

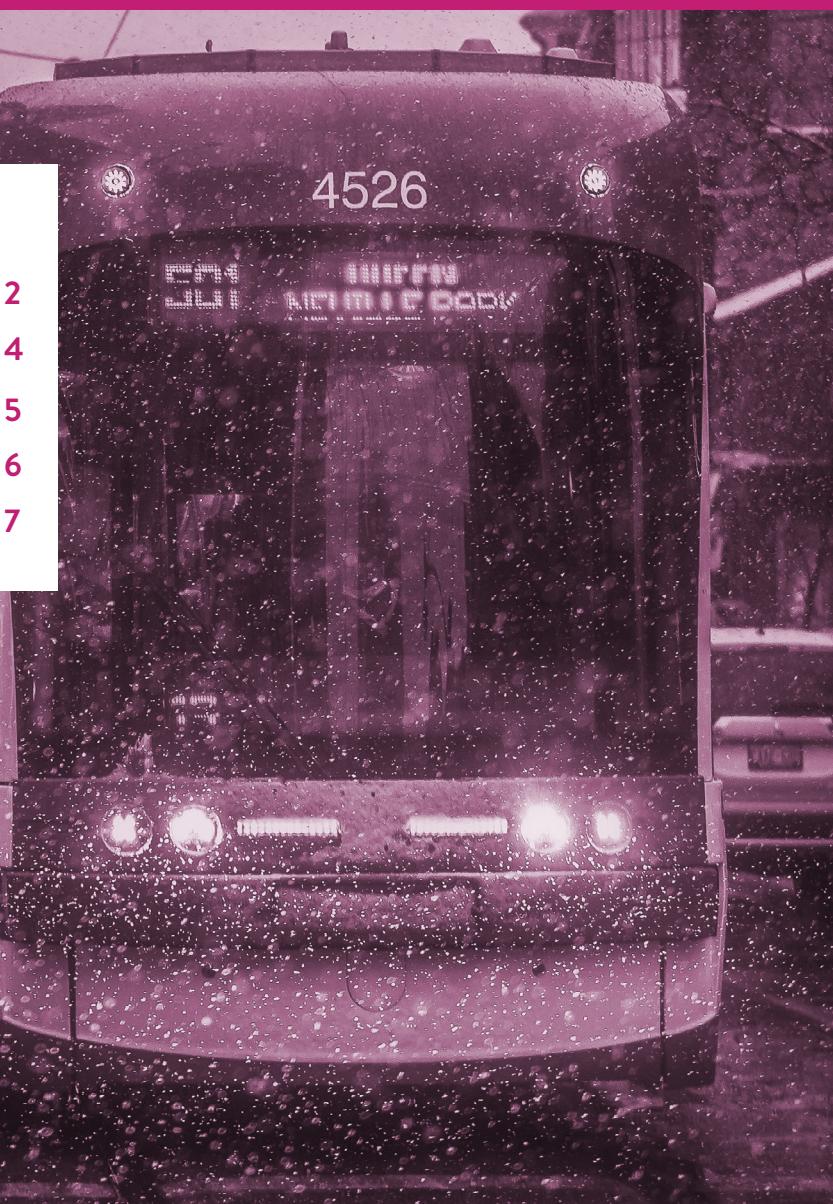


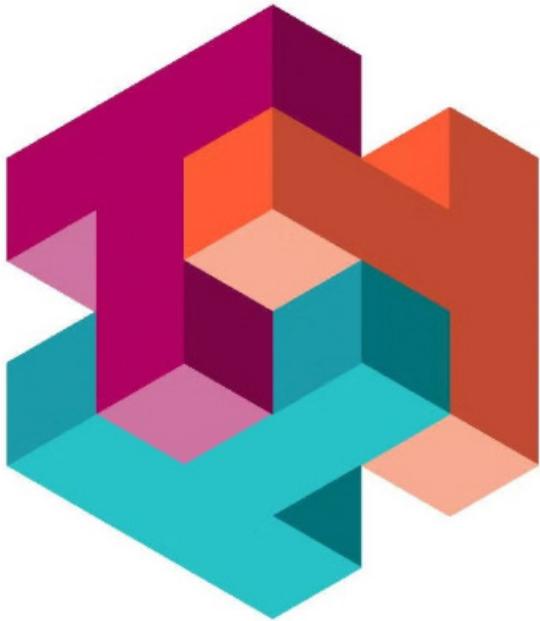
CONTRACT ACADEMICS OF TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

Report: CUPE National Convention	2
Fall Social Photos	4
The Joe Zboralski Teaching Award	5
Upcoming Events	6
Your Executive	7





The biennial CUPE National Convention took place in early October at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Although most participants were Ontario-based, members from across Canada attended. Because this year's Convention was in Toronto, both CUPE 3904 President Catherine Jenkins and VP Campaigns & Equity Michael Lapointe were able to attend sessions around their teaching schedules.

Before the start of the Convention, we attended the Post-secondary Sector Council meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for university and college workers to discuss and prioritize resolutions submitted by sector members. Importantly, all members present agreed on the urgent need for CUPE to support resolutions regarding restoring and increasing government funding to the sector.

REPORT ON CUPE NATIONAL CONVENTION

Resolution No. 204 stated that CUPE will:

1. Renew campaigning through lobbying and mobilization of all levels of government for comprehensive, public post-secondary funding. In particular, CUPE will pressure the federal government to legislate a national Post-Secondary Education Act with statutory, accountable federal funding for post-secondary education.
2. Develop resources for locals and chartered organizations to raise public awareness of the value of CUPE's Post-Secondary Education Workers, support efforts to fight post-secondary education cuts, and protect these members' jobs.

This Resolution was adopted at the CUPE National Convention on Tuesday, October 7 and is seen to cover resolutions 200, 205, 206 and 207, which address similar concerns. This is a crucial initiative for the post-secondary sector, as it aims to protect and stabilize member employment, while also bolstering the Canadian economy and supporting student education.

An additional resolution put forward by the Post-secondary Sector was passed on the Convention's final day. Resolution No. 201 stated that CUPE will pressure provincial governments to extend support and allow union membership to graduate students. Note that TMU's graduate students are already supported by membership in CUPE 3904 Unit 3 for Academic Assistants or in OPSEU for Research Assistants.

Two other sector resolutions failed to get to the Convention floor: No. 202 regarding lobbying the Federal Government for financial investments in academic research, and No. 203 calling for greater transparency from higher education institutions regarding future cuts to CUPE jobs and programs, to address the decline in the quality of postsecondary education, and to improve CUPE job security and wages.

The second half of the Post-secondary Sector Council was spent discussing the emerging impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies on post-secondary workers. Concerns include: grading, academic honesty, intellectual property, data-harvesting, and how to address these issues in future bargaining.

Many other resolutions presented by other sectors were also adopted at the Convention, as were numerous Constitutional Amendments; however, one estimate is that only about 5% of the resolutions and amendments addressed everyday labour concerns, like wages, job security, and workload. Procedural issues took up about 40% of the amendments, with international geopolitics holding 35%, and domestic activism another 20%. The fact that conflicting ideologies and international political debates heavily overshadowed domestic labour concerns at a time when a high percentage of the domestic labour force is facing decreased income and/or job loss continues to alarm many CUPE members, something reflected by comments during both the Post-secondary Sector Council meeting and the National Convention. Guest speakers, administrative matters, and lengthy debate of contentious geopolitical issues take a great deal of time and energy away from CUPE's labour focus, limiting time for discussion and debate on constitutional amendments and resolutions. This same issue was reported from the CUPE Ontario Convention in the September 2025 newsletter; at

every Convention, members have voiced the need for more time and attention to focus on CUPE's core labour issues and resolutions.

On the Convention's opening day, both CUPE National President Mark Hancock and National Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick delivered their reports to the membership, stating that CUPE's National membership now surpasses 800,000 members. Given CUPE's size, our membership gives us considerable weight and resources in the event of a strike.

One noteworthy event that occurred on the third day of the CUPE National Convention was that CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn lost his position as General Vice-President at CUPE National to Dawn Belrose who is active in CUPE Ontario as a Vice-President and with CUPE National's Indigenous Council. This change may not come as a surprise; Hahn has held this position for a decade and has experienced a year of controversy and member backlash. He has been challenged by some members for creating division, thereby violating the CUPE Constitution, and the CUPE National Executive has stated that they've "lost confidence" in his leadership. Hahn retains his position as President of CUPE Ontario but will be up for election at the CUPE Ontario Convention in May 2026. Although Hahn's CUPE Ontario Presidency was acclaimed for many years, his position has been contested the last two years.

Additional caucuses and events focused on AI in the workplace, privatization, equity and human rights, Black, Indigenous and racialized workers, 2SLGBTQI+ workers, persons with disabilities, psychological wellbeing, and health and safety worker concerns. Full details of the Convention are available online: [**CUPE National Convention 2025 Event App.**](#)

FALL SOCIAL

While the AGM and GMM are required for Union business, the Socials provide a more relaxed and informal atmosphere, allowing members to chat with colleagues as well the Executive Committee, providing a valuable opportunity for members to express concerns and feedback directly to the Executive.



JOE ZBORALSKI TEACHING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD

THE JOE ZBORALSKI TEACHING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD IS AN ANNUAL TMU AWARD OPEN TO CUPE 1 AND CUPE 2 MEMBERS

Joe was one of the longest-serving Executive Members of CUPE 3904, initially as the Unit 1VP, and subsequently as the President for many years. This award recognizes members' contributions to community building among students and colleagues at TMU and in the broader community. This includes academic and civic engagement through teaching and service to members of the TMU community, as well as the public, and supporting leadership skills to create positive change.

This year's 14 nominees all demonstrated service to TMU and the community, often sharing their own experiences to teach civic responsibility to their students by involving their classes in these initiatives. We thank those who applied and note that there was strong competition. Annual nominations for this award closed in November. The Award is announced in January and bestowed at the Toronto Met Gala in May.

[See additional information here.](#)

THIS YEAR'S WINNER

DR. NAGINA PARMAR

Nagina has taught in the Department of Chemistry and Biology at TMU for 23 years, supporting undergraduate and graduate students through experiential learning, mentorship, and community-engaged scholarship. She strives to create collaborative learning environments where students can connect theory to practice in science and public health. Last summer, she mentored graduate students from Immigration and Settlement Studies during their placements with the Brilliant Minds Group's mental health initiatives, contributing to a 30% increase in international student satisfaction and well-being.

Nagina is also an executive member of TMU's Research Ethics Board and has reviewed and approved over 50 research protocols to ensure ethical compliance and culturally sensitive treatment of participants. Her own research has informed improvements in domestic and international student inclusivity and support.

In service to CUPE 3904, Nagina supports her colleagues as the Unit 1 Steward for her department. Previously, she was a member of the Unit 2



bargaining committee. She is also a long-standing member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), completing 1,842 workplace inspections over the last four years, actively contributing to a safer and more inclusive campus.

Nagina's commitment to bridging academia and community practice has led her to serve with a variety of community organizations, including:

- President of Spelling Bee of Canada, expanding outreach and leading to a 20% increase in participation from low-income and immigrant families. This organization now reaches over 5,000 youth, strengthening their language and public speaking skills, as well as improving their self-confidence.
- Women's Lead at the Punjabi Chamber of Commerce, bridging academic, immigrant, and business communities to amplify cultural competence and civic engagement, empowering women by fostering leadership, entrepreneurship, and professional growth. She also initiated scholarship programs to promote equity and access to education.
- Grants Coordinator at the Thalassemia Foundation of Canada, funding thalassemia scientific research, treatment, patient services, public awareness and education. She has assisted in fundraising for patient-focused research and coordinated awareness events that increased donations by 25%.

With this powerful combination of academic, union, and community activities, we are pleased to announce that Nagina Parmar is this year's winner of the Joe Zboralski Teaching & Community Engagement Award. Congratulations, Nagina!

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR CUPE 3904 MEMBERS

COFFEE CLUB

**Feb 2nd
11-2 pm
KHW 373**

WINTER SOCIAL

**Feb 12th
3-6PM
Oakham House**

ONLINE AGM

Details TBA

Join us for the

CUPE 3904

WINTER SOCIAL

*an afternoon of food and drink and an opportunity to chat
with your colleagues and executive members.*

**THURSDAY, FEB 12 FROM 3-6PM
OAKHAM HOUSE, 55 GOULD ST**

Open to CUPE 3904 members only with your ONECARD



Executive Officers & staff with Jay Berberick, CUPE National Rep.

YOUR CUPE LOCAL 3904 EXECUTIVE

President: Catherine Jenkins

Unit 1 VP: Kelly Train

Unit 2 VP: Rob Denning

Unit 3 VP: Rebecca Scenna

Treasurer: Richard Deklerk

VP Communications: Alexandra Perlin

VP Campaigns & Equity: Michael Lapointe

president@cupe3904.ca

unit1vp@cupe3904.ca

unit2vp@cupe3904.ca

unit3vp@cupe3904.ca

treasurer@cupe3904.ca

communications@cupe3904.ca

campaigns@cupe3904.ca

YOUR CUPE 3904

All TMU Contract Lecturers and Academic Assistants automatically become dues-paying members of CUPE 3904.

Our local is divided into three Units:

UNIT 1

Represents
TMU day
school
Contract
Lecturers

UNIT 2

Represents
Chang School
Continuing
Education
Lecturers

UNIT 3

Represents
Academic
Assistants



**Curious to find out more? Need information?
Check out our website:**

CUPE3904.CA

The website includes details about:

- Unit-specific Collective Agreements and Executive Member information
- Information on Health Benefits and Professional Development/Assistance Funds
- Important Dates
- Stewards Lists
- FAQs and other Unit-specific information
- Access to CUPE 3904's Bylaws and Policies
- Monthly meeting minutes (login required)
- The local's latest news and newsletters
- A brief history of the local and Unions in Canada
- Links to Union Affiliates and Partners and the CUPE National Constitution
- Step-by-step details on what to include in your Academic application

**KHW 373 CUPE 3904 Office
is now open every Tuesday and Thursday from 10-6**