

CUPE BC Library Committee
Report to Convention – April 2017

“Libraries remind us that truth isn't about who yells the loudest, but who has the right information.” **President Barack Obama**

The CUPE BC Library Committee is a multi-sector committee representing CUPE library workers in four sectors; public libraries, K-12, colleges and universities. Our committee meets regularly to discuss the common issues facing all library workers across the province. At the October 2015 OBCM, the committee set the goals for the next term.

We identified three main priorities:

- CUPE BC's ongoing relationship with the BC Library Association
- Member engagement
- Health and safety tool kits.

What follows is a look-back on the accomplishments of the Library Committee during the last year of its 2015 - 2017 term.

BC Library Association (BCLA) Conference Participation and the Relationship with BCLA

The BC Library Association (BCLA) Conference held its annual conference April 19 - 21, 2017. This year, CUPE BC was a platinum sponsor hosting the full plenary “Hot Topics” session giving Brother Faoro the opportunity to address the whole conference delegation. Our Library Committee moderated a panel “*Measuring Our Value Beyond Our Walls*” where we discussed how we measure the social and moral impact libraries have on our communities. The panel participants featured Alex Hemingway (Public Finance Policy Analyst, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives), Kyla Epstein (Chair, Vancouver Public Library Board of Trustees and CUPE 1004 member), a civic politician and Carlos Carvalho (CUPE 1760 member). Our booth featured our Health and Safety survey report, as well as the updated lists of progressive children's, adult books and films focusing on social justice.

At the 2016 conference we interacted with 120+ CUPE members and had almost 70 delegates (CUPE members, management, non-union library workers and trustees) attend our workshop on the results of our Health and Safety survey conducted the year

before. Overall, it was well received and participants walked away with a better sense of our members' working conditions and best practices in dealing with challenges to health and safety at work.

Word Vancouver – September 25, 2016

Once again, CUPE Local 391 (Vancouver, Gibsons and Sechelt Public Libraries) hosted authors at the WORD Vancouver Literary Festival. Author readings included Carol Shabeen, Andrew MacLoed, and Anakana Schofield. They also debuted their popular “Rosie the Reader” logo!

CUPE National Library Committee

The common issues of chronic underfunding of the public education system (K-Post Secondary), violence in the workplace, electing progressives at all levels of government, declining enrolment in post secondary, privatization attempts and many other issues that unite library workers across the country.

At the 2016 Canadian Library Association (CLA) conference, the CLA as we know it ceased to exist. Instead, the Canadian Federation of Library Association (CFLA) will take its place. The keynote at last year's conference was Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild who identified three calls to action the library community could undertake, mostly focusing on preserving and ensuring access to indigenous historical history. Library and Archives Canada also launched the National Heritage Digitization strategy for institutions across the country to start digitizing their collections for all Canadians to enjoy.

The committee's main priorities continue to be to map library workers in all sectors, participate in Library month in October, continue the relationship with the CFLA and the launch of a national survey on precarious work in the library sector.

Submission on the Renewed Strategic Plan for BC Public Libraries 2016

Last fall, CUPE BC delivered a two page submission to government on the *Renewed Strategic Plan for BC Public Libraries 2016*. We were able to voice our opinion on a

variety of questions on the evolution of library services based on feedback we've received from our members in the sector over the past few years. We addressed everything from access to information, the roles libraries and our members play in reconciliation, development and curation of diverse collections, how libraries enhance democracy and the importance of keeping all aspects of library services public.

CUPE BC Health and Safety Survey for Library Workers

At last year's convention we presented the results of the 2015 Health and Safety Survey for Library Workers. To recap, the report validates the anecdotal information we have heard from CUPE members over the years. As resources for the disenfranchised seem to dwindle, non-work, traditionally done by counselors and social workers, has crept into the daily work life of many library workers. It also highlights the unpredictability of our members' worksites and the need for improving awareness of working alone policies, increasing staffing when possible, establishing better sight lines within libraries (for example, by using mirrors), improving procedures for dealing with problem patrons and encouraging better utilization of Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees. Committee members were trained earlier this year to make presentations and to lobby their MLAs, schools boards, city councils, library boards and boards of governors.

The committee would like to thank Staff Advisor, Zoe Magnus, Communication Representative, Kathryn Davies and Researcher, Sarah St. John, for their support and ongoing dedication to our sector.

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Ranalletta, Chair
Karen Dykes, Co-Chair
Nelda Bonsor
Kathy Boyce
Kelly Davison

Allison Hardman
Rose Jurkic
Helen Lapp
Denise Parks
Nancy Quilty

Linda Sjuberg
Leah Stubbings
Zoe Magnus – Staff Advisor
Kathryn Davies – Staff Advisor

April 2017

