sitting still is not an option." All in all, it was a very optimistic report!

His remarks were organized according to five themes.

1. Key Investments in the future of SMU: teaching and learning

As a result of cost containment, SMU has invested newly in an expansion of the SAS (Software and Application Centre), in an upgrade of digital technology in general and

Brightspace in particular, the Jump Start Program, emergency bursary support, and employee benefits.

2. The Sobey Entrepreneurship Hub Building Project

This is an exciting, large capital building project, 42 million dollars investment in a world-class future for SMU and our students, with cross-faculty involvement. The project begins soon, in April, with the demolition of Gorsebrook House, and completion is expected within 18-24 months.

3. Branding SMU

The President spoke briefly on the Re-Branding project that has been taking place under the direction of VP Advancement, Erin Sargeant Greenwood. Later, the VPA gave a detailed report on this project which was the second half of the Town Hall.

In brief, this is a marketing effort which is asking two fundamental questions of us: What is it about St. Mary's? What sets St. Mary's apart? The goal is to tell St. Mary's strong story globally.

4. Strategic Plan

The goal here is to replace the 2017 plan which was pre-COVID of course. This is under the direction of the VP Finance and Administration, with input from members of

the SMU community and the public as to how we should react to changes and how to stay the same.

5. Diversity Excellence

The President spoke of creating a fair and equitable modern university-- which would allow us to be responsive to great diversity. He mentioned diversity in gender, LGBTQ+, Truth and Reconciliation, and systemic racism. In the latter connection he mentioned the Black North Initiative, the Scarborough National Charter, and the fact that SMU had signed the Federal commitment to ensure that in 50% of senior positions, there would be women.

All in all, I found this a very positive experience and I encourage you to listen to the President's own words yourself. Next newsletter I plan to report on the Branding Project.

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).

“For what it’s worth”: On fair wages, undergrad tuition fees, full-time and tenure track salaries, and part-time and contract pay

By Neil Balan, CUPE 3912 Bargaining Support Committee

Given that bargaining negotiations are often indexed to inflation, costs of living, and comparator institutions, I'm interested in understanding part-time and contract faculty wages/stipends in different ways according to other measures and comparisons. My aim: make sense of CUPE 3912's bargaining efforts to secure a new collective agreement (CA) that actually reflects the work we do in universities.

The current round of bargaining is important on its own. Yet, in a bigger way, this CA will be a bridge to a post-pandemic labour environment where public sector institutions and PSE are subject to a kind of 'corona-shock doctrine,' which will likely justify and legitimize the increased casualization of labour and harden what was already a normalization of a sector-wide reliance on precarious contract labour. We see this happening in Alberta, where the provincial government there is flirting with significantly scaling back public monies for PSE, imagining a more thoroughly private version of what is an increasingly public-private university. According to Statistics Canada data from 2020, Canadian universities spend 60% of their revenues on benefits, compensation, wages, and salaries (Table 37-10-0027-01), so we can anticipate that contract and part-time faculty will bear a disproportionate amount of whatever austere legislation unfolds.

We can also suggest, too, that one of the biggest threats to academic freedom and

really-existing collegial self-government is precarious university labour. Precarious labour undermines collective teaching and learning, and the reliance on and the naturalization of precarious labour willfully produces asymmetries and secures antagonisms between different communities in the university that divide us all in what is increasingly becoming an enterprise environment.

As I provide (and have, for the last two years, been providing) just-in-time teaching labour for three different universities in two different provinces – WLU in Ontario, where I taught in person from 2014-2019 while living in Toronto; MSVU and SMU here in Halifax since 2019 – I decided to compare undergrad tuition fees, full-time and tenure track salaries, and part-time and contract pay in order to get a sense of where we stand in the context of precarious work and what we accept as a "fair" wage. For what it's worth, I taught as an LTA and sessional instructor at the University of Saskatchewan from 2009 to 2013, and I was earning more per course then in Saskatchewan than I am here at MSVU and SMU.

I also included Dalhousie (3912) and Acadia, which seems to be a comparator institution. Additionally, I tried to get a sense of the funding mix in Ontario and Nova Scotia in relation to university revenues from provincial funding and from tuition fees along with a sense of the over money that goes toward

funding full-time equivalent (FTEs) undergrad students.

Understanding the relationship between tuition, TT/FT salaries, and PT/contract pay offers a different way to measure and quantify a situation in which PT/contract faculty are undervalued, undercompensated, and obscured from view in the wider political economy of the neoliberal and semi-public university where austerity and lean budgets. Framing this in relation to wider public government spending on PSE is in real, proportional, and comparative terms is something that could reveal more about the wider economic and financial situation.

So, this is a partial picture using StatsCan data from 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021, CAUT data from 2017, and data from Universities Canada, a stand-alone but reliable third-party website. In addition, I consulted the current WLUFA, CUPE 3912, and AUFA collective agreements. All figures below are CAD.

Tuition, Revenues, and Funding

NS undergraduate tuition (domestic students) is, on average for 2020-2021, the highest of any province or territory (\$8,700). Saskatchewan is second, and Ontario is third.

Here's tuition according to average for domestic undergrads at the different universities at which I teach with added figures for Dalhousie and for Acadia Universities ([Canadian Universities 2021](#)).

- SMU = \$6,887 - \$8,170
- MSVU = \$6,887 - \$8,170
- Dalhousie = \$6,820 - \$8,103
- Acadia = \$7,918 - \$9,201
- WLU = \$5,663 - \$7,081

Ontario universities on the whole have more revenue, charge lower tuition, and but rely on tuition for more of its overall revenue (i.e., high student populations across the board in total and proportional terms).

According to StatsCan data for 2018-2019 for universities **and** degree-granting colleges, Ontario institutions had a total revenue of \$17.3 billion, \$4.5 billion of which came from the province and \$6.8 billion of which came from tuition fees. Ontario tuition fees account for 39.3% of all revenue.

The NS situation for 2018-2019: \$1.48 billion with \$443.2 million from the province and \$477.6 million from tuition fees. NS tuition accounts for 32% of overall revenue.



A distant memory – our campaign from pre-pandemic times in January 2020

Last, according to the CAUT data for 2016-2017 from StatsCan, provincial funding per FTE varies significantly.

- NS average spending for FTE = \$11,139
- ON average spending for FTE = \$7,841

While the numbers have likely changed since 2017, this means that NS spent more per

FTE undergrad student while also asking them to pay more overall.

Contract Teaching Faculty and Part-Time Faculty/Employee Pay

If Ontario tuition is lower across the board, and if WLU is lower than CUPE 3912 schools and Acadia, what do we see with contract stipends and wages? CTF/PT faculty stipends in 3912 are closer to 63% of what they are in ON if we use WLU as a comparator. WLU, like Acadia, has no CUPE local for contract faculty. It has a faculty association with two units: one for tenure-track full-time employees and one for CTF/PT and limited-term appointments.

For 0.5 credit course (1 semester, 39 credit hours), the first "step" at WLU in 2020-2021 is \$8,320 for faculty with less than 5 years of experience at WLU (WLUFA 2019, 25.2, p. 92).

The first step in the grid at Acadia is \$6,325 for part-time employees teaching stand-alone courses (AUF 2017, p. 160). Acadia's stipend is about 76% compared to WLU

Across 3912, we'll say that the first step is \$5,200 at SMU, MSVU, and Dal. Again, this is 63% of WLU's rate. The 3912 rate is also 82% of Acadia's rate.

Tenure-Track and Full-Time Faculty

SMU, MSVU, and Dal TT/FT salaries are most definitely neither 63% of WLU nor 82% of Acadia's average.

Comparing 2018-2019 data for average median salary presents a different picture (NB: SMU and MSVU have no available data for 2019-2020), we see the following.

WLU is at \$143,725 for all ranks combined including deans (2019-2020 salaries = \$150,400).

- SMU = \$123,050.
- MSVU = \$120,050.
- Dalhousie = \$139,900 (\$142,350 for 2019-2020).
- Acadia = \$116,550 (\$118,500 for 2019-2020).

So, in comparison to WLU, SMU = 85.6% of WLU. MSVU = 83.5% of WLU. Dalhousie = 98%. Dalhousie's medical school and research intensity bump up the overall average in relation to SMU and MSVU, but WLU salaries are still higher.

The provincial context is remarkable in that all three of the 3912 schools have FT/TT median salaries **that are higher** than Acadia's average.

To Sum Up

Nova Scotia undergraduates pay the highest tuition fees in the country.

While the data is 4 years old, the province pays more for per FTE undergrad student than in ON, and it asks undergrads to pay more in fees.

CUPE 3912 members, for the first step, earn about 63% of what their PT/CTF colleagues make at WLU. AUFA members earn 76% of WLU's stipend.

And 3912 members earn 82% of AUFA members.

So, CUPE 3912 members earn substantially lower pay across the board.

This changes with TT/FT faculty (including deans) salaries. Compared to WLU, SMU

TT/FT = 85.6% of WLU, MSVU = 83.5% of WLU, and Dalhousie = 98% of WLU

And SMU, MSVU, and Dal TT/FT faculty **earn more** on average than their peers at Acadia.

My conclusions: we're underpaid and overleveraged. We know this; it's a fact.

We should certainly pay attention to how our stipends and pay fit into the wider relationship with other PT/CTF workers. But we should also understand those comparisons alongside the relationship between TT/FT salaries in comparative terms as a way to index our wages, too. There is a bigger economic and financial continuum that may provide different ways to frame the problems we face and demands we make as 'part-time' workers who likely work full-time by piecing together different gigs, contracts, and jobs.

WLU CTF earn \$8,320 for the first step. If we earned proportionally what SMU, MSVU, and Dal TT/FT workers do when compared to their WLU TT/FT counterparts, we'd be earning \$7,122 (85.6%, SMU), \$6,947.20 (83.5%, MSVU), or \$8,154 (98%, Dal). We'd be earning more than our Acadia colleagues, too.

I cite the numbers not to break up the local but to simply make a point.

Clearly, we should anticipate bad faith arguments along with qualifications and equivocations from our employers about these kinds of comparisons. We should also be ready for suggestions from the province about having to pass on increased labour costs to undergrads, who already pay punitive tuition fees, much of it being money rented via loans, i.e., debt agreements. And

we should anticipate no shortage of taxation talk around keeping rates low and other neoliberal normal talking points amplified by the pandemic and something like a recovery.

Building alliances with students, our FT/TT colleagues, and communities and publics outside beyond the university is important, and administrators and public officials would likely try to do the opposite. Ultimately, our demands don't have to be divisive so much as anchored on the existing antagonisms we inherit in the current political economy of the university.

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- [Thanks to David Banoub for support with access to stats and data.]

On #Ed4All

David Banoub, CUPE 3912 Outreach Coordinator

The Education for All campaign is a joint initiative of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and the National Union of Public General and Public Employees. These unions and associations have come together to rally for more affordable, accessible, high-quality and publicly-funded post-secondary education system.



This high-quality and publicly-funded post-secondary system will offer fair working wages and secure employment for all workers at colleges and universities. It will end contracting-out and privatization of teaching and support services. It will prioritize research and knowledge, not corporate priorities. It will encourage

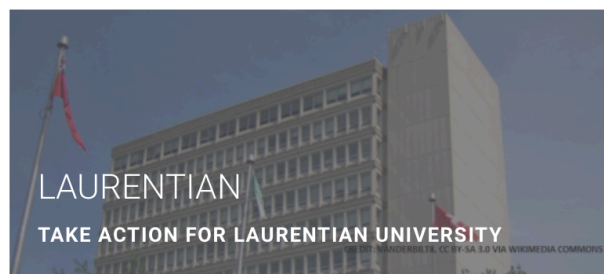
community cooperation and transparent governance with diverse representation of academic staff, students, and workers.

The campaign launched with an introductory panel on January 21, 2021. This panel mostly focused on how COVID has exacerbated the negative impact of inadequate government funding of higher education in Canada, and on building solidarity between students, faculty, and support staff – all of whom are feeling the brunt of the neoliberal university in crisis.

There was another panel discussion on March 11 focused on 'Education and Equity for All.' This discussion included suggestions on: how to foster inclusive and accountable classroom spaces; how student movements foster leadership and diversity; that education for all requires breaking down barriers for BIPOC students, faculty, and staff; incorporating anti-racism and anti-oppression training into classroom pedagogy; how to include disability perspectives into campus conversations; and a discussion on how the corporate university undercuts solidarity between the diverse

groups on campus, and how to resist that fragmentation. A challenging and energizing panel!

Thinking of these issues nationally, and seeing speakers from across the country share their organizing strategies, frustrations, and hope for the future is heartening. Precarious contract work is often isolating, and this has – at least for me – intensified under COVID when so many of us are working from home. This campaign directly addresses that, and these joining with our colleagues and allies from different institutions and associations offers important reminders about why our work as post-secondary workers and as union members matters.



To find resources on these issues, take action to demand public funding to secure Laurentian University's future, or sign up for updates on this campaign, visit: <https://www.educationforall.ca>.

You can follow on social media using the hashtag: #Ed4All.

Excerpts from Bargaining Updates

Karen Harper

Here are some excerpts from bargaining updates from my weekly emails.

Process:

- This round of bargaining we did not sign any ground rules either. Ground rules are usually introduced by the employer and include items like not tabling additional proposals or speaking about any of the proposals to the media and sometimes to our members. Although we usually do abide by these rules, we want to be flexible and keep options open. In particular we are working towards more open and transparent communication with you, our members.
- I thought I'd take this opportunity to discuss more about what goes on at the table. It seems like a lot of bargaining involves back and forth discussion and proposals, often about specific wording. Sometimes language disagreements might seem trivial, but the difference between something like 'could' or 'shall' can be substantial. Another aspect of bargaining is the LOU or MOU (letter or memorandum of understanding). Sometimes if both sides want to see progress towards a proposal but don't think it can be accomplished during the current round of bargaining, they set up a LOU/MOU to set up a committee to discuss the issue within a certain time period. The discussion can then lead to changes in the next round of bargaining. We then have to decide if or what we can achieve this round of bargaining and what could go in an LOU/MOU and how it will be followed up.

- Transparency in communication about bargaining with members is something we have discussed for our bargaining teams. Current practice ranges from not revealing anything that is discussed at the bargaining table to putting all proposals and counter proposals on the website, as is done by CUPE 3903 at York. There are reasons not to be quite so revealing, but Larry Savage does advocate for greater transparency. For CUPE 3912, we are working at being more transparent, but I also recognize that it is best to do this gradually and strike a balance. We are figuring this out as we go. So for now I will continue to provide bargaining updates to you as we progress with our negotiations. I also hope you will help us by responding to quick polls we are planning. Membership engagement is key to successful bargaining.

Progress:

- Much of what we are discussing at the table in the early stages is related to past and ongoing grievances. There are two main sources of ideas for bargaining proposals: priorities of our members, which we get from our survey, and grievances. Proposals related to grievances are usually non-financial and often relate to different interpretations of the collective agreement from the employer and union (this is why they result in grievances). For us this time they are mostly related to discipline and job postings. These issues often seem to be less important to most members, yet by protecting a few members through grievances and changing the language of the collective agreement, we are protecting all members from possible unfair treatment.
- We have been having some good discussions at some of the bargaining tables. In particular, at the Mount some members of the bargaining team presented the results of a survey and report on office space and related facilities. This report was the result of an appendix of the Collective Agreement negotiated last time to look into office space. The results are helping inform bargaining issues and also issues related to occupational health and safety.
- The first step in negotiations is to exchange proposals, which we have now done at all three universities. Then there is the long process of asking questions, suggesting counterproposals and hopefully coming to an agreement on some of these while deciding not to pursue others. We are now at the start of this stage and are just beginning to ask each other questions to clarify proposals. We have tentatively agreed on only a few very minor proposals, most of which involve things like editing. Some of our common proposals such as a major increase in salary, pension and other benefits are financial proposals and come much later in the process, typically after dealing with all non-financial proposals. We do not expect to even start negotiating financial proposals anytime soon. Therefore, the bargaining teams are still doing background research including exploring different options for a pension plan.
- At Dalhousie, we are pleased that the employer is eager to understand our motivation behind our proposals and we are hoping to come to an agreement on several non-monetary issues. The union explained the importance of key issues such as ensuring grad students are not asked to teach or TA extra hours to finish their degrees in a timely manner and making this year's temporary ban on using student evaluations for discipline permanent because they are biased.

- Bargaining at three universities at the same time gives us a comparative vision of the perspective of the employers. For example, we have common proposals to address equity issues. Our goal is to strengthen language to protect our members against harassment and discrimination. Notably we want to make sure that provincial and university policies are included in the collective agreement wherever possible to inform our members and alert them to details of these policies. One of the employers agrees with us and included even more language outlining various university policies on these issues. Another employer instead proposed to remove the language we have from the collective agreement rather than expand it further.

One last reminder:

CUPE 3912

**Annual General
Meeting**

**April 16 @ 2 pm
Online**

