

CUPE3287

University of Saskatchewan Sessional Lecturers

News From Nowhere

Year 33, Number 5

October 2022 Newsletter



Orange ribbons tied throughout campus were retrieved and gathered at the Gordon Oaks Red Bear Centre on September 26 as part of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation programming at the U of S. CUPE 3287 honours the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and affirms that Every Child Matters. *(Photo: Patrick Bulas)*

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome Back Meet & Greet BBQ	p. 2
President's Report	p. 6
Obituary: Nik Semenoff	p. 9
Bargaining: Rights of Online Instructors	p. 10
Awards & Opportunities	p. 11
Notice of Motion	p. 12
Fall Membership Meeting	p. 12
Equality Statement	p. 14

CUPE 3287 Welcomes its Members Back to the Fall Term



(Left to right) Members of the CUPE 3287 Executive, Brian Zamulinski, William Buschert, Jeffery Klassen, Patrick Bulas, and Eleanor Shia are joined by Will Bauer, JR Simpson, and Tria Donaldson of CUPE Saskatchewan at the September 16 Welcome Back BBQ. (Photo: Tenille Campbell)



Clockwise: CUPE 3287 Vice President Jeffrey Klassen our MC for the Meet & Greet BBQ , guest speaker J R Simpson addresses the audience, CUPE 3287 members enjoying the evening (Photos; Tenille Campbell, Eleanor Shia)





CUPE 3287 Executive Member-at-Large Eleanor Shia greets members at the September 16th BBQ. (Photo: Tenille Campbell)

Members of our local gathered at Palliser Garden between Qu'Appelle and Marquis Halls to enjoy a burger and a beer courtesy of CUPE 3287 on the evening of September 16.

The Welcome Back Meet & Greet BBQ was organized by CUPE 3287 President William Buschert and the News & Communications Committee with the support of Tria Donaldson, the Communications Officer for CUPE Saskatchewan.

Along with the BBQ, members had the opportunity to have a professional quality head shot taken by photographer Tenille Campbell. Members arriving to the event were greeted with CUPE swag and a chance to enter for a door prize of one of three Tim Hortons gift cards.

The event not only celebrated the beginning of the fall term but also served to engage sessional lecturers as CUPE 3287 concludes the current round of bargaining with the employer.

“NO U OF S WITHOUT US”

CUPE 3287 Vice President Jeffery Klassen welcomed members at the event and invited William Buschert along with Will Bauer, of CUPE National and negotiator for the CUPE 3287 bargaining committee, and special guest speaker, JR Simpson to speak on the invaluable role sessional instructors have at the University of Saskatchewan.



CUPE 3287 President, William Buschert (top), & Will Bauer, from CUPE Saskatchewan & negotiator for the bargaining committee speak to the local. (Photos: Tenille Campbell)



Jeffrey Klassen and Tria Donaldson announce the winners of the door prize. (Photos: Tenille Campbell)



JR Simpson, the recording secretary for CUPE Saskatchewan encouraged the ongoing efforts of sessional lecturers and the CUPE 3287 bargaining committee. Simpson assured that CUPE National is prepared to support sessional lecturers in the months ahead if the current round of bargaining with the employer results in job action.

During the BBQ, CUPE 3287 Executive Board Members all wore buttons with the phrase “No U of S Without US” boldly printed across them. The meaning behind those words is clear and must be remembered during bargaining with the employer. We all need to recognize that the work done by sessional lecturers is vital to the University of Saskatchewan.

Patrick Bulas
CUPE 3287 News & Communications Officer

President's Report

Welcome (or welcome back) to the Fall term at the University of Saskatchewan. I hope you are successfully adapting (or re-adapting) to your teaching work – especially if now returning to face-to-face instruction after teaching remotely for all or most of the last two years,

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, you'll know that our local has been in negotiations with the University for nearly two years now with a view to getting a new collective agreement. It has not been going especially well.

During negotiations, our Negotiating Committee – which includes myself, Vice-President **Jeffrey Klassen**, **Patrick Bulas**, **Brian Zamulinski**, **Jacob Semko** and **Stavros Stavrou**, together with our CUPE National Representative, **Will Bauer** – has advocated for, amongst other things:

Recognition for the work that sessional lecturers do outside of the classroom.

Specifically, we have proposed a modest fund that academic units could draw on to provide some financial recognition for the work that we do serving on graduate supervisory committees, serving on juries in the Department of Music, contributing to exhibitions in Art and Art History, contributing to departmental events, delivering colloquium talks, and the many other contributions that sessional lecturers make to the functioning of the University.

From the beginning of negotiations, the University's response has been an undeviating hard 'no'. The University's

negotiating team seems to think that we simply come on campus to teach our courses and then pack up and go home. The work that we do outside of the classroom, they say, is simply 'volunteer work' and for which we needn't be recognized or rewarded.

Access to a decent pension plan. We've also proposed that sessional lecturers once again have voluntary access to a reasonable pension plan. It's true that some of our members may teach only a handful of courses at the University, or may teach only one or two courses each year. Nonetheless, our recent membership survey confirmed that about 42% of us derive all or most of our income from sessional teaching and many of us have been (or expect to be) teaching at the U of S for many years.

As things stand, however, you can teach as a U of S sessional lecturer for your entire working life only to be discarded like a lemon that has been squeezed dry when you choose (or have no choice but to) retire. Sessional lecturers at most U of S 'comparator' universities, including the University of Regina, do have access to a pension plan. But even if other Canadian universities didn't offer a pension plan to their sessional faculty, it's surely just a matter of basic fairness and justice that they *should*.

Yet, once again, the University's response, from the beginning of negotiations, has been a hard 'no'.

Improved health and dental benefits, in particular, vision care benefits. As things stand, CUPE 3287 is virtually the only employment group at the U of S that doesn't have vision care included as part of their benefit plan. Graduate and undergraduate students have vision care coverage. Our colleagues at the University of Regina have vision care. We don't. So, we proposed to the University either that vision care be added to our existing health and dental insurance package or that sessional lecturers be given a health spending account that could be applied to vision care.

But, once again, from the very beginning the University's response has been a hard 'no'.

And there are many other important issues that our Committee has raised with University during negotiations. But perhaps most importantly, we have been attempting to bargain for:

A fair and equitable wage increase. The University's most recent offer (which may soon enough turn out to be their final offer) is 0%, 1.5%, and 1.5%. Allow me to repeat that: The University has offered *nothing* in the first year of a new collective agreement and only 3% combined over the following two years. If you're currently at stipend Level III, that's a whopping *\$118 per year* increase for each course you teach.

I'm sure I don't have to point out that we are living through a period of increasing cost of living – currently running at nearly 8%, year over year. You've likely noticed that your rent or your mortgage payment is going up; your groceries are getting more

expensive. Everything is getting more expensive. And it's not as if U of S sessional lecturers are already conspicuously overpaid. For comparison, sessional lecturers at the University of Regina at Level IV (the top of their stipend grid) currently earn fully *22% more* than sessional lecturers at Level III (the top of our stipend grid) at the U of S.

I think it's clear that the University of Saskatchewan hasn't been taking us seriously. What the University has offered to date is much less than we deserve. Frankly, it's insulting. And, as I've mentioned more than once over the last year, the University's *tone* in bargaining often has been dismissive, occasionally bordering onto contemptuous. From the employer's most recent proposal package in May: *"The University submits that where it cannot see the union's proposals as aligning with its interests, it is no longer prepared to invest time and effort in declining to adopt such things."* On many important issues affecting U of S sessional faculty they are no longer even listening.

Neither side has yet formally declared an impasse, but it seems increasingly likely that that is where things are headed.

We are now in voluntary mediation. In this process a mediator from the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety attempts to broker compromises for both parties, with the aim of developing an agreement acceptable to both parties that we then can take to the membership for ratification. We have entered into the mediation process because our Negotiating Committee has an obligation to leave no stone unturned in trying to secure a

collective agreement for our members. So we are committed to participating in the mediation process in good faith in the hope it may yet deliver an agreement that we can present to our membership for ratification. But in recent days this too hasn't been going especially well.

If voluntary mediation doesn't produce an agreement that we can bring to the membership, the next step will be for the Negotiating Committee to inform the Ministry that negotiations are at an impasse. A next step after that will be to ask our members for a strike mandate. And a next step after *that* will be job action, up to and including a strike – a strike that, to be clear, no one wants, but which may be the only way to get the University to finally pay serious attention to the needs and interests of its sessional lecturers.

At this stage especially, the union needs your support. I encourage all of you to speak up about the issues that sessional lecturers face. Communicate your views to your department head, to your dean, to senior administration; [contact President Stoicheff](#) to let him know that CUPE 3287 deserves a better deal. I imagine that many of you have questions about the issues we face, about negotiations, and about where we go from here. If you do, I strongly encourage you to attend, via Zoom, our upcoming Fall membership on Thursday October 13th, starting at 4:00. (For more information see the meeting announcement in this newsletter.) As always, I encourage all members of CUPE 3287 to attend.

William Buschert
CUPE 3287 President



Design credit: Sarah Walker

Obituary: Dr. Nik Semenoff, 1928 -2022



Retired sessional lecturer and internationally recognized artist Nik Semenoff passed away peacefully at the age of 93 at City Hospital in Saskatoon on Wednesday, September 7, 2022,

Nik will always be remembered for his inventive mind and his generosity to share his knowledge with others. His basement studio in his Saskatoon home containing his darkroom, print studio, carpentry shop, electronics area, and jeweler's shop was a testament to his curiosity and active intellect.

Nik's innovations in printmaking, especially waterless lithography, brought him worldwide acclaim. He developed safer, more environmentally responsible, and less expensive methods of printmaking techniques. His artwork has been exhibited throughout the world and he received several awards for his research, including a

Lifetime Award for Excellence in the Arts from the Saskatchewan Arts Board (1999), an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Saskatchewan (2006) and most recently in 2022, a Meritorious Service Medal (Civil Division) created by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Nik remained humble of his accomplishments and made his research freely accessible to everyone. This pursuit of knowledge and invention was central to his work as a sessional lecturer in the Department of Art & Art History.

He leaves behind his wife of six decades, Marygrace, his three children Jan (Susan), Sasha (Ben), and Rob as well as four grandchildren (Evan, Alex, Ben and Sidney).

Nik will be missed, and we offer condolences to his family and friends.

Patrick Bulas
CUPE 3287 News & Communications Officer



A Flower for Sidney, Nik Semenoff, waterless lithography, 1998
Image Credit: U of S Art Collectio

Rights of Online Instructors

With “Big Bad Summer” in the August 2022 newsletter, we began a series on what CUPE 3287 is focusing on in bargaining. We continue the series with an in depth look at the rights of online instructors.

In the summer of 2020, the employer transferred online courses administered by the Distance Education Unit from the auspices of ASPA to CUPE 3287. Unilaterally. Without consultation. And without negotiating the integration beforehand.

The position of the employer is that courses, not workers, were transferred. Nonetheless, workers were affected. Some had taught both types of course and had been able to teach more than the 12 credit unit limit in the Fall and Winter terms prior to the transfer. These people were made poorer because the employer immediately imposed the 12 credit unit limit on them.

Furthermore, there were cases in which people who had never taught in DEU suddenly had right of first refusal for online courses and in which people who had taught in both ASPA and CUPE suddenly had priority over individuals who had taught only CUPE courses.

The response of CUPE 3287 has been to propose arrangements that would preserve the status quo in terms of pay and number of courses while extending analogues of some CUPE rights to people teaching DEU courses.

Three such proposals have been made by CUPE 3287. With the third, a real effort was made to accommodate the supposed concerns of the employer. It was rejected like the first two. Without discussion. The employer even objected to provisions modeled on proposals first made by the employer.

Article 1.01 of the Collective Agreement between CUPE 3287 and the University says that “the purposes of the Collective Agreement are to promote harmonious relations between the Employer and employees ... [and] to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes and grievances....” It is hard to see that the employer is acting in the spirit of this provision.

Brian Zamulinski
CUPE 3287 Executive Member-At-Large

Awards and Opportunities

Sylvia Wallace Sessional Lecturer Award

The Sylvia Wallace Sessional Lecturer Award, sponsored by The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning, annually recognizes the important and essential contribution of sessional lecturers to the University of Saskatchewan's teaching community. It recognizes exceptional competence in teaching - including superior command of the subject area, skills at organizing and developing class materials, and the capacity to motivate and inspire students.

The award was established in 2001 to honour the memory of Dr. Sylvia Wallace, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition. The winner of the award receives \$1,000 from the GMCTL

The submission deadline for nominations is February 15, 2023

Visit [Sylvia Wallace Sessional Lecturer Award](#) for more information.

Indigenous Peoples' Conference 2022

Registration is now open for the annual CUPE Saskatchewan Indigenous Peoples' Conference to be held in-person on November 21 – 22, 2022, at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, outside Saskatoon.

Open to all CUPE members, and members of other unions, the CUPE Saskatchewan Indigenous Peoples' Conference seeks to build union activism with a focus on equality and rights for Indigenous people in our workplaces and in our communities.

CUPE 3287 supports its members and can cover the cost of a delegate to attend the conference. If you are interested, please email a brief description of why you want to attend to cupe3287@gmail.com

Download Conference Call [here](#)

Download Registration form [here](#)

Early registration deadline is October 21, 2022.

Notice Of Motion:

Motion to be proposed for ratification at the Membership Meeting scheduled for October 13, 2022:

“That, in view of a possible strike or other job action in the foreseeable future, the Secretary-Treasurer shall be authorized to liquidate a portion of the local’s investments, not to exceed \$48,000. These monies are to be used exclusively to top up strike pay and/or to cover other expenses related to a strike or job action. Any funds not used for these purposes will be re-invested with the local’s Contingency Fund upon ratification of a new collective agreement.”

Fall Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2022

4:00 pm

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

Agenda on following page



FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 13, 2022, 4:00 PM

Via Zoom

(Meeting invitations circulated via email)

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Roll Call of Officers
3. Reading of the Equality Statement
4. Adoption of Minutes, Annual General Meeting, August 10, 2022
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
6. Motion: Acceptance of new members
7. Secretary-Treasurer's Report
8. News
9. Correspondence & Communications
10. Executive Committee Report
 - a. Membership numbers: A new pattern – a significant increase in new members; a moderate decrease in overall membership
 - b. Negotiations/Mediation Update
 - c. Grievance & Case Work Report
 - d. SJUMC Report
11. Motion: "That, in view of a possible strike or other job action in the foreseeable future, the Secretary-Treasurer shall be authorized to liquidate a portion of the local's investments, not to exceed \$48,000. These monies are to be used exclusively to top up strike pay and/or to cover other expenses related to a strike or job action. Any funds not used for these purposes will be re-invested with the local's Contingency Fund upon ratification of a new collective agreement."

12. Notice of Motion: To be voted on at our next membership meeting – “That Section 8 – Honoraria in CUPE 3287’s By-Laws be amended as follows: ‘Information and Communications Officer – \$200.00 month’ shall be deleted and replaced with ‘News and Communications Officer – Annual honorarium equivalent to the stipend for a three-credit course, apportioned and paid on a monthly basis.’”
13. Motion: “That the membership authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to provide a special one-time honorarium in the amount \$1,200 to the incumbent News and Communications Officer, Patrick Bulas, in recognition of the extra responsibilities he has assumed in his role since taking it on in April, 2022.”
14. New Business
15. Adjournment

CUPE Equality Statement

Union solidarity is based on the principle that union members are equal and deserve mutual respect at all levels. Any behaviour that creates conflict prevents us from working together to strengthen our union.

As unionists, mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding are our goals. We should neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Discriminatory speech or conduct which is racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic hurts and thereby divides us. So too, does discrimination on the basis of ability, age, class, religion, language and ethnic origin.

Sometimes discrimination takes the form of harassment. Harassment means using real or perceived power to abuse, devalue or humiliate. Harassment should not be treated as a joke. The uneasiness and resentment that it creates are not feelings that help us grow as a union.

Discrimination and harassment focus on characteristics that make us different; and they reduce our capacity to work together on shared concerns such as decent wages, safe working conditions, and justice in the workplace, society and in our union.

CUPE’s policies and practices must reflect our commitment to equality. Members, staff, and elected officers must be mindful that all persons deserve dignity, equality, and respect.

-Mark Hancock, National President

-Charles Fleury, National Secretary-Treasurer

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If you would like to submit an article to our newsletter or would like to join our committee, please contact news.cupe3287@gmail.com