



Volume 5 Issue 1

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The CUPE newsletter is published by CUPE Local 3911. We welcome your submissions, letters and comments. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of CUPE Local 3911

Editor: Natalie Sharpe

CUPE 3911: Meet our new 2014 – 2015 Executive

Thanks to everyone who has come forward to serve our union this year. Several executive members of previous years have returned. There was a bit of shuffling in the positions. We also have some new faces. Remember that if you still want to serve, we are building a steward network and your help is really appreciated. The number beside the name indicates the length of term in years.

Co-chairs

- [Dougal MacDonald](#) (2)
- [Ronnie Leah](#) (2)
- [Rob Wiznura](#) (1)

Recording Secretary

- Glynnis Lieb (2)

Grievance Officer

- [Yessy Byl](#)

Grievance Committee

- Laura Marik
- Virginia Gillese
- Brenda Kuzio
- Rob Wiznura
- Liam Connelly

Communications

- Natalie Sharpe

Membership

- Klaus Thomson

Representative officers

- Wayne Brehaut
- Virginia Gillese
- Teresa Bosse
- Rochelle Sato

Trustees

- Lorraine Laville (3)
- Joyce Miller (2)

- Ann Reynolds (1)

Labour Management

- Yessy Byl
- Brenda Kuzio

Occupational Health & Safety

- Marlyss Valiant

Professional Development Fund

- Wayne Brehaut (2)
- Mark Dimirsky (2)
- Deb Foster (1)
- Teresa Bosse (1)

Complaint Review

- Ann Reynolds
- Glynnis Lieb (alt)

Human Resources

- Yessy Byl
- Nyron Jaleel
- Virginia Gillese

Bryon Paegge Award

- Rochelle Sato
- Helen Onderka
- Arlene Young

Bylaw Revision

- Dougal MacDonald

- Nyron Jaleel
- Klaus Thomson

Bargaining Committee

- Garry Ramsay
- Dougal MacDonald
- Glynnis Lieb
- Nyron Jaleel
- Ann Reynolds

Health Benefits

- Lorraine Laville
- Ann Reynolds

PATME Award

- Wayne Brehaut

Budget

- Liam Connelly

Conference Planning

- Glynnis Lieb
- Nyron Jaleel
- Natalie Sharpe
- Dougal MacDonald
- Klaus Thomson
- Ronnie Leah
- Lois Hameister



How do I get paid my \$100 stipend for attending the conference?

By now, you will have received an email from Cammy Peden (Learning Services) who has provided the following instructions to receive \$100 from the University for attending the conference. As you can see, you will have to go through the Banner Expense Training in order to have this form processed. Here is Cammy's email:

"If you attended the CUPE conference and have expenses that you will be submitting please follow the instructions below.

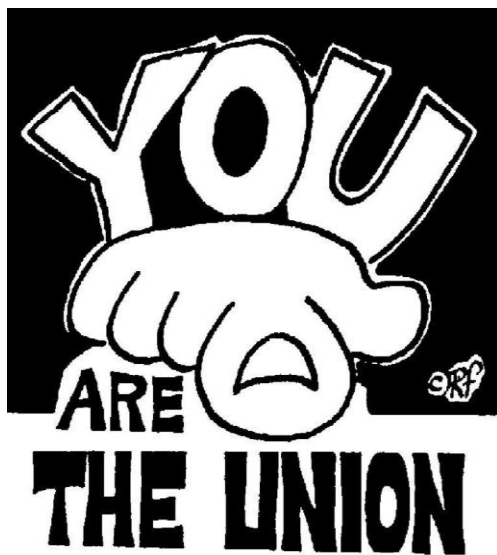
Below you will find the link to the Travel and Expense Manager Training Manual for submitting your expense claims.

http://train.lms.athabascau.ca/pluginfile.php/6180/mod_resource/content/18/TEM%20Training%20Manual%202014-9-8.pdf

If you have not yet set-up your profile for Travel and Expense claims please start on page 1 of the manual to set-up your profile. For those that already have, please begin on page 8.

When you have reached step 3 "Change the funding default section of your report", the FOAPAL will be entered as: Fund=110000 Organization=305301 Program=401

When you get to the "Comment" section, add a note that your claim needs to be routed to Cammy Peden for approval."



Next CUPE GENERAL Membership Meeting:

Saturday, December 13th @ 9:30

**Room 1115, 10011 – 109 St
Edmonton**

Teleconference Available

Walk in's welcome!!



Okay, So What is a Grievance?”

In everyday language, a grievance has many meanings, but within a collective agreement, the meaning is specific. There are also different kinds of grievances. Here is a quick summary of what a grievance is.

“A grievance is a complaint about something the employer did or did not do.

- *A violation of the collective agreement.*
- *A violation of federal or provincial employment-related laws.*
- *When the employer changes the way they apply collective agreement language.* **“(CUPE Steward Handbook: 2011:19)**

Three Main Types of Grievances

Individual grievance: *The Union files a grievance on behalf of an individual employee. (e.g., a worker feels s/he was unfairly disciplined)*

Group grievance: *The Union files a grievance on behalf of a group of members affected in the same way and at the same time by an action the employer has taken. (e.g., a group of workers, e.g., Science tutors, are affected by a violation of the collective agreement)*

Policy/Union grievance: *The Union files a grievance because the employer did or did not do something that could have an impact on all workers covered by the collective agreement. This is usually a general (rather than individual) complaint. (e.g., the employer does not inform union members of positions they are eligible for) (ibid:15)*

Common Questions about Grievances

1. Do I own the grievance? No, the union has “carriage rights” and is the owner because a collective agreement is a contract between the employer and your bargaining agent, the union.
2. Can I represent myself in the grievance? No, the union appoints a representative for you (e.g., steward, grievance officer).
3. What are the 6 W’s of a grievance? WHO was involved and who saw/heard it; WHAT happened; WHERE and WHEN did it happen; WHY does it violate the Collective Agreement; WHAT remedy being sought for the employer to fix it?
4. Who should I talk to? Your local representative to see if the problem can be fixed before filing a grievance. Not every problem is a grievance, and there must be a reasonable chance of the grievance being successful. (ibid: 19)



5. What else is important about the grievance process? Always do your research; always meet your deadlines; and always hold the employer accountable to deadlines.

In 2011, CUPE National published the CUPE Steward Handbook, the source of the italicized information above. See: https://cupe.ca/sites/cupe/files/steward_handbook_eng_final.pdf

What if I have a Problem that is not deemed a Grievance?

1. Seek guidance from your union on how to solve problems informally with your supervisor or the party with whom you are having conflict.
2. Attend union meetings and bring up these problems to see if they are shared by others or may be systemic (e.g., address to committees such as: labour-management, health and safety, etc.)
3. Be involved in a steward network, and participate in important union actions to voice workers' concerns and rights.

What Do I Get for my CUPE Union Dues?

This is an important question to ask as we may take it for granted that our rights once achieved do not have to be protected and fought for. This is what your union dues provide for you:

1. Decent wages, health benefits, pensionable earnings, job security, protection by your union
2. Union courses and resources
3. Support for arbitration
4. Campaigns by National, Regional and Local sectors to support public education, public health care and fight against privatization of our public services
5. A tax deduction as well as tax support for public services

Update on the Call Centre Battle – Dougal MacDonald

On September 17, at Athabasca University campus in Edmonton, the second of two “special” General Faculty Council meetings addressed the important issue of “Who decides?” at AU. As set out in the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act, the 53-member GFC, mainly populated by fourteen appointed administrators, 28 elected full-time academic staff, and five elected tutors, is responsible for academic and student affairs at AU, subject to Board of Governors approval. At both GFC meetings, a resolution spearheaded by full-time faculty and tutors was put forward, demanding that the academic decision-making power currently being usurped by the administration must be returned to the GFC.



At the first special GFC meeting on August 28, the provincially-legislated Chair of the meeting, interim AU President Peter MacKinnon, stopped a vote on the decision-making resolution by moving adjournment, exercising what amounted to a veto [note 1]. Between meetings, the administration attempted to have the mover withdraw the motion. Continuing to oppose the resolution even after the “yes” vote on September 17, MacKinnon now declares it to be only “advice” that does not need to be acted upon, which also amounts to a veto.

The question of “Who decides?” at AU is directly related to the administration’s persistent attempts to arbitrarily impose the “call centre” model on all the AU faculties, without GFC assent, under the hoax that it is an administrative matter and not an academic matter. The main aim of imposing the call centre across all university faculties is to reduce the pay of the tutors who do the bulk of the online teaching. The attack on tutor livelihood is part of the administration’s abject capitulation to the savage March 13, 2013, provincial budget cuts to the operating budgets of all of Alberta’s universities, colleges, and technical schools.

Specifically, the call centre will eliminate the salaried part of tutor pay, known as “block pay”, which is based on the number of students registering in a tutor’s online class. Exactly how much tutor pay will be reduced is unclear but previous experience with the Faculty of Business, which had the call centre imposed in the 1990s, shows the cut could be 50 per cent or more. Losing block pay will also eliminate the fact that it helps stabilize tutors’ overall pay by serving as a buffer to the ebb and flow of the submission of student work to tutors for marking.

AU claims that tutor block pay must be eliminated because “tutor costs are becoming unaffordable.” AU wrongly considers tutors to be costs rather than what they really are, which is producers of much of the added value generated by the university through teaching their students, who in turn contribute to the society. Education is an investment, not a cost. There is also a false implication that block pay should be eliminated because it is “undeserved” and that somehow tutors are overpaid.

The call centre system of paying tutors will require tutors, renamed “academic experts”, to fill out monthly timesheets detailing every interaction relating to their students and to submit the timesheets for administration approval. Valuable instructional time is wasted making out the timesheets and tutors can easily omit claims for work they should be paid for. Administrators examine tutor timesheets and can reject claimed items, which has already occurred in the Faculty of Business call centre and given rise to tutor grievances.

Since the AU administration first decided to arbitrarily impose the call centre in all faculties, we have campaigned vigorously against both the dictatorial decision-making and the call centre itself. As everyone knows, instructor working conditions are student learning



conditions. Mandating that the call centre must be imposed at AU will damage teaching and learning, downgrade services to students, and undermine the quality of the education that the university delivers. The ongoing tutor campaign to have a say and to oppose the call centre includes informing and mobilizing members, building alliances, being active in committees, lodging grievances, taking actions such as participating in a picket and march, and informing the public through various media. Earlier, we established the Protectlearning.ca site with its comprehensive arguments against the call system and the related petition now has nearly 1,000 signatures.

[Note 1: MacKinnon was previously president of University of Saskatchewan where he unsuccessfully vetoed the unanimous decision of a committee granting tenure to a sociology professor. To find out the latest on this ongoing court case go to:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/University+appeals+presidential+veto+over+tenure+decision/10293724/story.html>

About the Recent Call Centre Article in the *CAUT Bulletin* – Dougal MacDonald

The Canadian Association of University Teachers published a front page article in its October 2014 issue titled, “After Faculty Vote, Athabasca University Call Centre on Hold.” Interestingly, after we sent a message to CAUT explaining the actual situation (see below), the CAUT changed the online title of the article to, “After Faculty Vote, Hope for a Rethink of Call Centre Model at Athabasca University.” While we much appreciated the national attention given to our fight, we found the article somewhat misleading, as did some of our members, in light of the fact that while the article stated the call centre is “on hold”, in reality, AU continues to switch courses to the call centre model. To inform CAUT of the actual situation, your three co-Chairs sent the following message to CAUT:

Dear CAUT,

We are the three co-Chairs of CUPE Local 3911 which organizes the contract teaching staff (tutors) at Athabasca University, Alberta. On behalf of our members, we want to thank you very much for highlighting our struggle against the AU administration's attempt to impose the call centre at our university. We certainly appreciate your assistance in our struggle to protect learning at AU.



Since the AU administration first decided to arbitrarily impose a call centre in all faculties some two years ago, the tutors and their allies have campaigned vigorously against both the administration's arbitrary decision-making and the call centre itself. As everyone knows, instructors' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Mandating that a call centre must be imposed at AU will damage teaching and learning, downgrade services to students and undermine the quality of the education that the university delivers.

There is one small issue that we have however with your article and that is that recent actions by the AU administration show that unfortunately the call centre is NOT on hold, the vote at General Faculty Council notwithstanding. In fact, we have just received notice that more courses in the Faculty of Science and Technology will be "moved over" to the call centre model very soon. It is clear that AU has chosen to implement the call centre a few courses at a time, and is not acknowledging the result of the GFC vote which should have put the call centre on hold.

In light of these latest developments, we ask that you continue to keep a close eye on what is happening at AU. As you clearly state in your "Procedures Related to Censure": "When a university or college administration (including its governing body) acts in a manner that threatens academic freedom and tenure, undermines collegial governance, disregards negotiated agreements, refuses to bargain in good faith, or takes other actions that are contrary to interests of academic staff or compromise the quality and integrity of post-secondary education, CAUT will do everything in its power to remedy the situation."

We will keep you informed of future developments. If you would like to talk with us directly about this matter, please email co-Chair Dr. Dougal MacDonald at doogmacd@shaw.ca to set up a conversation.

Thank you again for your support for quality education.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Dougal MacDonald, co-Chair, CUPE 3911

Dr. Rob Wiznura, co-Chair, CUPE 3911

Dr. Ronnie Leah, co-Chair, CUPE 3911



The Digital Imperative: The Mythical Divide: by Betsy Hoover (Summary of Keynote Address to CUPE National Sector Conference, Oct 2014)

- The view that there is a difference between online and offline organizing is a “mythical divide” that does not really exist.
- The media is changing; the way we approach public narrative is changing.
- Focus on Values first, e.g.: Respect. Empower, Include. Talk tactics later.
- Digital media is about building relationships.
- Think about who your audience is- who is on your email lists, etc.
- Online engagement is a set of principles, not tactics.
- Empowerment - give people the tools.
- Participation – focus on building relationship with one another.
- Force Multiplier – build a wider audience.
- Relationship-based organizing is strategic, not forced.
- Use a ladder approach; move people up the ladder in their comfort zone.
- Use this premise to build relationships incrementally, not scare/overwhelm.
- Online messaging matters: social = speed.
- Create a culture of testing engagement; make people feel part of something.
- Think Mobile first as over 50% of web traffic comes through phones.
- Understand your organizing model; this needs to be mirrored online.
- A steward network is important to help prioritize the buy in.
- Invest in the infrastructure: what are your online tools? What is your website built on? What is the email structure? What tools are available to you?
- Go back to Values: focus on building data about where, who your people are.
- Prioritize training to help bridge what some may perceive as a gap in modes of communication. Offer digital team help.
- Test to see if your digital work is helping you to accomplish your goals of reaching to membership and other important audiences.
- BE INTERESTING as you are competing with cat pictures.
- BE AUTHENTIC or people won’t believe you.
- BE ENGAGING or people will get bored.
- BE A MEGAPHONE and think of how you are engaging with your audiences. BE OKAY WITH RISK or you will be left behind; don’t worry about failure.
- BUILD A CULTURE OF CIVILITY AND RESPECT. Set ground rules for conversation.

(Betsy Hoover is a Partner in 270 Strategies, the Grass Roots Campaign for Barak Obama 2012)