

CUPExpressCFP

*The Newsletter for Teaching and Research Assistants, Markers,
Proctors, Demonstrators, Lab Monitors & SFRB Students at
University of Ottawa.*

General Assemblies

On November 14, 2007 CUPE 2626 held its regular general assembly. Many members left the assembly in a confused state of mind and were also annoyed of the course that the meeting took. We would like to make an effort to explain the significance, the purpose and the structure of a general assembly.

According to our By-laws there are three types of General Assemblies (GA's): Annual General Assemblies, Regular General Assemblies and Special General Assemblies. The latter can be called by a large, enough group of members and has the purpose of dealing with urgent issues, as for example strike mandates. The former two can only be convened by the President of the local and serve the following purposes (among others): report to the members, elections, vote on the budget, announce amendments of the constitution and form committees. But most importantly, the regular general assemblies specifically provide the venue where the members can bring **forward their motions** and inform the executive committee about their concerns. The president sets an agenda for the meeting which still has to be approved by the membership. The pre-condition for a successful general meeting is that a quorum is reached. Quorum denotes the minimum number of members needed to start the meeting. As long as a no recount is requested an initial quorum allows **to conduct** the meeting, even if the number of attendees drops. We are often very close to quorum when the meeting begins, although 2% of the membership already constitutes quorum. What happened last November was that a count for quorum was asked for, before we had made finished with all the business on the agenda. Since, less than 2 % of all members were present, the assembly was at this point over. In the future, the EC would like to prevent such an unfortunate ending. The members did not get an opportunity to tell their elected representatives what they think about the submitted motions and the EC had little feedback form the membership which makes it more difficult for the local to function.

On March 19, another general assembly will take place, the so-called Annual General Assembly. As every year we will elect a new EC and listen to the reports of the outgoing president. But this year is also very special for our local: the bargaining committee which was formed 10 month ago

has ever since worked hard on re-negotiation our collective agreement. We are very optimistic that we can present the new collective agreement to you at this coming general assembly. So it will really be an interesting meeting and will be even better, if you show up.

Important Deadline

Application for Financial Aid: The deadline is Feb 8th, 2008.

The application form is in our website: http://www.cupe2626.ca/english/forms_en.htm

The documents that we need are: copy of TA/RA contracts, copy of lease, signed letter from the applicant, completed form. For additional information and to complete an application form, please visit our website or contact us at (613) 562-5345.

Revision of the constitution

CUPE 2626 is currently reviewing its By-laws. The objectives of this process are

- 1 make the local function more efficiently and serve the members better.
- 2 incorporate the values and ideas of our members.
- 3 seek CUPE national approval while not giving up local autonomy.

We are looking for your suggestions! You can submit them anonymously on our website.

Steward recruitment

Is your department represented at the Steward's council? If not, why not become a CUPE steward? To find out more, contact: info@cupe2626.ca

By: Fereshteh Modarresi

The Chief Stewards at CUPE 2626 have been doing their best to represent the fellow employees before the management at the University of Ottawa. Such a responsibility may seem an overwhelming task at the beginning. However, it is a position that can be mastered and exercised effectively if the person responsible for it uses common sense, pays careful attention to detail, and maintains a firm and reasonable attitude.

Stewards are also in a position that enables them to assist in providing the best representation for the employees, with the help of a copy of your contract, a strong sense of justice and knowledge of the collective agreement between CUPE 2626 and the University of Ottawa.

Do You Know Your Steward?

Stewards are the eyes and ears of CUPE 2626, serving as the official union representatives in departments around campus. They inform members of their rights under our contract (Collective Agreement), the wages and benefits that they are entitled to and the union's activities, campaigns, meetings and decisions. As the direct link between the union and individual members, and the elected representative from their departments, stewards play a prominent role in identifying issues and problems related to the work place and bringing them to the attention of Union staff.

All departments should have at least one union steward. Check www.cupe2626.ca to see a list of the stewards that have been reported to the CUPE2626 Office. If your department's steward is not listed, please contact us at info@cupe2626.ca. If you are interested in being a steward or in electing a steward for your department contact one of the chief stewards at

csa@uottawa.ca

csf@uottawa.ca

Do You Know About Your Rights?

During the past academic year (2007-2008) a number of students filed grievances that were often successful in addressing any violation of the Collective Agreement for a certain student or a number of students in some departments. During the grievance procedure, the students won fair treatments in terms of workload, pay rates, informal evaluations by the supervisors, and ultimately were successful in protecting their rights as specified in the Collective Agreement and provincial law, notably Employment Standards Act (ESA). The ESA includes the minimum standard that employers and employee must follow. An effective grievance procedure transforms the contract from a piece of paper into a living document.

You should consult with the Collective Agreement. It is a legal document that brings measures of justice, equal rights and democracy in the employment relationship and work place. You can obtain a copy of this agreement between university of Ottawa (employer) and Local 2626 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees at www.cupe2626.ca.

A more detailed description of the steward's role can be found in our bylaws. Our bylaws empower the Stewards' Council to act as a policy-making body and provide representation between membership meetings.

It is vital that your Department has a Steward, who attends Stewards' Council, to ensure that your Union remains representative of your interests.

Occupational Health and Safety Committee

To ensure that the University of Ottawa is a safe and secure workplace for CUPE 2626 members, we have representatives on the Sectorial Health and Safety committees, as well as the University Committee.

Northern and protection Sector: Maryam Haghighi

Central Sector: Rhea Wilson and Massoud Khazabi

Science and Engineering: Vinay Mulgundmath

Smyth Road Sector: vacant

University Sector: Vinay Mulgundmath and Maryam Haghighi