

**CUPE BC Colleges Committee**  
**Report to Convention – April 2017**

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The CUPE BC Colleges Committee is comprised of Local Presidents or designates appointed by the CUPE BC Division Executive Board.

Part-time and precarious workers, access to post-secondary education, Public Private Partnerships, shared services, reductions and inadequate funding continue to be significant challenges facing post-secondary workers. As a sectoral committee, our challenges are on-going and resolutions difficult to attain in the short-term; however, we continue to advocate for affordable, accessible public post-secondary education for this generation and future generations of workers and students.

**Precarious Employment**

When members of the CUPE BC Colleges Committee look at what is affecting their workplaces, with negative consequences to the lives of workers and the quality of the educational system, we continually come back to discussing the problem of precarious employment. As funding decreases to post-secondary education, employers have increased their workforce of precarious workers. More of our members are relying on two or three jobs to pay bills and buy food for their families. We continue to push our employers for more regularization language and less pay-as-needed workers so that core appointments accurately reflect what they do and how many hours they work.

Having workers constantly check schedules, in hopes of obtaining additional hours while trying to arrange time for their other jobs or for child care, or elder care, keeps workers under duress. Cafeteria, bookstore and other ancillary services keep the pink ghetto rolling along. Ongoing temporary appointments and casual employment impedes workers who want to plan a future. It is well past time for the post-secondary bosses to stand with the workers in demanding adequate funding for our institutions. The Colleges Committee is dedicated to opposing the Employers' continued reliance on precarious employment and we look to all CUPE members to support us in this opposition.

### **Access to Post-Secondary Education in BC**

The BC Liberal Government is talking out of two sides of its mouth. On one side it holds fast onto the 2% tuition cap and on the other encourages institutions to find ways around the 2005 Tuition Limit Policy – which limits tuition increases to the rate of inflation – by the creating additional student fees. These student fees are supposed to be for new services but in reality look like they are for services that have existed in one form or another. Some examples of these new student fees are: North Island College \$6.00 per credit – Learner’s Resource Fee, Vancouver Community College \$26 per term student fee, Vancouver Island University \$6.72 per credit Student Services Fee.

### **Public Private Partnerships**

Christy Clark and the BC Liberal Government continue to impose Public Private Partnerships (P3's) on a number of our BC post-secondary institutions despite the recent BC Finance Ministry report (2016) which has been very critical of the government’s activities around P3’s. This recent and alarming report raises issues of conflict of interest, atrocious business practices, and highly questionable assumptions about the true costs to taxpayers and the province. And this is a report produced by Christy’s own government!

Emily Carr University (CUPE 15) is in the process of building a new P3 campus which will result in layoffs of their entire maintenance department. P3 initiatives can be found throughout BC on a variety of large projects that would have previously been financed with traditional public funding. These also include the construction of hospitals, secondary schools, universities and colleges, highways, bridges, dams and correctional facilities to name just a few. The BC Liberals continue to push through these controversial projects despite the evidence that the cost/risk analysis surrounding P3's has been completely faulty and that the process itself has been mired in dubious practices which have cost taxpayers billions.

The evidence is in: In reality P3's end up costing the public and lead to deregulation and privatization of our public services. In January 2015 the Ontario Auditor General's

report made headlines as Auditor Lysyk found that the use of Public Private Partnerships had cost Ontarians \$8 billion more than they would have paid if the projects had been financed with traditional public funding. In 2016, it became news that the P3 schools program in Nova Scotia was also a failure that cost Nova Scotians tens of millions more than the traditional procurement system.

The Colleges Committee will continue to question and oppose the privatization of our public education system and work to educate our communities on the ineffectiveness of P3 projects.

### **Shared Services**

The BC Liberal Government has made deep cuts to post-secondary budgets. The proposed savings to offset these cuts are laid out in the Administrative Service Delivery Transformation Project or 'shared services' project. Not only are the proposed savings unattainable, the result of the proposed savings from shared service will have a detrimental effect on communities, our members, and will reduce the quality of the services we provide.

Shared services place the focus on cost saving outcomes and away from education. Areas being reviewed include procurement, print, IT, financial, human resource, and ancillary and library services. We continue to demand transparency and monitor the transfer of work from one institution to another and privatization of our bargaining unit work.

### **BC PSE Sexual Assault Policies**

In 2016, the BC Provincial Government passed Bill 23 requiring our public PSE institutions to develop sexual misconduct policies. The initial private member's bill was based on similar legislation in Ontario (Bill 132) and creates a legal responsibility for institutions to both create and maintain policies to prevent occurrences of sexual violence, including educating, protecting and creating safe avenues for students

reporting sexual assault. At the time, BC was only the second province to pass such legislation. While some institutions, such as Camosun College, are offering Consent workshops to both employees and students, many institutions are focusing solely on the students or are only consulting with CUPE after the policy is almost complete. Our 28 public PSE institutions are at various development stages of these policies but what has become clear to CUPE members is that these policies cannot be solely for students. Students live at many of our worksites and incidents along the continuum of sexualized violence are happening to more than just students.

### **Infrastructure Funding**

For Colleges, infrastructure funding refers to two issues: existing infrastructure and new infrastructure.

#### **Existing Infrastructure**

Prior to 2012, in order to maintain existing infrastructure, institutions were provided a grant for preventative maintenance of its facilities in order to prevent early failure and to extend the life of buildings and facilities at Post-Secondary Institutions. This grant was known as the Annual Capital Allowance and made up part of the Ministry of Advanced Education Operating Budget.

In 2012, this funding was changed to the Routine Capital Allowance and was no longer part of the Ministries Operating Budget but was identified as a separate voted appropriation.

After 2012, Institutions no longer had the ability to plan scheduled maintenance of infrastructure as the Annual Capital Allowance was removed and funding was provided by the Ministry as Routine Capital and provided on an institution by institution basis, and not as a planned budget item, placing facilities at risk.

Currently funds for projects are provided with little time for preparation and planning and generally must be spent in the current fiscal year.

### New Infrastructure

New Capital projects make for great photo opportunities for the BC Liberals, but in reality, create hardships for institutions on the receiving end of these projects. The glitzy ads and BC Liberal propaganda around these projects paint a picture about how government is addressing the skills shortage, but nothing could be further from the truth. New projects are announced with great fanfare, but the reality is the projects are not adequately funded, forcing the institutions to seek funding from outside sources to complete the projects. Corporate and private funding comes at a cost to institutions as they strive to operate and build facilities without the provision of adequate public funding. It won't be long until institutions succumb to the pressure to include those outside funding sources in decisions around curriculum and training. Naming rights are seen as a way to raise funds and soon buildings may be named after corporate sponsors.

In some instances, the lack of proper funding for new infrastructure is resulting in the new facility providing less space than the one being replaced. This, compounded by the demand of government to put more students through the system, is creating cramped classrooms and training areas, and in some instances, may have a negative impact on student safety, especially in a trades environment. Combined with the above issues that institutions face regarding inadequate funding for new infrastructure is the matter of no increase in funding to provide for the increased staffing requirements of the new buildings. More students and more programs mean more support staff are required to maintain proper service to students and instructors.

### College and Institutes Canada Conference

CUPE representatives from the CUPE BC Colleges committee attended the 2016 Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Conference in Quebec City. CICan is a national association of 150 of Canada's publically-funded colleges, cegeps institutes and polytechnics. This organization serves 3,000 urban, rural and remote communities across Canada. The annual conference brings together senior administration, Board of Governors members and other college employees. While networking is a focus of the conference the workshops contain valuable information on upcoming workplace shifts;

changes in educational practices; issues and solutions as presented through a management lens and workshops for Board of Governor members. The information presented is often contrary to practices CUPE employees wish to see in our workplaces and from our BOG members.

The 2017 CIGan conference is in Ottawa. While the conference workshops are valuable for both networking and information there are many advantages for CUPE to participate as a vendor in the Marketplace for the upcoming conference. For several years CUPE set up a booth in the Marketplace of this conference which allowed us to communicate with BOG members and with many of the conference attendees about the work CUPE does in our communities. Our presence allows an opportunity to counterbalance the presence of organizations such as Aramark and Chartwells as well as offset ideologies that oppose our traditional values.

### **Education Conference**

A successful conference for CUPE K-12, College & University members was held November 7 - 9, 2016 in Vancouver. The Alberta Education Minister, David Eggen was the keynote speaker and brought hope of what a change in BC government could bring to us. A panel discussion including MLA Rob Fleming, Opposition Spokesperson for Education, MLA Cathy Corrigan, Opposition Spokesperson for Advanced Education and Duly-Elected Vancouver School Board Chair Mike Lombardi provided insight into the topic of Current Challenges, Future Solutions. This was followed by a lively Q & A opportunity.

Nine workshops were offered with four sector-specific workshops and five workshops available to all attendees. There were over 180 members in attendance with many locals sending first time conference attendees. This is one of our largest conferences and once again was executed in the high standard to be expected from CUPE BC.

### **Engagement**

Engaging our memberships and obtaining community support for CUPE members is an ongoing challenge facing the post-secondary sector; The College's Committee remains

committed to fighting for gains in social and economic justice for our members by engaging and motivating our members through communication, education and bargaining.

Our Committee is committed to educating our membership, employers and the general public on the values of union principles and the benefits of union membership.

Our Committee members encourage you to join us in our fight for public post-secondary education by supporting our resolutions to:

- Hold a BC Bargaining Strategies Think Tank.
- Lobby the BC government and urge CUPE National to insure the restriction of corporate involvement in BC post-secondary institutions.
- Lobby the BC government to increase base operational funding for building maintenance and upgrade projects.

Respectfully submitted:

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