

CUPE BC Universities Committee

Report to Convention – April 2017

The Universities Committee consists of the Presidents or designates representing ten Locals of the University of British Columbia (UBC - Locals 116, 2278, and 2950), Simon Fraser University (SFU - Local 3338), University of Victoria (UVIC - Locals 917, 951 and 4360), University of Northern BC (UNBC - Local 3799), Royal Roads University (RRU - Local 3386) and Thompson Rivers University (TRU - Local 4879). The committee functions as the coordinating body for CUPE workers at these universities, and liaises with CUPE workers at other post-secondary institutions in BC and in other provinces. Our meetings provide important opportunities for the committee to discuss common concerns and plan strategies on a sectoral basis.

Our Staff Advisor is Ross Idler. Chair is Karen Wong, Co-Chair Lois Rugg and Recording Secretary Fiona Brady Lenfesty. Lois Rugg attends the Post Secondary Task Force on behalf of the CUPE BC Universities Committee at the National table, where she also serves as Co-Chair of the National Committee.

Committee Meetings

The Universities Committee met on October 14, 2016, where we reviewed local reports, and had a presentation by Tom McKenna on the Site Committee and Joint Occupational Health and Safety issues. Our last meeting was January 27, 2017, where we drafted resolutions and reviewed reports on key issues from all regions of the province.

The key issues were as follows:

Bargaining

Most Universities' Collective Agreements will expire, in accordance with the provincial mandate, on March 31, 2019. Locals are ramping up in preparation of bargaining in the fall of 2018.

Precarious Workers

Many of our University Locals in the province are continuing to overuse casual, temporary and auxiliary contract staff. With the continual overuse, some of our members are easily classified as precarious workers. We are seeing a rising trend where management continues to employ casual, temporary and auxiliary contract workers instead of posting permanent positions. These positions are often without benefits, seniority or stability. Precarious workers are also at a much higher risk of injury.

Long-Term Underfunding of Post-Secondary Education

Throughout our committee meetings, we shared common concerns and issues that are similar throughout the province. Of these common concerns, the most worrisome is the long-term underfunding of education in BC. This has a direct impact on post-secondary education.

With our Provincial Election soon approaching this year, the committee feels education must be in the forefront of all discussions around election platforms.

Our committee has focused on the damage done by the underfunding of education, building and maintenance, and commit to bringing these education concerns to public forums. We continue to reach out to the K-12 sector and Colleges sector for support in this fight against the decimation of the education system. We encourage all locals to bring forward an awareness campaign to educate members on the value of training and learning opportunities.

Underfunding of post-secondary education should be on the minds of every person in British Columbia, as they vote in our next provincial election on May 9, 2017.

Our Awareness Campaign

The core values of investing in employees provides continuity in our workplace, and skills upgrading provides increased job security. Our Universities sector is working

towards developing an Awareness Campaign, which will assist locals in educating our members on the value of training and learning opportunities. Creating member awareness will assist all Post-Secondary Locals at their respective bargaining tables.

Loss of Bargaining Work

Our committee members are extremely concerned that CUPE work is being methodically moved to non-unionized 'associations' across the province. We continue to gather information on the loss of jobs and at which universities. This information will help us do battle across the sectors, prevent future losses, secure our bargaining language, and bring these jobs back in house.

Sexual Assault Policy

At the time of this submission, universities are working on the final drafts of a government mandated Sexual Assault Policy. Once drafted, Locals at each site will be involved in the consultation process, before the policy is finalized.

WorkSafeBC

Tom McKenna, National Staff Representative, met with the committee to outline Bill 9 and Bill 35 of the WorkSafeBC mandate. There is overwhelming concern that onsite Health and Safety committees are in danger of being non-existent, with the exception of UBC, which has agreed to keep Local Site OHS Committees in addition to Joint OHS Committees. As well, Local Site Committees are invaluable in that they are the "eyes and ears" of safety issues in the workplace. Local Site Committees are a great mobilizing and organizing tool.

Health and Safety should be our top concern, and the WorkSafeBC proposals are the first step in watering down of safety concerns on the campuses. This issue should be a concern for all levels of the public education sector; K-12, Colleges and Universities.

Thanks

The committee thanks our Staff Advisor, Ross Idler, and communications, research and servicing staff that assist us with our work.

Recognition

The Universities Committee would like to recognize Sister Trish Everett-Kabut, who served on this committee for several years, and contributed significant time and energy to her Local and CUPE BC. We wish Sister Trish all the best in her future endeavors, and as she says "...she did a thing".

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Wong, Chair
Lois Rugg, Co-Chair
Laura Yvonne Bulk
David Lance
Fiona Brady Lenfesty
Greg Melenchuk
Karen Ranalletta
Caroline Sewell
Byron Spiers
Kara White
Ross Idler – Staff Advisor

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