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With 100% of the votes in support, 325 teaching assistants (TAs) at Saint Mary's University (SMU) have now joined Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3912.

HALIFAX - Membership in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3912 has now expanded to include Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Independent Course Appointees (ICAs) from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), and TAs from Saint Mary's University (SMU). All of those who voted for labour board certification were in support of unionization.

"Our new members responded to the success of our 2022 Dalhousie Strike, and the three collective agreements we signed, with three different employers, within 100 days," according to CUPE 3912 President Cameron Ells.

"The unanimous voting result is a testament to the passion of our unified community of TAs," reflected Jonathan Mansvelt, a member of the SMU TA Organizing Committee. "We are only just getting started, and I am excited to continue collaborating with all members to construct a collective agreement that serves each and every one of us. I'm very proud of what we have accomplished to date; it's amazing that what started as an ambitious chat between three TAs last November sparked a movement leading to union certification in less than a year."

The successful effort to unionize the TAs at SMU was a collective one. Unionized full-time and part-time professors pitched in by encouraging their TAs to sign union cards and vote in the certification process. Solidarity with SMUFU (the union for full-time professors and librarians) and NSGEU 179 (support staff, maintenance, security & general workers) undoubtedly helped achieve this.

CUPE 3912's next goal is to negotiate a first collective agreement between the SMU TA members and the Employer that will improve wages, working conditions, and job security. In addition to the SMU TAs, last spring, 75 Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Independent Course Appointees from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) also voted 100% in favour of joining CUPE 3912.

About CUPE 3912

CUPE 3912 is Nova Scotia's largest university union, proudly representing more than 5,000 academic service providers in six bargaining units at Saint Mary's University (SMU), Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), Dalhousie University (Dal) and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). The union's members are part-time instructors, language instructors, teaching assistants, markers, demonstrators, research assistants and independent course appointees. The mix of members differs between different university employers.

For more information, please contact: Cameron Ells (President, CUPE 3912)