

Secretary candidate Steven Henle's answer to written questions.

1. Question

"Do you believe that the CUFA executive should value transparency and effective bottom-up consultation in its communications with the membership? Why or why not?"

Sent by Anya Zilberstein

Answer by Steven Henle

My door is always open—whether via email or a face-to-face meeting, I am here to listen, clarify, and collaborate.

Core Principles

Transparency & Confidentiality: While transparency and member consultation are foundational, I will always prioritize protecting a member's right to confidentiality, which may impact transparency. When complex decisions are made, I am committed to explaining the underlying rationale clearly.

Inclusive Representation: CUFA's priorities should always be shaped by our constituents' needs. My role on the Executive is to uphold the Collective Agreement and defend our rights through a process that starts with the members.

Open Dialogue: I value collegial discussion and will not shy away from difficult conversations. I recognize the diverse concerns across our membership and aim to foster an environment of honest, respectful debate.

Accountability: I am dedicated to proving I am worthy of your trust. I will share issues with you and ask for feedback, but I also ask for your confidence in my decision-making when circumstances require it. I will speak truth versus loyalty.

2. Question

"In your position statement you say you would work to strengthen communication across the membership and help foster a culture of respectful but productive debate. The concept of genuine dialogue seems to be sorely lacking recently in CUFA. Can you elaborate on how you would go about doing so?"

Sent by Norman Ingram

Answer by Steven Henle

To foster a culture of respectful and effective dialogue, I propose prioritizing member understanding through training in two key areas:

I aim to provide training to those who want it on Robert's Rules, particularly before the Annual General Meetings (AGM). When members understand how to properly bring motions, debate, and vote, participation becomes more effective and less intimidating. Education will help reduce frustration, leading to a more civil and engaged atmosphere.

Our Collective Agreement is a complex document that dictates all our actions. I propose training for interested members to demystify these rules, ensuring members understand the legal framework we operate within.

Council meetings and the AGM can often feel hostile and intimidating. To that end, I would like to see a change in tone, such as more use of “I” statements in our meetings, rather than accusatory language and combativeness, I will practice this to provide an example for members. The Executive and Council are open to feedback and new ideas; dialogue is most productive when members bring forward both problems and potential solutions. By empowering members with knowledge and promoting constructive communication, we can transform our union into a more collaborative and respectful community.

3. Question

“I would like to get your opinion on what CUFA should do to ensure job security and academic growth for those members holding ETA positions. What do you see as the biggest issues facing those members?”

Sent by Gail Fayerman

My journey at Concordia began in 2004, progressing from LTA to ETA Teaching Professor. I have experienced the successes of our union firsthand, but I have felt the sting of setbacks and workload inequities. Due to the hiring freeze coupled with retirements, and soon to be missed LTAs, our service responsibilities have increased, with fewer available people to share the workload.

Workload & Pay Inequity

Budget cuts have created severe workload disparities. For example, my eConcordia caps have increased from 100 to 150 students—a 50% surge—without a corresponding increase in workload credits, unlike other faculties that scale compensation with class size. We must close this gap in the Collective Agreement to ensure fair compensation for larger classes and the increased responsibility of supervising TAs.

Barriers to Leadership

Despite my Ph.D., peer-reviewed publications, and 22 years of experience, I am currently barred from serving on the DPC or as Unit Head. Such restrictions stifle professional growth and prevent ETAs from participating fully in university governance.

In the next round of bargaining, we must:

- **Fix pay/workload inequities** regarding class sizes and service duties.
- **Empower ETA faculty** to hold leadership and governance roles while recognizing the value of teaching and service.