



CUPE BC Universities Committee Report to Convention – May 2019

The Universities Committee consists of the presidents or designates representing ten locals: 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 British Columbia and in other provinces. Our meetings provide important opportunities for the committee to discuss common concerns and plan strategies on a sectoral basis.

The Universities Committee met on November 15, 2018, and again on February 8, 2019 where we reviewed local reports, and developed our strategies around significant issues facing our sector. We have outlined our key issues:

2019 Bargaining

Most Universities' Collective Agreements will expire on March 31, 2019. The locals continue to meet through the Universities Coordinated Bargaining Committee (UCBC) for all bargaining related issues.

Governance Issues

The committee was pleased to see that the BC Government repealed Bill 18 that prevented union activists to sit on post-secondary Boards of Governors.

At the 2018 CUPE BC convention, the floor passed resolutions allowing more elected members on the Boards of Governors versus the provincial appointed members, and that a seat should be earmarked for a unionized support staff worker.

We met with the Minister of Advanced Education to discuss those governance resolutions as well as general board appointments.

Loss of Bargaining Unit Work and Organizing Opportunities

After many meetings and discussions about the alarming rate that CUPE work is being methodically moved to non-unionized ‘associations’ across the province we invited CUPE organizers, David Fleming and Zoe Magnus to join us at our November meeting to help us strategize and map organizing opportunities at each of our campuses. We committed to identifying an organizing contact for each local as we move forward on this long term project.

Long-Term Underfunding of Post-Secondary Education

For many years, the committee has been extremely concerned about funding in the sector. As we’ve met and shared common concerns and issues we have asked for comprehensive funding and revenue analyses for each of our institutions.

This will encompass how tuition (domestic and international), capital funding, operations funding, grant funding, federal and provincial transfer payments, endowments, corporate revenue and anything else that falls into how our universities are funded. This will serve as a foundation for future lobbying asks and support needed as we continue to advocate for our members in the sector.

CUPE National Post-Secondary Task Force - Our Time to Act! Campaign

The CUPE BC Universities Committee along with the CUPE BC Colleges Committee is participating and taking action in the CUPE National Post Secondary Task Force’s “*Our Time to Act*” Campaign calling on the federal government to adopt a federal Post-Secondary Education Act with clear conditions and accountability measures for federal funding:

- Create a dedicated Post-Secondary Transfer.
- Increase transfer funding by 40 percent to restore the level of per-student PSE funding that was provided in 1993.

- Work with the provinces to reduce and eventually eliminate tuition fees for post-secondary education.

We encourage CUPE members and their friends and families across BC to sign the petition <https://cupe.ca/sign-petition-its-time-federal-government-be-real-partner-post-secondary-education-again>.

We also encourage CUPE members to learn more about the campaign and visit <https://cupe.ca/our-time-act>.

Please sign the post cards that will be handed out to delegates on the convention floor.

Sexual Misconduct Policies

In 2016, the BC government passed legislation requiring all post-secondary institutions implement stand-alone policies and procedures regarding sexual violence on campus. An unintended consequence of implementing these survivor-centric policies has been considerable neglect of procedural fairness. There are significant legal concerns regarding the nature of these complaints that put our members at risk – their employment, their physical and psychological health and well-being and their safety. Some institutions are exploring alternate dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, like restorative justice, to respond to these complaints; the committee will continue to monitor, share and consider various ADR models. We are also engaged in consultations with an advisory committee on the Federal Government's Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence in Post Secondary Institutions.

CUPE BC met with the Minister of Advanced Education to share the feedback from our locals about our concerns and will continue to advocate on this serious issue until our institutions get it right.

Truth and Reconciliation

The committee has made truth and reconciliation a priority - we are planning a reconciliation day at UBC; to learn about the land we conduct our business on, to meet and learn at the new Indian Residential School and Dialogue Centre and to visit the Reconciliation Pole.

Thanks

The committee thanks our Staff Advisor David Scott, Communications Representative Janet Szliske, Researcher Anusha Balram and the support staff who assist us with our committee's work.

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Ranalletta, Chair
Lois Rugg, Co-Chair
Fiona Brady Lenfesty
Laura Yvonne Bulk
Donal Burrows
David Lance
Craig Marykuca
Greg Melenchuk
Caroline Sewell
Kara White
David Scott, Staff Advisor

May 2019

