

# CUPE<sub>Expres</sub>SCFP

The Newsletter for Teaching and Research Assistants, Markers, Proctors, Demonstrators, Lab Monitors & SFRB Students.

Check us out on the Web!

<http://www.cupe2626.ca>

## REMINDERS

- *BBQ to be held on September 21 (rain date the 22<sup>nd</sup>) at Morisset Terrace from 11 am to 2 pm.*
- *REGULAR GENERAL ASSEMBLY will be held on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 18h in the Alumni Auditorium.*
- *ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY will be held on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 at 18h in the Alumni Auditorium.*

## Tuition Hike Reduced for CUPE Members!

By Pierre-Alexandre Boucher, President

Tuition hikes? Not for CUPE 2626 members (well, at least nothing over 2%)! If you work a total of 130 hours or more this year as a TA, RA, corrector, lab monitor, demonstrator or proctor, you are eligible for a tuition increase reimbursement.

Even though the tuition fees were frozen in 2004, our union negotiated with the university a clause in our collective agreement specifying that, if the tuition fees increase by more than 2%, the amount surpassing 2% would be reimbursed to the members having worked 130 hours or more. For example, if your tuition goes up 6%, you'll get 4% back! Even if you are new to the University, you are eligible for the rebate as long as you will be working 130 hours this year as a CUPE member. This clause is particularly important starting September, as tuition fees are going up an average of over 4% across campus.



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## The CUPE 2626 Office Renovation – More than Just a Renovation

By Brad DeFazio, Second Vice-President

If you look for a definition for 'renovate' on the internet you will find there are many variations. The definition I believe describes the renovation of the CUPE office is 'give new life or energy to' ([www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com)).

After discussing the idea of renovating the office this past February and March with members of the 2005-06 Executive Committee and our Workers' Representative, I decided to include renovations in the Local's budget. It was my hope that when we would welcome our members back for the 2006-07 school year the office would have an exciting and refreshing new look and be more functional so that our stewards, Worker's Representative, and Executive Committee could better serve the membership for years to come.



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## Occupational Health & Safety

By Vinay Mulgundmath, First Vice President

One Canadian worker is injured on the job every nine seconds and tragically three workers are killed every day, according to HRSDC general statistics. In order to ensure that our privileged members work in a safe and secure environment, CUPE has representatives on six Occupational Health and Safety Committees across the University campus. If you have questions or concerns about the safety of your workspace or lab, on or off campus, please contact the CUPE 2626 Health and Safety representative listed in your union work book, or contact Brad DeFazio at [vp2@cupe2626.ca](mailto:vp2@cupe2626.ca).



## Dental Plan Options and Benefits

By Vinay Mulgundmath, First Vice President  
Razib Iqbal, Officer without portfolio

### UOttawa Dental plan:

*Eligibility:* CUPE members (both undergraduate and graduate)

*Deadline:* First 45 days of the **first contract** at the beginning of academic year in your program of study. Register with Human resources (TBT 019). \$40 refunded for CUPE members!

*Cost per month:* \$18.56 for singles and \$55.94 for families.

*Reimbursement:* 80% on all services including root canals with no annual maximum

*Condition:* Opt out of GSAÉD dental plan before October 13, 2006.

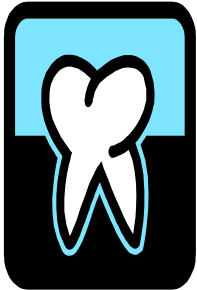
### GSAED Dental plan:

*Eligibility:* Graduate students including CUPE members (Automatically enrolled)

*Deadline to opt out:* October 13, 2006

*Cost per month:* \$18.50 for singles, \$38.67 for couple and \$47.88 for family.

*Reimbursement:* 100% for basic services, 75% for minor restorative services upto an annual maximum of \$1000 per person.

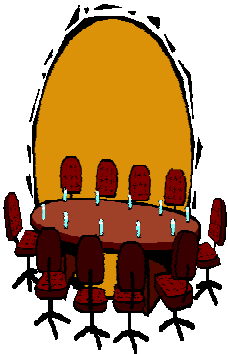


## STEWARDS

By Vinay Mulgundmath, First Vice President

Do you want to get involved in the working of this union? Do you want to improve the hiring policies within your department? Are you being over-worked? Stewards act as union mobilizers who serve as a link between the members and the executive committee of local. They voice concerns of their members to the union by participating in Stewards Council meetings held at least twice a year which is also a governing body of the union.

Each department is represented by at least one steward. Our local is currently recruiting stewards. Check our website for stewards representing your department. To join, please contact Mr. Massoud Khazabi, Chief Steward Anglophone ([csa@cupe2626.ca](mailto:csa@cupe2626.ca)) or Ms. Fida Dankar, Chief Steward Francophone ([csf@cupe2626.ca](mailto:csf@cupe2626.ca)) or our local office at [info@cupe2626.ca](mailto:info@cupe2626.ca)



## SFRB??

By Reza Ghazal, Chief Delegate 2626-1

Greetings to you all! I am the new SFRB (Soft-Funded Research Bursary) Representative to CUPE 2626-1.

I intend truly to contribute towards SFRBs in terms of actually “REALIZING” that they are SFRBs! Awkward as it may sound, but it is a fact that many SFRB students are working as Full-time RAs, and yet, are paid a lump-sum SFRB rate, irrespective of the hours that they put in... and these students don't even know that they are afflicted! I hope to create and maintain my own email list of all SFRB students, and keep them posted on any upcoming issue that can affect them, or even to keep them involved within CUPE 2626-1!

Also, some special meetings of the SFRB members will be organized and decisions taken about the fund being collected and unused by the 2626-1 members. Creating a forum on the CUPE website to discuss the issues related to SFRB students will be another way to share the thoughts and ideas comprehensively. After all, I believe in a union spirit, and I hope to keep up to my hopes and aspirations.



## Are Undergrads eligible for CUPE membership??

By Ashley Reid, Undergraduate representative

Here is a big shout out to all the Undergrads!!! Have you ever considered TAing? Are you presently a TA, marker, proctor, tutor, demonstrator, lab monitor or RA? Aside from the rewarding experience of helping your peers through their undergraduate experience, there are many benefits that go along with being an academic worker. As one of the above you are automatically a member of the CUPE 2626 local during, and for the year following your contract. The Union provides its members with a wide range of benefits including; Dental, Free Parking, Events, Fair wages, Substantial bursaries and more. Within the Executive Committee of the union there is a unique position for an Undergraduate Representative. This representative is responsible for voicing and concerns at the Undergraduate Level. In addition to the Executive Committee responsibilities starting last year, each term there will be a FREE Pub event exclusively for the Undergraduate members to answers questions, encourage union involvement, discuss labour concerns and get to know one another. The first one was a great success so be sure to check the CUPE boards and website for dates!



## Report on the 43rd Annual Convention of CUPE – Ontario

By Pierre-Alexandre Boucher, President



Each year, the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees holds its convention. This year, the 43rd Convention of CUPE Ontario, was held at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa from May 24 to 27, 2006.

Our Local submitted to this convention a resolution to promote bilingualism. In fact, our union is bilingual, but the Ontario division of CUPE is not.

Every week we receive documentation and posters originating from CUPE Ontario; unfortunately, most of them are only in English. We therefore submitted a resolution that, if accepted, would oblige CUPE to produce all documentation in the two official languages and to provide translation services at each of its conferences.

Once at the Convention, we started a vast publicity campaign. Our delegates wore black t-shirts with the slogan: Two languages, one strong voice – Deux langues, une seule voix followed by our logo. (Incidentally, One strong voice is the motto of the Ontario division of CUPE.) Moreover, we distributed the same t-shirts to delegates to the convention, including the CUPE Ontario president, and soon-to-be elected Secretary-Treasurer. The delegates responded enthusiastically to our speeches and our campaign. We managed to get a crowd of about 900 delegates cheering!

After several speeches supporting the cause and with an unbelievable support of the delegates of the assembly, what became infamous resolution #37 concerning the availability of the documents in the two languages was passed nearly unanimously.

Our Local was very effective in the promotion of the bilingualism. In fact, at the end of the Convention, people knew us; our presence really changed the pace of the Convention and the face of CUPE Ontario. Our delegates to the convention were: Fida Dankar, Vinay Mulgundmath, Razib Iqbal, Lucie Kocum, Olivier Henchiri, Behnam.Shadravan and myself.

Two languages, one strong voice.

## Tuition Hike Reduced for CUPE Members! (Continued from page 1)

### Your Executive Committee

Pierre-Alexandre Boucher (President), Vinay Mulgundmath (1st VP), Brad DeFazio (2nd VP), Massoud Khazabi (Chief Steward Anglophone), Fida Dankar (Chief Steward Francophone), Reza Ghazal (Chief Delegate, 2626-1), Ashley Reid (Undergraduate Representative), Maryam Haghighi, Razib Iqbal, Fereshteh Modarresi

### To contact us:

SCFP/CUPE 2626  
85 University Private  
University Centre, Room 303  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N-6N5  
Phone: 613.562.5345  
Fax: 613.562.5220  
E-mail: [info@cupe2626.ca](mailto:info@cupe2626.ca)  
  
<http://www.cupe2626.ca>

Graduate and under graduate members are eligible, whether studying full- or part time.

How do you obtain this reimbursement? You must submit the Tuition Support Bursary form available on our website (<http://www.cupe2626.ca>) to the CUPE 2626 office as soon as you have signed the contract that will bring your total hours for the year to 130. Once you submit to us the completed form, we will send it to the university, who will then deposit the reimbursement directly in your account. It's as simple as that!

## The CUPE 2626 Office Renovation (Continued from page 1)

Thanks to the efforts of Lucie Kocum, our tireless Workers' Representative, the input from the Executive Committee, and the excellent work of Geneviève Quesnel at the University of Ottawa Physical Resources Service who designed the new office (with our input), the budget item then became a resolution that passed at an Executive Committee meeting in April. With the passing of the resolution however, came the realization of the preparation that would need to be done. With Lucie leading the preparation efforts, I knew the preparation would be done. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Committee and Lucie packed up the office and temporarily moved to UCU 304, although the majority of the files and boxes were placed in storage. When I came to office the day after we had packed and moved to take 'Before' pictures, the movers were moving the last of the heavy items that we had left for them and the office was virtually empty. At that moment I had a strange feeling.

If anyone has ever moved from a family home, apartment, or done renovations, you probably understand what I mean. The amount of memories and energy that a physical space and the items in the space hold is truly amazing. Taking those pictures of the empty office, I had this overwhelming feeling to reflect.

The CUPE office is more than just an office – it's our 'home' and our welcoming and meeting place on campus. There have been countless members helped, meetings held, and friendships formed in the office. Worker's Representatives, stewards, and Executive Committee members over the years have worked many hours in the office to serve the membership. Voices and laughter have resonated off the walls and probably a few tears have hit the floor. Challenges have been overcome and successes have been celebrated at the office. And together, we have become a strong and united union.

Sure, I know the office isn't alive and can't talk, but I have to tell you, that day standing in the empty office it sure felt like it was alive and that I could almost hear the voices of past members, stewards, Worker's Representatives, and Executive Committee members recounting their memories and encouraging us to stay strong and support each other.

As I write this article in the middle of July the renovations are still in progress. They will be completed however, in time for the start of the new school year. I invite you all to come visit and to take a look at the 'Before' and 'After' pictures on our internet site <http://www.cupe2626.ca>. Although the definition for renovate that I use at the beginning of this article mentions 'new life or energy', something I hope the renovations will bring, I also know that the life and energy already present in the office will continue to reside within the office and in us.

Special thanks to Lucie Kocum for her enthusiasm and support for this project, and for working in the 'space' that has been our temporary office. Also, thanks to Geneviève Quesnel who not only designed the office, but is also the Project Manager for the renovations. Finally, thank you to the 2005-06 and 2006-07 Executive Committees for your input, support, and extra hours of work.



### Credits

Chief Editor: Vinay Mulgundmath.  
Translation: Chantale Grenon-Nyenhuis.  
Copy-Editors & Editorial Team: Lucie Kocum, Pierre-Alexandre Boucher, Brad DeFazio, Reza Ghazal, Ashley Reid, Maryam Haghighi, Razib Iqbal, Fida Dankar, Massoud Khazabi, Fereshteh Modarresi.