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CUPE 3911 BARGAINING REPORT

### ATTEND THE CUPE 3911 MONTHLY MEETING ON NOVEMBER 20, 2021

*Our next general meeting, open to all members, will be held on **Saturday, November 20, 930 AM**. Suggested agenda items should be sent to the administrator's email address by 1100 PM, Thursday, November 18. The meeting will be conducted remotely via ZOOM.*

### ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION PICKS NEW PRESIDENT

*by Dougal MacDonald, Communications Officer*

On October 7, 2021, it was announced that Athabasca University's (AU) new president will be Dr. Peter Scott, starting January 4, 2022. Former President Neil Fassina, who took over as AU president in October 2016, left AU to become president of B. C.'s small Kelowna-based Okanagan College on April 1, 2021. Since April 1, Deborah Meyers, AU Vice-President Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), has been serving as interim AU President.

Scott has a PhD in psychology from the University of Sheffield, U.K. He spent almost 20 years at the Open University, U.K., and, most recently, was Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in New South Wales, Australia. From 2007-10 he was elected founding President of the European Association of Technology Enhanced Learning. Scott's AU bio states that he specializes in "digital-led, transformative educational technology innovation" while his research focuses on "eLearning, or technology-enhanced learning, looking at how individual technical innovations can create new models of learning." Links to many of his scholarly publications may be found here:

<http://kmi.open.ac.uk/publications/member/peter-scott>

AU has found itself a new president and only time will tell where he will take the university. As with other recent presidential searches, representatives of CUPE 3911, AUFA, and AUPE 069 could not participate meaningfully in the search because they were excluded from the search committee. Various bogus excuses have been given for this exclusion: our addition would make the committee too big, increased danger of leaking confidential information, and anyway our members could give their input as individuals. The employee groups were at one time included on search committees but that policy was changed, obviously to eliminate our input.



We didn't fall off the turnip wagon yesterday, so we are fully aware that our input and that of AUFA and AUPE would not exert much influence on who gets hired as president of AU. We already have much experience with phony consultations and token committee representation where our views are formally solicited but then ignored. At the same time, we still believe in the need for genuine, transparent consultation and the need to uphold the important principle that we have the right to a say in all decisions at AU that affect our lives.

The approximately 1,000 members of CUPE 3911, AUFA, and AUPE 069 are the main producers of added value at AU through their teaching, research, and support work. So the presidential search committee that picked the new president should have included members of CUPE, AUFA, and AUPE. Until that occurs, every presidential search committee will be a sham and unrepresentative of AU. It will also stifle the important voices of a large segment of those of us who do so much very important work educating AU learners and creating new knowledge.

## JOIN THE CUPE 3911 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING!

CUPE 3911 will hold our Annual Conference and General Meeting on Saturday, December 4 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. More details of the meeting and the agenda will be available closer to the meeting. Your Executive encourages the participation of every available member. There is no cost.

You will be sent a link so you can register for the meeting in advance. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about how to join the meeting.

It is important to note our annual elections of Executive members will take place at the meeting. More details on the election process are available on our website: <https://www.cupe3911.com/agm-nominations>. Here is a list of current CUPE 3911 Executives and their willingness to stand in their positions for another term.

| Position                                  | Term   | Current Executive     | Status of Position |
|-------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Executive Officers</b>                 |        |                       |                    |
| <b>Co-Chair</b>                           | 2-year | Glynnis Lieb          | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Co-Chair</b>                           | 2-year | Mark Dimirsky         | 1 year left        |
| <b>Co-Chair</b>                           | 2-year | Ronnie Leah Joy       | 1 year left        |
| <b>Recording Secretary:</b>               | 2-year | Fiona MacGregor       | 1 year left        |
| <b>Secretary Treasurer:</b>               | 2-year | Vanee Narayanan       | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Grievance Officer:</b>                 | 1-year | Barret Weber          | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Communications Officer:</b>            | 1-year | Dougal MacDonald      | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Membership Officer:</b>                | 1-year | Leigh Brownhill (OOP) | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Membership Officer:</b>                | 1-year | Melanie Cook          | <b>Term Ending</b> |
| <b>Representative Officers (up to 8):</b> | 1-year | Grace Shi             | <b>Term Ending</b> |

|                                                           |             |                            |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                                           | 1-year      | Brenda Davis               | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-year      | Gordon Drever              | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-year      | Gregory Krabes             | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-year      | Susan Cake                 | <b>Resigned</b>           |
|                                                           | 1-year      | Ann Reynolds               | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-year      | Agnieszka Doll             | <b>Resigned</b>           |
| <b>Trustees:</b>                                          | 3-year      | Henry Agbogun              | 1 years left              |
|                                                           | 3-year      | Evelyn Chernyk             | 2 years left              |
|                                                           | 3-Year      | Lorraine Laville           | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
| <b>Permanent Committees</b>                               | <b>Term</b> | <b>Current Executive</b>   | <b>Status of Position</b> |
| <b>Human Resources Committee</b><br>(up to 3):            | 1-yr        | Ann Reynolds               | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Vanee Narayanan<br>(Chair) | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
| <b>Grievance Committee</b> (4 or<br>more):                | 1-yr        | Barret Weber               | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Ronnie Joy Leah            | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Natalie Sharpe             | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Mark Dimirsky              | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Marlyss Valiant            | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
| <b>Bryon Paege Committee</b> (up to<br>2):                | 1-yr        | Marie Weingartshofer       | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Ernie Jacobson             | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
| <b>Bylaw Revision</b> (up to 5):                          | 1-yr        | Mark Dimirsky              | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Gynnis Lieb                | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Henry Agbogun              | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
| <b>Representation to AU<br/>Committees</b>                |             |                            |                           |
| <b>PD Fund Committee</b> (up to 4):                       | 2-yr        | Mark Dimirsky (Ch.)        | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 2-yr        | Vanee Narayanan            | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 2-yr        | Cal Hauserman              | 1 year left               |
|                                                           | 2-yr        | Leigh Brownhill            | 1 year left               |
| <b>Board of Governors</b>                                 | 3-yr        | Liam Connelly              | 2 years left              |
| <b>Complaint Review Committee</b><br>(1 and 1 alternate): | 1-yr        | Brenda Kuzio               | <b>Term Ending</b>        |
|                                                           | 1-yr        | Natalie Sharpe, alt.       | <b>Term Ending</b>        |

|                                         |      |                     |                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Labour Management Committee (2):</b> | 1-yr | Barret Weber        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Ann Reynolds        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
| <b>OH&amp;S Committee (2 or more):</b>  | 1-yr | Evelyn Chernyk      | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Glynnis Lieb        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Melanie Cook        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
| <b>Health Benefits Committee (2)</b>    | 1-yr | Lorraine Laville    | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Ann Reynolds        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
| <b>Bargaining Committee:</b>            | 1-yr | Ronnie Leah Joy     | Bargaining Committee in place until next collective agreement ratified. |
|                                         | 1-yr | Glynnis Lieb        | Until next agreement ratified.                                          |
|                                         | 1-yr | Cal Hauserman       | Until next agreement ratified.                                          |
|                                         | 1-yr | Mark Dimirsky       | Until next agreement ratified.                                          |
|                                         | 1-yr | Sue Mitchell (Res.) | Until next agreement ratified                                           |
|                                         | 1-yr | Ann Reynolds        | Until next agreement ratified.                                          |
|                                         | 1-yr | Barret Weber        | Until next agreement ratified.                                          |
| <b>AU Budget Committee (1)</b>          | 1-yr | Vacant              | <b>Vacant</b>                                                           |
| <b>Conference Planning</b>              | 1-yr | Natalie Sharp       | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Glynnis Lieb        | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Mark Dimirsky       | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Vanee Narayanan     | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Ronnie Joy Leah     | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Fiona MacGregor     | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |
|                                         | 1-yr | Ernie Jacobson      | <b>Term Ending</b>                                                      |

## CUPE 3911 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT

BY GLYNNIS LIEB, CO-CHAIR

The CUPE 3911 bargaining committee has met biweekly now for over a year in preparation for what is anticipated to be an arduous round of bargaining with Athabasca University.

The bargaining committee is pleased to report that we exchanged proposals with the employer on October 5, 2011. Both employee and employer proposals are extensive and first blush informs us that this will be a challenging round of bargaining. But we are very optimistic that gains will be made that will improve our working conditions and clarify processes as well as lines of communication between us and the University.



We have set three more bargaining dates in November and look forward to tackling our proposals then. We will begin with the non-monetary proposals. Once those are agreed upon, we will move to the monetary asks. We plan to work hard and to move through the process in as efficient and timely a manner as possible. We will continue to report on our progress to the membership through the newsletter.

Kind regards,  
Glynnis Lieb PhD, Bargaining Chair

## AUFA FILES BAD FAITH BARGAINING COMPLAINT

*(from AUFA Blog, slightly edited for non-AUFA members)*

After almost 6 months of bargaining, Athabasca University (AU) has yet to provide its full opening offer to Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA). Last week, over 50 AUFA members emailed AU's bargaining co-chair Margaret Kierylo as well as Alain May asking them to provide AU's full open offer. These messages ranged from polite to outraged.

AU has made no move to change its behaviour in response to these messages. Consequently, AUFA has filed a bad-faith bargaining complaint with the Alberta Labour Relations Board. This blog post explains what this complaint means.

### Incomplete Proposal

In late March, the Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA) and AU exchanged opening proposals. The majority of AU's opening proposal comprises placeholders for language AU indicated it would provide later. These placeholders included Academic Appointments, Salaries and Economic Benefits, Professional Development, Annual Research Leave, Research and Study leave, Other Leaves, Equity, Salary Scales, Benefits, Discretionary Benefits Fund, Market Supplements, and Overload.

Almost six months later, AU has not provided a complete proposal (including its monetary asks) despite being asked repeatedly for a full proposal by AUFA's bargaining team.

Withholding a full opening proposal thwarts progress in collective bargaining. Imagine, for example, that you were seeking to buy a car. But the seller would not tell you the price or what features the car had. Is there really any possibility

that you could come to an agreement to buy a car in these circumstances? Obviously not.

In the context of collective bargaining, refusing to table an opening proposal for months is not consistent with the employer's obligation to bargain collective in good faith and make every effort to enter into a collective agreement.

### AU's Strategy

It is unclear what AU hopes to achieve by delaying the start of meaningful bargaining. AU refusing to comply with the law (which requires them to bargain in good faith and make every effort to achieve a collective agreement) appears strategically stupid because:

- AU acting unreasonably makes AUFA members angry and increases support for AUFA among its members. This, in turn, makes AUFA members less amenable to agreeing to whatever AU's proposal actually contains.
- Fighting a bad faith bargaining complaint will unnecessarily drive up AU legal costs.
- AU will eventually be required to provide an offer, allowing the union to claim a victory and demonstrating to AUFA members that, when they fight, they win.

Refusing to table a full opening proposal may be a strategy of exhaustion. That is to say AU may be hoping AUFA will lose the will to resist employer demands for a concession. AUFA has never given up in the past so, if this is the goal, AU is unlikely to achieve it.

AU may also be seeking to simply delay a bad reaction from staff when its full offer is tabled.



During the most recent days of bargaining when AU's legal counsel (Chantal Kassongo) said of AU's full offer, "As soon as we table it, you will immediately declare impasse and strike."

AUFA has, in the past, always continued to bargain when faced with awful proposals by AU so an immediate strike is unlikely. Further, eventually, AU will be forced to provide a full offer. Delay and additional (pointless bargaining) only serves to further run up AU's already substantial legal costs and further anger AUFA members.

It is also possible that AU has no particular strategy and is making it up as it goes along.

### What's Next

AU could avoid further litigation by providing a complete proposal. This would be the responsible thing for AU to do.

If AU decides to fight this complaint instead of bargain, the ALRB will request from AU a

response to AUFA's complaint. The ALRB is then likely to hold a resolution meeting and/or a hearing. This is likely to take a month or so to resolve.

AUFA has requested numerous remedies, including an order directing AU to immediately provide AUFA with the outstanding bargaining information, including its monetary proposals, and to set additional dates for bargaining.

AUFA will keep everyone apprised of any developments on this issue. In the meantime, based upon AU's lawyer's assertion that AU's proposal will be unacceptable to AUFA, AUFA will regrettably begin preparing for a strike.



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## CO-CHAIR GLYNNIS LIEB WRAPS UP CITY COUNCIL RACE

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CUPE 3911 has strongly supported the months-long Edmonton City Council campaign of our highly respected co-Chair, Glynnis Lieb, in Edmonton's Ipiihkoohkanipiaohsi ward. Glynnis fought a strong campaign and spent a great deal of time engaging with her constituents but was unable to win the council seat. She did, however, come in a strong fourth out of six candidates, receiving a total of 1760 votes or about 10% of the votes cast.

Of note is the fact that only 37.5% of the estimated 629,000 eligible voters in the riding actually voted. In other terms, close to 400,000 voters in the riding did not even cast their vote! Since the winner of the seat received just under 6,000 votes the non-voting pool of 400,000 is obviously a huge untapped resource of potential votes for whoever can mobilize them.

After the election, Glynnis made the following remarks: "As many of you know, I put my name forward in the municipal election in Edmonton. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all my colleagues who encouraged me and extended their support in my first stab at running for political office. I had a tremendously dedicated core team and we worked very hard over the past 14 months with not a lot of wealth or resources.

"While it was disappointing to see that the labour candidates in Edmonton did not make out as well as we had hoped, it is very



encouraging to see some of the shifts that did happen in the municipal elections in this province. It is thrilling to see that the mayors of our two major cities are BIPOC and especially that Edmonton's new mayor, Amarjeet Sohi, comes from a labour background. We also have two thirds female councillors in Edmonton and increased BIPOC representation.

*"We still have some work to do with increasing diversity of mind at all levels of government. But we will keep moving the needle. Here's to the next four years of progress!"*

*Kind regards, Glynnis Lieb PhD"*

## UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA OUTSOURCES LAST REMAINING IN-HOUSE CUSTODIAL SERVICES *(Non-Academic Staff Association)*

Friday, October 8 marked an inauspicious day at the University of Alberta, as all remaining in-house custodial services ceased to be provided by university staff. After Friday, all remaining custodial and building service work is being outsourced by the university to private contractor Bee-Clean.

NASA strongly opposed this decision when it was announced by university leadership back in mid-July, 2021. In addition to not supporting this outsourcing, NASA was also extremely frustrated with the failure of the administration to follow its own well-defined procedure for making decisions regarding outsourcing. (For background, see <https://www.nasa.ualberta.ca/custodial-outsourcing-july...>)

Multiple requests from NASA to President Flanagan, Board Chair Kate Chisholm, and members of the President's Executive Council (PEC) to revisit the decision were rejected and similar demands emailed by more than 1,000 members of the university community were ignored.



We remain incredibly frustrated that university leadership has chosen to address the university's fiscal crisis by sacrificing some of its lowest-paid and most vulnerable workers and turning this important work over to contracted workers being paid far less for the same work. We are saddened by the loss of

these critical workers from NASA and the entire university community, especially given that a number of these custodial workers have been with the university since the late 1980s or early 1990s.

We know that many of you have formed strong relationships with the workers who have kept our campus clean and safe for years, and they deserve our thanks. We also ask members of the university community to wear black on Friday, October 8 to visibly mark this unfortunate day at the university.

## WORKERS NATIONWIDE FIGHT NEW ASSAULT ON HEALTH CARE

*by Barbara Biley, Regional VP Hospital Employees Union, B.C. (reprinted from Workers Forum)*

On September 29, Canadian Medical Association President Katharine Smart issued a statement entitled "We need to mobilize now: Alberta and Saskatchewan's health systems at breaking point." In it she calls for, among other things, effective public health measures such as 'firebreakers' or 'circuit breakers' to aggressively control COVID-19 cases, bringing health workers from other provinces to assist, and transporting patients to other provinces that have ICU capacity. She told the *Globe and Mail* in a phone interview that "What we're seeing now is essentially no ability to provide any other acute-care medicine beyond care to people with COVID. So, in essence, the health care system has already collapsed."

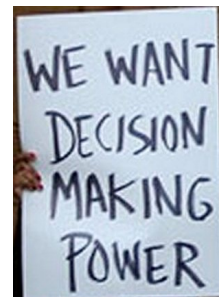
In her published statement Smart said, "We are now witnessing an unprecedented health care crisis in Alberta and Saskatchewan -- and patients and health workers are experiencing unfathomable choices and consequences. Early relaxation of public health measures has left two crumbling health care systems in their wake and the dire realities are now in full view."

Alberta currently provides the worst example of social irresponsibility in this regard, but other provinces are in fact no better. The agenda of the ruling United Conservative Party (UCP) in Alberta "to keep the economy open," no matter the consequences serves the demands of the monopolies and is rejected by all those on the front lines of the healthcare system. The government has already rejected all calls to take strict public health measures to get the pandemic under control.

Kenney himself, in response to calls from every quarter for a circuit-breaker lockdown as was implemented at the start of the pandemic, made the outrageous comment that he would not do so because that would "punish" people who are vaccinated. While frontline workers and people everywhere are making sacrifices, taking social responsibility to protect themselves and others and demanding government action to protect everyone, Kenney speaks only on behalf of the narrow private interests that insist that the economy stay "open."

When the province dropped virtually all public health measures early in the summer there was massive opposition, with daily demonstrations and appeals from health care workers, doctors, municipal politicians and the public to reverse course. The consequences of the government's refusal to act are seen in the current situation. As of October 1, Alberta had the highest rate of infections in the country -- close to four times the national average -- and deaths from COVID-19 in Alberta are about triple the national average. Saskatchewan is in a similar situation.

At the base of the health care crisis is the crisis of democracy, that it is not the people who are sovereign, who are the decision-makers. The crisis of representative democracy is such that the people have no say on matters that concern them and governments act on behalf of the rich and not the people no matter the consequences.



Frontline workers and health care professionals know what needs to be done and are continuing to fight for what is needed. Solutions to problems can be found if everyone is informed and involved in working out solutions. Whether the need is for human resources or for equipment or for increased hospital capacity, the solutions depend on the mobilization of the working class to unite all those whose common aim is the well-being of the society itself.

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## TEN REASONS TO GET VACCINATED

*(National Foundation for Infectious Diseases)*

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1. Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away
2. Vaccines will help keep you healthy
3. Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise
4. Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death
5. Vaccines are safe
6. Vaccines will not cause the diseases they are designed to prevent
7. Young and healthy people can get very sick, too
8. Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive
9. When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may be at risk, too
10. Your family and co-workers need you





## WHY IS SUPERSTORE FORCING A STRIKE RIGHT NOW?!

(UFCW 401, October 5, 2021)

Our province is in a state of crisis. We have the highest COVID-19 related death rate in the country. We had more COVID-19 cases this September than in any other month during the pandemic.

Almost 9,000 surgeries in Alberta have been canceled because of overrunning hospitals and parents are worried about the spread of COVID-19 in schools and among children.

The military has been deployed. Burnt-out nurses and health care professionals are being stretched to their limit.

Our members at places like Superstore have lost pandemic pay, seen their hours cut, and worry every day about contracting COVID-19 in very crowded and public environments.

At the cutting-edge of these issues is the plight of Superstore union members. These workers are fed up. But their demands are not extravagant.

Read the full update here:

<https://gounion.ca/negotiations/strike-or-settle-at-superstore/>



## TEN NEW BRUNSWICK CUPE LOCALS VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY TO STRIKE

(CUPE, New Brunswick)

All ten CUPE locals who were in wage talks with the New Brunswick government have voted overwhelmingly to strike. The ten locals represent approximately 22,000 workers. Percentages for a strike ranged from 83-98 across the 10 groups.

Steve Drost, the president of CUPE New Brunswick, said the results send a clear message to government and Premier Blaine Higgs. "So, Mr. Higgs, you've got ten locals that have taken very, very strong strike mandates. Let's not go down that road. Don't force us down that road, but our members have given us a very, very clear, strong message."

Talks between the province and CUPE members broke down on Sept. 3 when an agreement over wages couldn't be reached and the province stopped negotiating. Drost said the union wrote to the premier, asking the province to come back to the bargaining table. So far, he said, they haven't received a response.

The union is asking for annual wage increases of five per cent over the next four years. Last December, Higgs asked public-sector unions to agree to four-year contracts with no wage increase in the first year and increases of one per cent in each of the three remaining years.

Premier Higgs said wage restraint was necessary because COVID-19 had pushed the province into a precarious financial position. The province's most recent offer was for annual increases of 1.25 per cent over four years, then two per cent in the fifth and sixth years. But the government wanted CUPE to agree to concessions, including converting members' pensions to the shared-risk model used elsewhere in the civil service and transferring about 100 union members to management positions.

The CUPE locals that voted in favour of strike action are:

- Local 1418 – Rehabilitation, therapy and RCPO - 92 per cent
- Local 1251 – Institutional services and care - 98 per cent

- Local 1253 – School district unions - 97 per cent
- Local 2745 – Educational support staff - 91 per cent
- Local 1840 - Court stenographers - 96 per cent
- Local 1866 - WorkSafe NB - 83 per cent
- Local 5017 - Community colleges - 93 per cent
- Local 1252 - Hospital workers - 94 per cent
- Local 5026 - Collèges communautaires du NB - 96 per cent
- Local 1190 - General Labour and Trades 96 per cent

All 10 locals are now in a legal strike position. President Drost noted: "Again, we're reviewing this extremely closely. We don't want to put our members at risk, we certainly don't want to put the public at risk, and we are looking at everyone's safety and well-being."

Each local has a number of "essential" positions that cannot walk off the job. The numbers vary depending

on the classification within the local. In the case of hospital workers, for example, there are more than 140 classifications in Local 1252, explained CUPE spokesperson Simon Ouellette. He said at least 50 per cent of the positions are deemed essential, but the percentages vary depending on worker classifications. Ouellette said it's about 75 per cent for those directly involved in patient care and significantly lower in others, like administrative/clerical positions.

Drost said workers prefer to get back to the bargaining table instead of taking job action. He said some employees have been without a contract for five years.



## STUDY WILL BRIDGE TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE

*(Athabasca University Hub, September 27, 2021)*

A partnership between Bigstone Cree Nation and Athabasca University (AU) researchers will help bridge the gap between Indigenous Ways of Knowing and the traditional way science research is done.

Dr. Shauna Zenteno, microbiologist and dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, and Dr. Janelle Baker, an assistant professor of anthropology in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, are collaborating with Bigstone Cree Nation on a project examining the potential impact of human activity and development on aquatic health in northern Alberta at a microbial level. This project will combine the qualitative observations Bigstone members have made with a quantitative metagenomics analysis of what's happening in the water.

"We feel that changes to the water biodiversity due to human activity may trigger long-term impacts on plants and animals, which affects food security for First Nations communities," Zenteno said. "Bacteria are essential to many processes that support ecosystem health and can sense and respond to environmental changes rapidly. An imbalance has potential downstream impacts on water, plant, and animal health. Bigstone Cree Nation is particularly interested in water quality and moose health."

This work is supported with an infrastructure grant from the John R. Evans Leaders Fund administered by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. It helps build on similar work Baker has done with the community over the past decade.

Baker studies issues of wild food contamination in collaboration with Bigstone members and has seen first-hand some of the changes community members have observed in the area and spoken about.

Imagine a member of Bigstone Cree Nation harvesting a moose on their traditional territory in northern Alberta. They clean and dress the animal, preparing the meat to sustain their families in much the same way as their ancestors have done for thousands of years.

But not everything is the same as it has been in the past, something Baker has observed while working with members of the First Nation.

“I’ve been out hunting and have seen cysts in the livers of moose, which community members have been telling me about,” she said. “Now they’re able to sample the liver right there, and send it for testing.”

### **The need for Traditional Indigenous Knowledge**

Baker also knows the frustration of seeing Traditional Ways of Knowing dismissed in the context of scientific research.

“For me as a cultural anthropologist, and someone with maternal Métis ancestry, I get really exhausted with the dismissal of the knowledge and wisdom of people who have been on the land their entire lives hunting and observing those changes,” she said. “Population dynamics, habitats, and species’ behaviour are just so incredibly nuanced.”

This is in contrast with what Baker and many others have observed in the past. For example, when researchers come into a First Nations community to study a species—say a type of fish or a particular plant—they may visit specific locations in the bush based on data gathered from maps. This data is processed in a computer lab somewhere, sometimes with inconsistent results.

Meanwhile, community members and elders who rely on those species for food and medicine, and have done so for generations, know from experience exactly where to find those species.

### **Community partnerships**

Both Baker and Zenteno emphasized the importance of having community members take a lead role. That way, the process of making observations and applying Traditional Knowledge aren’t done separately from the scientific work that produces quantifiable data about what’s happening in the systems being studied.

“The Traditional Knowledge and community members themselves help guide the research,” Zenteno said. “Their understanding of the environment and observations over time can help us interpret the data we obtain on water quality and how this relates to our findings in moose.”

Bigstone Cree Nation members, who are being trained to sample water and organize moose kits, are the environmental monitors for this research. They also interview elders and community members as part of the AU course Anthropology 390: Community-Based Research Methods. These activities are funded from an Indigenous community-based monitoring grant funded by Environment Canada titled “What is in the Water?”

While water is monitored, sampled, and sequenced for analysis, moose kits are collected from hunters as part of the meat-harvesting process. Sequencing and bioinformatics to assess water quality is conducted in collaboration with Dr. Tarah Lynch, and tissue analysis and toxicology are performed by Dr. Susan Kutz, both from the University of Calgary. This is all in connection to the Traditional Knowledge being gathered from the community and documented.

But ultimately, as much as this project is about understanding what’s happening in northern Alberta aquatic systems at a microbial level and how this impacts the health of moose, it’s also about nurturing long-term relationships.



“It’s not just about going and doing some sampling and then leaving. I have lifelong relationships and



obligations to this community,” Baker said, adding she was able to develop these relationships in no small part than to the support of Bigstone Cree Nation member and fellow AU professor Dr. Josie Auger.

Zenteno said from her perspective, one of the most important goals of the project is not only environmental sustainability, it is about creating capacity, and supporting data sovereignty to ensure the community has ownership of that data.

“Helping to understand the reliance of science on Traditional Knowledge is incredibly rewarding,” she said.

## Mary Joyce Art Show: Culture of Resistance



*(Editor’s Note: Mary Joyce is a very well-known Edmonton artist, activist, and former teacher who has shown her work in many galleries both in Edmonton and elsewhere. In 2006, she was the Edmonton District Labour Council’s artist-in residence, producing work celebrating the EDLC’s 100 years of existence. Her latest show, Culture of Resistance, occupied Edmonton’s La Galerie Citie from July 26 to October 22, 2021.)*

### Culture de résistance / Culture of Resistance *(by Marina Allemano)*

When you enter Galerie Cité in Edmonton where Mary Joyce’s show “Culture de résistance” is on display, the first impression is a combination of energy, vibrancy, sensuousness and beauty, not the least due to the large-scale red felt piece suspended from the 24-feet high ceiling in the atrium.

What is the idea of the huge square of a delicious rosy-red hue? It measures 26 feet on each side and hangs like a tent or a sail during a storm, the four corners secured to the balusters. Although inert, the draping suggests motion which is indeed one of the leading motifs in the exhibit. The artist explains in her accompanying text that the large square was inspired by the small one-inch red felt square worn by Québec students in 2012 to protest tuition hikes and student poverty as expressed in the wordplay “carrément dans le rouge” (squarely in the red).

In the atrium the hanging is not within reach from the ground but forces the

viewer to look up and experience the seemingly gravity-defying structure that connotes flight and expansion – “Resistance is everywhere” – but also as shelter and soft intimacy should the tent take landing. The idea of safety, stability and strength is further conveyed in the symbol of the eight over-sized brass safety pins attached to the cloth signaling the ordinary safety pins used to attach “les carrés rouges” to the protesters’ coats.

In addition to the red hanging, thirty-six paintings and prints are an invitation to celebrate and reflect on resistance as a fundamental human behaviour when faced with oppressive legislation and governance that harm and even destroy the lives and rights of the people. The safety-pin motif with its characteristic coiled shape is repeated in several of the works, veiled or distinct, pins closed or open, creating new and exciting compositional forms.

The artist documents specific acts of resistance, many of large public demonstrations and protests in Canada and abroad. A large image (oil-on-wood 30x30”) of a march in the town of Alma, Québec, stands out, depicting a historic action against the lockout at the Rio Tinto Alcan smelter in March 2012. Dot-like non-individuated figures in the far distance snake their way from the industrial site in the horizon to the front of the painting where distinct faces and figures of families come into view as if they were about to step out of the frame. As an onlooker I felt the urge to engage with these folks and hear their stories.

Documentation and skillful art are inseparable in this exhibit. Speaking to other gallery guests at the official opening, I learn that the all-time favourite painting is the large painting (oil-on-canvas 48x48”) titled “Indian Farmers Flowers Shower” that pays homage to the drawn-out struggle continuing from 2020 through 2021.

Seldom have a tractor and a truck looked more attractive, and protesting farmers more dynamic, than in this piece of art. The palette of candy-like pastel colours and sprinkles of floating flower petals have much to do with the energy expressed, and once again the composition brings the moving vehicles and figures forward directly into the viewer's space. Because the events portrayed are particular and historical, it is helpful to read the gloss accompanying the pieces to appreciate the moment captured: "On the borders of New Delhi, farmers have camped for months in protest against PM Modi ... Many are widows of farmers who could not withstand the hardships".

Other works in the show are more intimate such as the figurative painting "For Our Daughters 1989-2008", showing a group of five women chatting, having a break for water during a protest. "They might have been these women, had they not been shot dead Dec. 6, 1989", the annotation explains, thus referencing the misogynist shooting of fourteen women students at École Polytechnique in Montréal. The 1980's are represented in the women's



clothing, and in fact, Mary Joyce informs me, the painting was created shortly after the unthinkable massacre.

Abstractions play a frequent role in this exhibition. Cases in point are the paintings that abstract masses – "Red Square on Earth Day" and "Sherbrooke: 10,000 Carrying a Red Square" – where dots, dashes, opaque and transparent hues in addition to pronounced geometry produce a sense of motion. When asked about the merit of non-representational imagery, the artist explained that abstractions offer the viewer a space to consider their own ideas, associations and interpretations. Moreover, the viewer's attention will naturally be

drawn to the formal features of the work, paint application, hues, shapes, compositions, aesthetic aspects. This is particularly the case in "Vestige: A nod to Minimalism" (oil on canvas 24x18"), a formalist painting that is both a wink and a nod. On a brilliant scarlet/cadmium red background, a small square appears; its hue is darker, somewhat veiled with a pattern that is recognizable from the crowd abstractions.

But the joke lies in the markings above the square in a nearly invisible outline of a square of similar size dotted with bits of shiny, hardened paint, as if the darker square had once sat in its place but later slipped out and slid down to free itself from its original fixed formalist composition. It's a brilliant minimalist work that along with the large-scale cloth embodies the poetic AND political possibilities suggested by the simple "carré rouge".

*(Dr. Marina Allemanno is a former member of the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA), a retired Lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages & Cultural Studies, and an author, translator and literary critic.)*

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**RANDOM THOUGHTS:** As reported in this month's newsletter, at least ten CUPE locals in New



Brunswick are ready to go on strike. No CUPE locals are ready to strike in Alberta. However, this does not mean CUPE has never gone on strike in Alberta, although it has been awhile! In November 1995, CUPE 8 laundry workers at Calgary Hospital staged a 10 day, illegal walkout to protect their jobs. In 1986, CUPE 2550 went on strike for 10 weeks against what is now the St. Albert Catholic School Division. In 1978, CUPE 30 workers went on strike against the City of Calgary for 55 days. At the same time, 2,200 CUPE members at 17 hospitals went on strike to protest government wage guidelines of 6%. In 1977, CUPE 41 struck at Parkland Nursing Home, Edmonton, for 26 months. On May 22, 1974 CUPE 1606 (Wainwright) went on a wildcat strike. Also in 1974 CUPE 1606 (Buffalo Trail School Division) went on strike for nine days. In 1973, CUPE 41 went on strike for eight weeks at Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. In 1973, CUPE 41 went on strike for eight weeks at Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. In 1970, 1,100 members of CUPE 474 and 784 went on strike against Edmonton Public School District for 11 days, closing all schools. In 1968, CUPE 40 struck at the Calgary Board of Education. Just sayin'.



# CUPE 3911 MONTHLY GRIEVANCE SUMMARY REPORT

By BARRET WEBER, GRIEVANCE OFFICER

A grievance results from a violation of the Collective Agreement, Human Rights, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Labour Relations Act, or other University policies. If you feel there has been a dispute or difference of opinion or interpretation between yourself and the employer you should contact your administrator and/or your executive immediately. If the matter cannot be resolved informally then a grievance can be filed.

There are three types of grievances: individual, group, and policy.

- An individual grievance is a complaint that an action by the employer has violated the rights of an individual as set out in the Collective Agreement, law or by some unfair practice. E.g., discipline, demotion, timesheets etc.
- A group grievance is a complaint by a group of individuals all affected the same way, e.g., all employees in a particular department.
- A policy grievance is a complaint by the Union that an action or failure or refusal to act by the employer is a violation of the Collective Agreement that could affect all members covered by the agreement.

## Grievance Committee Activity Report for September-October 2021

CUPE 3911 is working hard on a number of individual, group and policy grievances on behalf of members. Here is a brief summary of the recent activity. Note that activity does not mean that previously listed grievances were not active but just that they were not active this month. Many of these activities were carried out in collaboration with our CUPE National Representative

- Supported numerous members on understanding their rights and contract challenges, especially around workload, performance appraisals, coordinator criticisms of work performance, and supporting workplace accommodations
- Worked on arbitrations with National Representative, CUPE National, and union Co-chair
- Worked with member and employer regarding an IST being terminated. Working on filing a grievance on the matter
- Chaired grievance committee meetings on September 14 and October 14 to review individual files and chart strategy to support members. Special thanks to the grievance committee members for all their work
- Supported a member regarding possible bullying and harassment in the workplace
- The union currently has 0 active grievances, 6 grievances going to arbitration, and several areas of discussion with the employer

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting.** Saturday, November 20, 2021.

**CUPE National Convention,** November 22-26.

**CUPE 3911 Annual General Meeting and Elections,** December 4, 2021.

**CUPE 3911 Website.** We have a shiny new CUPE 3911 website which we urge all our members to visit and use. The URL is [CUPE3911.ca](http://CUPE3911.ca)



### **Editorial Policy: The Outsider**

The Outsider is the voice of CUPE 3911. It is our vehicle for communicating with our members, on a regular (monthly) basis, about the issues that concern and confront us as workers. The Outsider is also the voice of our members. We encourage and welcome relevant contributions from members. While contributions are welcome, they need to contribute positively to the welfare of our union local and our members. They also need to contribute positively to the advancement of public post-secondary education in Alberta. We will not accept or print attacks on any of our members or our union leadership/executive. We also reserve the right to reply to any submissions that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of CUPE 3911 and its policies. Please direct all articles, letters, comments, and ideas to our administrator.