

Candidate for Bargaining Team

Matthew Coady

I am a third-year Ph.D. candidate in chemistry, self-nominating for a position on the TA Bargaining Team. I obtained my B.Sc. in chemistry at Western, including one year in industry as part of the Science Internship Program. I have been a TA for the past 2 years (and one summer), and have contributed to the organization of outreach events in chemistry as a grad and member of the chemistry club. I am organized and dependable, and will work hard for the hard-working minority of graduate students.

I share many of the concerns as other members, but am always open to hear concerns that are shared within our union. As a member of the TA bargaining team, I will strive to negotiate above nominal increases in our wages and medical coverage. Our take home pay should be protected from inflation and rising tuition: if we are paying more, we should be earning more than a compensatory increase. With regards to medical coverage, I would see an increase in vision coverage. These and other concerns from the membership will be addressed if I am selected.

In closing, I would like to say that offering TAs competitive wages should be more than an obligation for Western. Knowing that they are providing livelihood to those in pursuit of higher education should be a point of pride. I want to be a part of the team that can change how Western views its graduates.

It's a pleasure to have your consideration.

Sincerely,

-Matt

GTA Bargaining team election

Candidate Name: **Nadezda Ivanova**



My name is Nadia. I am an international 3rd year PhD student in Anatomy and Cell Biology Department.

To this day, I have many ties with our GTA and PDA Union. I introduced myself into the Union environment in the past year, when I joined the Scholarship committee. *Currently* I am serving as a *Biological Sciences Chief Steward* from May 2017. In this role, I have been working on rebuilding trust and renewing dialogue with the members to improve a line of communication that will allow us to collect and deliver an essential information and to gain people's support as we approach the bargaining with the university for a new collective agreement - a very crucial point for us. Continuing in this direction, I got involved with the *Negotiation committee's* work. I was and am performing the research and detailed analysis of member's issues, demands and suggestions for the upcoming bargaining and working on a survey which will aid in understanding of funding schemes across the departments. Altogether, this work allows us to build a solid list of demands accurately representing members' true needs and to carefully plan our bargaining strategy to negotiate improvements in the collective agreement, as well as the Mobilization committee to send a strong message to members and employer. Moreover, as a member of the *Executive committee*, I have been engaged with the recent postdoctoral bargaining experience that has broaden my awareness of the underwater stones of the bargaining process making me better prepared to the possible challenges we may encounter.

Once started with a spark of curiosity, the desire to be a part of the Union has grown into a great need to stand for the family at one of the most difficult times. *As a member of the Bargaining team I offer my knowledge, team player skills, dedication and commitment.* I am ready to take the responsibility with the rest of the team in representing our views and needs at the bargaining table. And I am asking for your support, trust and collaboration. Please **vote for Nadezda Ivanova and Dmitrii Marin** in the Bargaining Committee elections. I believe together we will form a strong team capable to deliver a truly positive change.

Sincerely,

Nadia Ivanova

bioschief@psac610.ca



Dmitrii Marin

for Bargaining Committee

We demand respect and recognition

My name is Dmitrii Marin and I am running for a position in the Bargaining Committee. I am a 3rd year PhD candidate in Computer Science. I started actively participate in our Union two years ago, because it is the only organization that has a *legal* right to bargain with the university as an *equal* party. This is a potential that has not yet been fully realized.

I am a member of a newly formed Mobilization Committee where I have participated in creating a petition and info cards for distribution during orientations, together with bus passes, etc. I have initiated a “course evaluation” project identifying problematic courses that require overtime work or have other issues. I have served as a departmental steward, member of the Scholarship and Graduate Students Issues Committees. Before moving to Canada, I served in electoral commissions and organized several programming competitions and trainings.

This is the third year I experience how increasing tuition (2.7%¹) and inflating prices for groceries (2.6%²) and housing (2.9%²) make it harder for us to make ends meet. Most of us are in financial distress. More than 40% of us will graduate with debts. In addition to stagnant wage rate, many of us work overtime without pay. The university exploits our motivation for studying. This is shameful for an institution claiming research and teaching excellence!

I propose³ a clear funding policy that separates TA's salary from the rest of the funding package, ties it to the living cost increase, and sets separate guaranties for all parts of funding.

The way the departments determine the number of TAs is not regulated and often does not consider the specific duties required for a course. As a result, the workload varies greatly among the courses. Many TAs end up working overtime without pay.

I propose³ a rule in the new collective agreement requiring the departments to determine the number of TAs according to the duties and the number of students in a course.

Conflicts of interest often happens when the TA's course instructor is their research advisor.

I propose³ a norm that enables students to opt-out from working for their advisors as a TA.

It is for the best interest of the university and us to work for courses relevant to our research.

I propose³ a provision requiring the departments to implement a system assigning TAship satisfying our preferences in the best way.

Today we bargain not just for the pay increase or work condition improvements, but for the basic respect and recognition of our value to the university. Please **vote for Dmitrii Marin and Nadezda Ivanova** in the Bargaining Committee elections. I believe together we will form a strong team capable to deliver a truly positive change.

¹ Annual increase averaged over 3 years: 2014 – 2017, Official fee schedule, uwo.ca

² Annual increase averaged over 3 years: 2013 – 2016, Statistics Canada

³ Please see the specific language I propose on <http://publish.uwo.ca/~dmarin3/bargain17.html>

Hello,

My name is Zach Morse and I would like to put myself forward as a nominee for a position on the PSAC collective bargaining team. I am a PhD candidate here at Western in the Planetary Science collaborative graduate program hosted between the Earth Science Department and the Centre for Planetary Science. I am also an international student. I came to Western four years ago from the United States to study and work with world leaders in the planetary science community. Although it is still early in my academic career, my first few years of experience have clearly illustrated the universal benefits of space science and space exploration. They have also shown me the often understated importance of the governing policy behind our scientific endeavors. Space exploration is a highly expensive and risky enterprise that would not be possible today without the political and financial support of governments across the globe. Likewise, the expensive and complex processes of teaching courses, grading assignments, and helping to shape the next generation of scholars at this or any university, would not be possible without the support and hard work of graduate teaching assistants.

In my years at Western I have been a teaching assistant for numerous courses. I have faced the challenge of inspiring first year students taking introductory geology courses as mere science electives. I have taken on the difficult task of explaining the complex spatial concepts of structural geology to upper-year undergraduate and graduate students. I have even had the opportunity to teach on one of the department's excellent field schools, where hands-on instruction had to be balanced with the organizational logistics of mobilizing people and gear, along with keeping a vigilant eye on the health and safety of everyone involved.

Beyond teaching, I have ample experience representing my fellow graduate students. I have served as both the president and vice president on the CPSX graduate student council helping to organize student events and address student concerns within the program. I have also served on the CPSX Executive Council where I acted as the voice of the graduate students in matters including scholarship creation, new course implementation, and developing and maintaining fair program level requirements. Currently I am acting as a student representative for the Centre as they create and implement an entirely new professional masters program in Space Studies.

I strongly believe that every graduate student here at Western, who is employed by the university as a teaching assistant, should be able to afford the cost of living and the cost of tuition based on the yearly income that is about to be determined through the upcoming bargaining process. As the cost of rent, food, and utilities increases in London; the cost of tuition, fees, and parking increases on campus; and the basic minimum wage increases across Ontario, the amount paid to the GTA's here at Western should not, and cannot remain stagnant. I believe that this goal is realistic and, with a strong collective effort, achievable for each of us. Thank you for considering me for a position of this year's bargaining committee.

Sincerely,
Zach Morse