



Volume 5 Issue 7

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The CUPE newsletter is published by CUPE Local 3911. We welcome your submissions, letters and comments. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of CUPE Local 3911

Editor: Natalie Sharpe

Launching Our New CUPE Website

Kristy Burke, your local Administrator, has been working behind the scenes to create a new CUPE website that will be visually appealing and more interactive for members. What is changing on the website? This will be a highly functional website where members can be quickly directed to important news that they may have missed in the long trail of emails. This includes Professional Development fund application dates and notification just before closing; Registrations for the AGM and conference, and many other things. How much will it cost? The cost is minimal (\$10/month). How will we evaluate the new website? We propose trying it for a year, and re-evaluating at that time.

Here is a look at our new home page:

CUPE
Local 3911

Search site

cupe3911@gmail.com | Tel: 780-421-3276

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September 25th deadline for 3rd Quarter of 2015/2016
CUPE Professional Development Funds
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October 24th Tutor Conference, Chateau Nova Kingsway,
Edmonton - Registration is open

You can view the new website at www.cupe3911.com or try clicking on the various links throughout this newsletter to view related content on the website. If you have any feedback or information that you would like to see posted on the site please contact cupe3911@gmail.com.



CUPE 2015 Tutor Conference – October 24th, Chateau Nova Edmonton – A FREE Conference for Local 3911 Members

For over 30 years, CUPE tutors, academic experts, markers and lab instructors have gathered for an [Annual Conference and CUPE Annual General Meeting](#). **And there is absolutely no registration fee.** This is a great way to break away from the isolation of distance education and meet with your peers. The conference provides a change to engage in discussions about ongoing changes in teaching at Athabasca University; issues and challenges facing you and your local; and the work that the Executive is doing on your behalf. You will also learn new skills and strategies to ensure that you are being treated fairly and paid fairly in all of your work

Our keynote speaker is Siobhan Vipond, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alberta Federation of Labour since 2013, and CUPE Local 201 President of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Ms. Vipond is shown below with President Gil McGowan at her election in 2013.



The conference will then unfold with three main sessions, which will be posted at www.cupe3911.com in the near future. There will be time for valuable networking with your colleagues and talking about common issues and resource sharing for CUPE members. One of our highlights will be Brenda Kuzio's session on Academic Expert Time Claims.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held earlier in the day to ensure that members are able to fully engage in making decisions about your union. Here you will have a chance to review and query the Executive and Committees that work on your behalf. You may even decide it is time for your voice to be heard more fully and stand for election on the Executive or one of the many committees. We need your energy and your perspective so consider a commitment to serve this year. The conference offers you a chance to speak to individual Executive and Committee Members about the nature of the role, the time commitment, and support for your nomination. Consider making a difference this year.

[Advance registration](#) is open for the Conference. It is being held in Edmonton at the Chateau Nova Hotel, near the old municipal airport just north of downtown. You will be reimbursed for travel and accommodation (one night extra if you attend the Annual General Meeting. You will also receive a \$100.00 participation stipend by submitting a claim to Athabasca University. For registration and updated information on the conference, please visit our website www.cupe3911.com. You can also register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015TutorConference>.



CUPE Local 3911 Call for Nominations for 2015 Executive Elections

Elections to the CUPE 3911 Executive Committee will be held on Saturday, October 24th, 2015 at the [Annual General Meeting](#). Members can register to attend the [AGM or Tutor Conference](#) at www.cupe3911.com.

In the interests of an open, democratic election, we will be giving regular updates of declared candidates and the positions for which they are willing to stand. Therefore, we are asking that any member who is willing to stand as a candidate for any position declare herself/himself as early as possible, by email message to cupe3911@gmail.com. Please note that:

- Declaration as a candidate is not, in itself, sufficient for inclusion in the election. Each candidate must be nominated by two persons who are present at the election meeting in order to be included in the election.
- **Nor is advance declaration as a candidate NECESSARY** for inclusion in the election. Although we are encouraging advance declaration, any eligible member who is properly nominated at the election meeting will be included in the election.
- If a candidate cannot themselves be personally present at the election meeting, they must have provided advance "acceptance" of nomination in order to be included in the election. Declaration of willingness to stand by email message to cupe3911@gmail.com would be sufficient for this.
- More than one member CAN declare themselves willing to stand for the same position. That is what elections are all about.

The positions that will be elected on October 24th are:

OFFICERS WHO MAKE UP THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. Co-Chair (1 for two-year term)
2. Treasurer (two-year term)
3. Grievance Officer (one-year term)
4. Communications Officer (one-year term)
5. Membership Officer (one-year term)
6. Representative Officers (up to 8 for one-year term)
7. Trustee (1 for three-year term)

**PERMANENT COMMITTEES OF THE LOCAL** (one year terms)

1. Human Resources Committee (1 Chair and up to 2 members)
2. Bryon Paeye Memorial Award Committee (2 or more)
3. Grievance Committee (4 or more)
4. Health and Safety Committee (2)
5. Bylaw Committee (1 Chair and up to 5 members)

REPRESENTATIVES ON AU AND JOINT BODIES

1. Professional Development Committee representatives (2 for two-year term)
2. [Harassment] Complaint Review Committee (1 rep. and 1 alt. for one-year term)
3. Labour Management Committee representatives (2 for two year term)
4. Occupational Health and Safety Committee representatives (2 for one-year term)

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES (one year terms)

2. Bargaining Committee (up to 10)
2. Strategic Budget Committee (1)
3. Health Benefits Committee (2)
4. PATME (President's Award for Tutor/Mentoring Excellence) (1)
5. Conference Planning Committee

Attention All Academic Experts:**Just a Taste of Upcoming Tutor Conference Sessions...*****– Brenda Kuzio, Grievance and Labour Management Committees***

Brenda Kuzio will be providing an updated session on Academic Expert Time Sheet claims at our conference. In our January newsletter, Brenda provided a valuable article on AE Time Sheets. This is a reprint of the article. Review it and attend Brenda's session so that you can ask her questions about claims that are not being supported. And if you are not an Academic Expert yet, be prepared! This is an important session for all CUPE members.

Brenda offers this important question: **Ask yourself: "would I be doing this if I was not an AE for AU? If the answer is "no" then you should be paid for it.**

Remember that you work at AU for a real living wage; it is not voluntary work.



AE Time Sheets - Brenda Kuzio (CUPE Outsider January, 2015)

AEs are required to fill out time sheets claiming for the work they have done as an AE (excluding marking – this is paid automatically upon entry of mark in Newton).

All too often, AEs do not properly account and claim for his/her time as AU employees. When you do not claim for the time you have spent as an AU employee in the role or AE, you are working for free. This detrimentally affects you and your co-workers.

In January 2015, AU updated the time sheets to provide drop down items under “Nature of Work”. The items are:

- Academic Experting (AE)
- Administration
- Discussion Forums
- Checking Grey Matter (GM)
- Technical
- Other

Be sure to include **EVERYTHING** you do as an AU employee on your time sheets. It is all compensable.

WHAT KINDS OF ITEMS FALL UNDER THE GENERAL DROP BOX TERMS?

AU has provided general Guidelines. Below are attempts to slot our functions under those guidelines. [Please note that this list is not exhaustive. If you do something as an AE that is not on the list, please let the CUPE Administrator know at cupe3911@gmail.com so that it can be added to the list.

ACADEMIC EXPERTING

- Time spent teaching and preparing for response to student query - Research to provide response when student asks unusual question or one that goes beyond course materials but is related to the course – perhaps students ask for additional information or a student is struggling so you provide additional resource to assist
- Dealing with student issues – would include researching for a student issue; telephone calls. Email discussions etc.
- Email discussions where student and tutor have direct email contact
- Monitor MOODLE for things like contract dates – student approaching end dates, etc.
- Checking archived GM requests for student history if required. This is necessary when there has been a change in workload distribution or if you want to go back on the



history with a student when you are running into some problems teaching them or for many other reasons that an AE, as an educator, would need to do so.

- Review student drafts and resubmissions – anything that deals with your role as an educator.
 - Making notations in GM that go beyond existing GM requests (e.g. a student direct emails you – you may want to make a note in GM that says email discussion with student – keep track of the time that the email discussion occurred PLUS the time it takes you to go into the time sheet and make the entry)
 - Dealing with any student issues that may arise – e.g. student who informally challenge marks; students who have questions on CMA's, students who have questions on the markings on assignments
 - Dealing with student issues
 - Time spent on any platform used for teaching student (may be courses that use platforms other than discussion boards – e.g. video classrooms; conferencing etc)
 - Keeping on top of course content (keeping current in your course content)
 - Providing feedback on issues that arise in the course (e.g. links not working; changes in text book result in course issues) or on ways to improve or update the course – curriculum development review and assistance (outside and apart from SME contract)
 - Dealing with plagiarism - Researching for plagiarism issues and corresponding emails with coordinator
 - Creating requests in GM
 - Communicating with other AU staff (Coordinators, course assistants, AE's, etc.)
 - Review student evaluations and other means of communication to AU from the students about the AE to assist in improving skills as educator.
 - Performance evaluation process and review
- **ADMINISTRATION** - includes administration to do the specific teaching portion of the job and also those duties that come with being a part of the university community – this list is not exhaustive
- Tracking time and the time spent filling out and submitting time sheets
 - Time spent discussing time sheet issues, should they be raised, with coordinators and others at AU
 - Emails - Opening AU email and reviewing and responding. Includes reading AU memos, bulletins, newsletters, etc. – anything that makes you part of the university community – staying connected and informed is part of being an AU employee. Emails must be opened, read and then acted on, filed or discarded as the case may be.



- All communications with AU personnel beyond the AU messages including but not limited to contact with coordinators, course assistants, other AEs, SSC staff, directors, payroll, etc. (unless it is course content or student related and then it can go under Academic Experting)
 - Buying/Ordering supplies that are used for AU work
 - Checking Spam (PreciseMail) and Junk and dealing with anti-virus issues
 - Shredding documents
 - File management
 - Tracking time and comparing pay received to time records
 - Requesting leave or arranging coverage if required to do so
- **DISCUSSION FORUMS**
- Claim for as much time as is spent on discussion forums. This includes reviewing and preparing/calculating and entering marks into Newton.
- **CHECKING GREY MATTER (GM)**
- NOTE: Claim 5 minutes a day per course to maximum of 10 minutes *for checking GM* .
- **TECHNICAL**
- Dealing with/Resolving technical issues – includes any time dealing with the Help Desk , dealing with Citrix issues, Time sheet issues etc.
 - Installing programs needed for AU work and learning how to use them
 - Any software or hardware issues/support
- **OTHER**
- Training – attending any AU training sessions that enhance/improve your role as an AE or that are taken to learn AU programs and systems
 - Practice time spent working on new programs to become proficient at them – e.g. Citrix, GM
 - Preparing letters of reference for students
 - Responding to and doing AU questionnaires + AU surveys – e.g. ergonomic surveys; Climate surveys etc.
 - Attending meetings (e.g. course revision meetings; course team meetings or other meetings called by AU)
 - Committee work – includes prep + attending



Collective Agreement Interpretation of Maximum Hours of Work: For CUPE Tutors and Academic Experts

-By Yessy Byl, Grievance Officer and Labour Management Committee

As a result of a recent issue that arose with respect to a tutor who had one block of his work converted to the “call centre”, CUPE has looked at the question of how the maximum hours of work for tutors and AEs are to be calculated when an employee is both a tutor AND an academic expert.

In the past, the practice apparently (unbeknownst to us!) was to put all tutoring and all AE hours together and if an employee hit a total of 122.4, then that employee’s workload (typically the AE work) was reduced. The employer based its practice on an interpretation of article 7.06 (b)(i) which they claimed set out a maximum total workload of four units of work time or 30.6 hours – i.e. 122.4 hours. The union disagrees with this interpretation.

In the case that brought this practice to light, the tutor had four blocks originally, but one block was converted to the “call centre” model giving him three tutor blocks and one AE “unit”. Because tutor blocks have been increasing in size and because his students were busy, Learning Services claimed that his overall hours of work exceeded 122.4 hours. As a result, his AE work was eventually completely taken away, leaving him with only three tutor blocks when he had previously been working four blocks.

The union took a long hard look at the issue and the wording of the collective agreement; we argued that the employer was trying to equate apples to oranges. We argued that a **tutor** is hired on the basis of a specific assignment of number of blocks (or portions thereof) of tutor work (which can fluctuate within certain limits). Any fluctuation of work does not affect the entitlement to the assigned number of blocks unless there is a decrease in enrollment in which case the lay-off Article 22 comes into effect.

Also, if there are consistently more students, then an additional block -or portion of a block - of work may exist and will be awarded as per the collective agreement. The maximum number of blocks that can be permanently assigned to a tutor is 4 blocks.

An **academic expert** is hired on the basis of “units” of work. A “unit” is defined as 30.6 hours. Because the wording of the collective agreement is based on the “call centre” model of no specific students assignments to AEs, then calculating workloads in terms of hours and a maximum workload of 122.4 hours (4 units of work x 30.6 hours) made sense. (Unfortunately the recent AU move to try to permanently assign students to AEs is problematic in many ways!)

So what happens when an employee is both a tutor and an academic expert with a full workload? The tutor workload consists of x number of **blocks**. Period. A tutor can carry a workload of up to 4 blocks. The hours within that workload are not calculated on a monthly basis (excluding long term changes).



If a tutor also works as an academic expert, then her or his workload consists of x number of blocks and x number of units. If the total AE work exceeds 30.6 hours/unit, x number of units, for more than 3 months, the employer may be able to adjust that workload.... **HOWEVER**, the employer does **NOT** calculate the hours worked as a tutor together with the hours worked as an academic expert to see if the maximum hours of 122.4 are reached.

If an employee works only as an academic expert, she/he can work up to 4 units but the 122.4 hours maximum will be applied.

Confusing, isn't it? Basically, your work contract is for x number of blocks and/or x number of units. The maximum permanent workload is 4 blocks or 4 units, or any combination totaling 4 blocks/ units.

In the case of the employee with the 3 tutor blocks, it was our position that his one unit of academic expert work was to be restored while he maintained his 3 tutor blocks. In the end this person's problem was resolved because LST had miscalculated his total hours regardless of the interpretation of article 7.06. So we still haven't really resolved this issue with AU.

Please **NOTE** that there is an exception to the 4 blocks/units maximum in Article 7.09 where an employee can be assigned additional work of up to 3 months "at the discretion of the employer" but to a maximum of 5 blocks/units. An example of this would be additional student/AE loads covering for absences.

Also please **NOTE** that this has highlighted to us the need to update hourly minimums for Academic Experts in light of the increasing sizes of tutor blocks! Here are some examples of the application of:

4 tutor blocks – no hourly maximum applied

4 AE units – hourly maximum of 122.4

2 tutor blocks, 2 AE units – maximum 2 tutor blocks + 61.2 hours (2 x 30.6 hours)

1 tutor block, 3 AE units – maximum 1 tutor block plus 91.8 hours (3 x 30.6)



More Critical Information on Calculations of Tutor Pay

-Submitted by Ronnie Leah, CUPE 3911 Co-chair, via information provided by Paulette Patry, Manager of Compensation Benefits, Athabasca University

Many members inquire about how Tutor pay is calculated. The following is a summary of the various calculations used by AU, which is valuable to members who want a better understanding of how they are compensated:

Hours Paid Per Pay Period Calculation

1 block of work is equivalent to 17 hours per month, so 17 hours X (number of tutor blocks) X 12 months, divided by 26 pay periods = number of hours per pay period. 1 Block of work = 7.85 hours per pay period.

Hourly wage calculation: Step Pay divided by 17 hours per month = \$\$\$ per hour

(Per hour wage) X (hours per pay period) = \$\$\$ per pay period.

Newton Pay Report

Newton pay is based on the pay period dates that occur every two weeks. When checking these, use the start date period (e.g. September 20 – Oct 3 pay period). You may check your Draft Newton Pay Report. Please ensure to have Sept 20/15 as your start date but you must have your end date as Oct 4/15 to include the Oct 3 entries as the report is auto-generated after midnight.

Overload Pay

Any students over your normal student maximum as of the **1st** of each month are paid on a per student basis. For instance: If there were **51** students September 1st on the report and the normal maximum for the tutor is **48**, the calculation would be 3 extra students.

How to Calculate Overload Pay: Step pay divided by number of students per block = \$ amount per student X # of students over your normal maximum = \$ Pay amount which will be on your pay stub as

Block Overload.

Note: The Overload Pay is on your first pay period of the current month.

Prep Stipend

If a Prep Stipend is to be paid to a tutor, it is indicated on the first Temp Pay coverage sent to H.R. See Temp Pay info below. (If you are preparing to start tutoring a recently revised course, and have new materials to read, ensure that you are being paid your Prep Stipend).



Temp Pay

Block Adjustment on your pay stub is when you cover off students for a tutor on leave. If covering another tutor who is away for a month, the calculation is based on when you tutor. If you tutor for example on Sunday and Thursday, AU pays the amount of students the other tutor has; for example: 32 students = 1 block of work. AU also checks to see if your number of students is at your maximum prior to completing the calculation. The pay, based on the above criteria would be calculated as: (Your current block size (i.e. 3 blocks) + the extra proportion of blocks (i.e. 1 block) = (i.e. 4blocks) of work for 4.5 weeks for the month you are covering the other tutor.

Learning Services Tutorial completes temporary coverage pay after the 20th of each month for the current month and submits it to Human Resources by the end of the month. To explain further, if you covered for another tutor from March 1/15 – May 16/15, the process was:

Mar 1-31 was calculated and sent at the end of March.

Apr 1-30 was calculated and sent the end of April.

May 1-16 was calculated and sent the end of May.

Once HR has processed the temp pay, then it will be paid on the next available pay period after they have completed their processes, so this may vary depending on the payroll schedule. (Note: January's pay was different because of the pay changes.)

Is CITRIX Giving you a Headache?

- by Ann Reynolds, Complaint Review, Bargaining and Health Benefits Committees and Local Trustee

Citrix use is a problem for many CUPE 3911 members, either because of hardware or connection issues. The University's IT help desk (helpdesk@athabascau.ca) is collecting information on these problems and forwarding them to the specialist on Citrix. This specialist is also having monthly **meetings with CUPE** rep, Ann Reynolds (annr@athabascau, anncupe@gmail.com), so you can also contact Ann to express concerns about Citrix.

Remember, that if no concerns are expressed, the University will believe that our members are satisfied with the working conditions this system provides. Ann and your union strongly encourage any members who have concerns with Citrix to write right away to either the help desk or Ann Reynolds, or both.



COCAL XII is Coming to Edmonton in August 2016

COCAL (Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor) is a network of contingent activists and their organizations that have come together every two years for two decades. CUPE 3911 encourages you to mark the dates (August 5 – 7, 2016) and prepare for several days of dialogue and interaction with your academic colleagues from other regions of Canada, the USA, Mexico, and other parts of the world. The conference site is Lister Centre, University of Alberta Campus. Check the COCAL website www.cocalinternational.org and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/COCALInternational> to learn more. As the details of the conference unfold, we will be providing more news [Here](#). If you want to participate on the committee, come to our [AGM in October](#).



2015/2016 Quarter 3 Professional Development Fund Deadline – September 25

We hope that by now members are aware that under our collective agreement, we are entitled to Professional Development Funds. Athabasca University allocates \$40,000.00 annually to CUPE 3911 to award to its members during the April 1st – March 31st AU fiscal year. If any funds remain at the end of the fiscal year, they must carry over to the next fiscal year.

Applications for the third quarter of 2015-2016 are due by September 25. View details and application guidelines and instructions on the CUPE website [Here](#).