

# News from NowHere

**Year 31 Number 2**

**Editor Gail Osachoff**

***CUPE*3287**  
University of Saskatchewan Sessional Lecturers

## President's Message

Welcome (or welcome back) to the 2020 Fall Term. Here's wishing you a pleasant and productive – and safe – academic term at the University of Saskatchewan.

As some of you will already be aware, CUPE 3287 recently entered into a two year agreement that will essentially extend our current collective agreement through to September, 2021 (i.e., two years from the expiration of our previous collective agreement in 2018), but with several important changes. Details of the agreement can be found on our website: <https://3287.cupe.ca>.

Some of the changes are worth highlighting here, however. These include: i) protections for Right of First Refusal (ROFR) while the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic remains in place, ii) changes to the terms of reference for our Academic Participation/Professional Development Fund to allow for grants supporting remote instruction, iii) an agreement that student teaching evaluations will not be used for review or discipline while mandated remote teaching remains in place, and, not least, a commitment to return to the bargaining table to negotiate a new collective agreement within six months prior to the expiration of the current agreement.

Perhaps the most tangible change many of you will have already seen: A 2% increase to all sessional stipend levels, effective September 1, 2020. You should have seen this increase reflected in your October 15<sup>th</sup> paycheque; back pay to September 1 should be included in the October 30<sup>th</sup> paycheque for members who are teaching this term.

The agreement is far from ideal. We had been preparing to enter into collective bargaining on a number of very important issues, including benefits and pensions, when the process was

derailed by the pandemic. The agreement that we have instead was eventually put to our membership for ratification because the University was pleading uncertainty about what effects the pandemic was going to have on University operations and finances. To repeat, it is far from ideal, but it was probably the best that we could achieve in the circumstances. The good news, though (and I genuinely think that is good news) is that we will be back at the bargaining table quite soon.

Speaking of which, this means that we will be electing a new Bargaining Committee at our AGM in December. I encourage all of our members – especially individuals from equity-seeking groups and those who have not previously had a role in serving the Union – to consider putting their names forward to serve on the Committee.

In a similar vein, I encourage all of our members to turn up (virtually) for our Fall Membership Meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> (about which details can be found below).

So, once again, welcome back. Stay safe and stay healthy.

**Submitted by William Buschert**

### 2020 Fall Membership Meeting

**Via Zoom**

(Invitation links have been distributed to the membership via email. If you have not received your invitation email, please contact [cupe3287@gmail.com](mailto:cupe3287@gmail.com))

**Monday, October 19, 2020**

Time: 4:00 PM



**FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
**October 9, 2020, 4:00 PM**

**Via Zoom**

**AGENDA**

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Roll Call of Officers
3. Reading of the Equality Statement (see reverse)
4. Adoption of Minutes, Summer Membership Meeting, August 5, 2020
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
6. Motion: Acceptance of new members
7. Secretary-Treasurer's Report
8. News and Communications Officer's Report
9. Correspondence & Communications
10. Executive Report
  - a. Update on agreement
  - b. Update on SJUMC issues and MOA on Online Instruction
  - c. Update re: Pandemic Response Team briefings and Winter 2021 term
11. New Business
12. Adjournment

## Teaching in the Time Plague

### Reports from the Edge

**GLORIE TEBBETT** reports taking some Glenna Moss classes about online teaching, but says that it would have been more useful to learn to navigate Canvas which she found to require a fair bit of time and attention.

**RITA MATLOCK** advises teachers to organize a course where students have a small assignment to do each week so that they are required to stay connected to the course. The students need to keep coming back to the Canvas class regularly so that they complete the course; otherwise they will be tempted to quit.

**RHONDA ANDERSON** warns us that using the marking tools can be challenging, especially when one wants to add or remove a comma from a student's essay. Having students from various locations (even as far away as China) can be a problem. Some students who live in rural Saskatchewan do not have access to WiFi. Other students do not read the provided directions. Instead, they ask questions by

email which needlessly takes up a teacher's time. Such students might be unsure and anxious or merely lazy.

As you can see from these reports, teaching remotely during the COVID virus pandemic is remotely possible. Send a report about your experiences to be included in the next newsletter.

**Submitted by Gail Osachoff**

### Notices

**ELEANOR SHIA** has received the Canadian Distinguished Teacher Award at the Fourth Global Chinese Education Awards.

Various IT help is available to teachers and students by consulting **NANCY TURNER** in the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness ([nancy.turner@usask.ca](mailto:nancy.turner@usask.ca)).

Several virus-positive cases have been reported in the College of Medicine, and these individuals are self-isolating. Visit <https://covid19.usask.ca/> for up-to-date information about recommended precautions and current cases on campus.

**Submitted by Gail Osachoff**

### Call for OHC Representative

Contact the Union Office ([cupe3287@gmail.com](mailto:cupe3287@gmail.com)) if you are interested in being the next CUPE 3287 representative on the University Occupational Health Committee or on other university or college committees. Our participation is vital. Union at.

## CHIRPS

Most classes this term and the next term as well are being taught remotely with minimal hands-on teaching where practical skills are necessary (as they are in dentistry, for example. Life on campus is extremely limited; for instance, there are no food services. Health risk to students and employees is the main consideration.

Top administrators seem to be unrealistic in their cheerfulness, but maybe that is part of their job description. President Peter Stoicheff praises us for being “flexible, innovative and unwavering.” Those are not the words that those with no work or little work would use to describe us.

Patti McDougall, Head of the Teaching and Learning Experience, was interviewed On September 15 by the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*. According to her, “we are among Canada's top discovery-led institutions...We have an amazing level of activity going on at present. ...It's fascinating to watch people who are senior, long-standing, fantastic educators who

have been on the job for a long time, are great, who do great work...they're pausing now to ask themselves why. What's important? What is it that I consider to be absolutely critical in this class? And how am I going to get that across?” However, Sessional Lecturers are asking, “Why don't we receive wages and benefits commensurate with the work we do?”

After months of fear and trepidation resulting from an anticipated decrease in student enrolment, the U of S administration has announced that undergrad enrolment is 2.4 percent higher and domestic graduate enrolment is 2.5 per cent higher than last year although the number of international students is 5 per cent less. A “historic high” of 26,000 students is possible. I wonder who is teaching all these students. Certainly, not Sessional Lecturers whose number keeps falling—only 161 of us teaching only 203 overcrowded classes.

**Submitted by Gail Osachoff**

### Union Office Remains Closed

The Union office in McLean Hall, Room 35 remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will likely remain the case for at least several more months. We continue to receive postal mail, however, and we continue to respond to email and voice mail communications as quickly as possible.

You can contact the Union at **(306) 966-7023** or via email at [cupe3287@gmail.com](mailto:cupe3287@gmail.com).

Information and announcements can also be found on our website: <https://3287.cupe.ca/>

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*The Communications Committee welcomes submissions to the newsletter for publication. You can check deadlines with Gail Osachoff, Editor of the newsletter, at: [mmqo628@mail.usask.ca](mailto:mmqo628@mail.usask.ca)*