

IN THIS ISSUE**ARTICLE 1**

REPORT ON CUPE 3911 ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING, DECEMBER 2021

ARTICLE 2

UPDATE: CUPE 3911 COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING REPORT

ARTICLE 3

OPINION: CLOSING ATHABASCA
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS WILL HURT
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND ALBERTA
ATHABASCA

ARTICLE 4

BITCOIN, POWERED, AND ATHABASCA
UNIVERSITY

ARTICLE 5

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY (EDMONTON)
FACULTY ASSOCIATION VOTES TO
STRIKE

ARTICLE 6

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STAFF
ASSOCIATIONS AND ALLIES PICKET IN
SOLIDARITY WITH BARGAINING TEAMS

ARTICLE 7

LISA WAS ONE OF US

ARTICLE 8

UPDATE: UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
FACULTY OPEN LETTER TO STUDENTS

ARTICLE 9

CONDEMN THE ALBERTA
GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-WORKER BILL
32

ARTICLE 10

SPEECH BY PAM PALMATER

ARTICLE 11

CUPE 3911 GRIEVANCE REPORT

ATTEND THE CUPE 3911 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2021

Our next general meeting, open to all members, will be held on Saturday, January 22, at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be conducted remotely via ZOOM. Details of how to connect will be sent out.

REPORT ON CUPE 3911 ANNUAL MEETING

CUPE 3911 held our Annual Conference and General Meeting on Saturday, December 4 from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. The meeting was held virtually by Zoom. 43 members attended. Elections of Executive members took place at the meeting. This is a list of current Executives as a result of Saturday's elections.

Executive Officers

Co-Chairs: Glynnis Lieb, Mark Dimirsky, Ronnie Joy Leah

Recording Secretary: Ann Reynolds

Secretary-Treasurer: Barret Weber

Grievance Officer: Ernie Jacobson

Communications Officer Newsletter: Dougal MacDonald

Membership Officer: Leigh Brownhill

Representative Officers: Marie Weingartshofer, Gordon Drever, Gregory Krabes, Marlyss Valiant

Trustees: Henry Agbogun, Evelyn Chernyk, Lorraine Laville

Permanent Committees

Human Resources Committee: Ann Reynolds

Grievance Committee: Marlyss Valiant, Natalie Sharpe, Mark Dimirsky, Brenda Kuzio

Byron Paege: Marie Weingartshofer,, Grace Shi (?)

First Nations Scholarship Committee: Melissa Scott, Deborah Foster

Bylaw Revision: Mark Dimirsky, Glynnis Lieb, Henry Agbogun

Representation to AU Committees

PD Fund: Deborah Foster, Cal Hauserman, Leigh Brownhill; Vacant

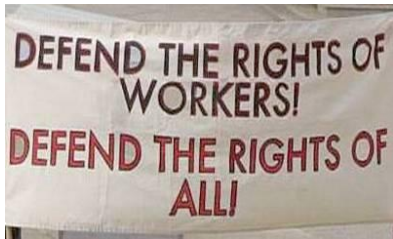
Board of Governors: Liam Connolly

Complaint Review: Brenda Kuzio, Natalie Sharpe (alt.)

Labour Management: Ernie Jacobson, Brenda Kuzio

OH & S: Glynnis Lieb, Melanie Cook

Health Benefits: Lorraine Laville, Ann Reynolds



Bargaining: Ronnie Joy Leah, Glynnis Lieb, Cal Hauserman, Mark Dimirsky, Sue Mitchell, Barret Weber, Ann Reynolds
Budget: Vacant
Conference Planning; Natalie Sharpe, Glynnis Lieb, Mark Dimirsky, Ronnie Joy Leah, Ernie Jacobson

UPDATE: CUPE 3911 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPORT BY GLYNNIS LIEB, CO-CHAIR

The current bargaining committee consists of the following members:

Glynnis Lieb (chair), Mark Dimirsky, Ann Reynolds, Ronnie Joy Leah, Barret Webber, Cal Hauserman, Sue Mitchell, Stephanie Lustig (CUPE National Representative), Nancy Furlong (Advisor)

Our current contract expired in 2019, but political and economic circumstances lead us to not request to open Bargaining until 2021. However, we have used the past almost two years to conduct a thorough review of our current collective agreement and systematically work through each article to examine how we could strengthen language and improve working conditions and benefits.

We have sought professional consultation, legal advice, outside expert opinions, and conducted focus groups with specific members of our union who have previously been under-represented, such as clinical nursing instructors and academic experts. Through this work, we have continued to fine-tune our bargaining proposals and are very happy with them.

By summer of 2021, the employer had still not initiated bargaining. So, after consulting with our membership, we reached out to the employer to compel them to begin. We did this for a number of reasons. First and foremost, we recognized that we could not continue without a current collective agreement. Second, we recognized that the provincial government had been actively interfering with post-secondary bargaining processes and the outcome had been that most post-secondary institutions are now in bargaining at the same time. We wanted to be part of this process at the same time as our colleagues in other bargaining units and other institutions so that we could actively participate in the collective larger conversation about the future of post-secondary education and our working environments.

The employer responded positively to the request to commence and we exchanged proposals at the beginning of October. Glynnis, Mark, Ann, Ronnie, Sue and Stephanie are sitting at the bargaining table with Glynnis and Mark co-chairing.

We have completed three full days of bargaining so far and have up to four more days tentatively scheduled in January and February 2022. We have begun with the proposals that were seen to be less controversial and easier settled. We are slowly working through the non-monetary proposals on both sides, towards the more complex asks. Once we have settled the non-monetary proposals, we will exchange monetary proposals and conclude bargaining when we have negotiated those.

Thus far the atmosphere has been collegial. There are definite themes on both sides. The employer appears to be leaning towards increasing their autonomy with decision-making around HR practices and increasing hiring and contracting options. We have focused on reducing opportunities for subjective application of the collective agreement, improving communication between our bargaining unit and employer, and providing better protections against loss of work as well as disciplinary action for all members. Both sides are prioritizing improving equity among members through inclusive language and better recognizing diversity of experience and needs with regards to benefits and leaves.

Given the context in which we are bargaining, we know that this is going to be a challenging round and that the gains we make will be hard fought. But we have a dedicated team who has put countless hours into being the best prepared we can be, and we are confident that we will come out with a much improved collective agreement.



Kind regards, Glynnis Lieb PhD (Bargaining Chair)

OPINION: CLOSING ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS WILL HURT SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND ALBERTA

BY COLLEEN POWELL, MAYOR OF ATHABASCA; REPRINTED FR EDMONTON JOURNAL

A battle is unfolding an hour and a half north of Edmonton that has implications for the entire province. The stakes? Athabasca University's (AU) future as a uniquely Alberta institution. In May 2020, the university's board of governors, in a closed meeting, decided to effectively close the Athabasca main campus and end Edmonton and Calgary campus leases. Beginning this January, AU will move to a "near-virtual" model, meaning from a university based in a specific place, AU will now exist primarily in space. Instead of living and working in Athabasca, core employees, including even the president, can be based in Victoria, Toronto, or anywhere else they want.



The university is one of Alberta's greatest success stories. From its humble beginnings in 1970, AU has grown to become one of the world's foremost and fastest-growing online and open universities, serving more than 45,000 students across 87 countries. It's the fifth-largest university in Canada and one of only four comprehensive academic and research universities in the province. For 37 years, AU has served as an intellectual hub for northern Alberta, attracting some of the best and brightest from across the country and around the world. Absent quick and decisive action, however, it will barely have a presence in the town it has grown alongside.

As an online university, AU's home is Athabasca, where most managerial and administrative employees work. Ten years ago, 520 employees lived in the community. Today, fewer than 300 do. After the university goes near-virtual in January, this number is expected to plummet to fewer than 40. AU recently advertised for senior-level roles that previously would have been based in Athabasca. Not anymore. As the job postings breathlessly put it, "In this exciting and near-virtual work environment, this role may be permanently home-based from anywhere across the country — your postal code is irrelevant!" Your postal code may be irrelevant, but the impact of outsourcing these jobs outside of the university, the community and our province are not.

The foremost casualty is going to be the university itself. The near-virtual model will erode the university's cohesive culture and destroy the creative vigour that has driven its success. How can you truly collaborate with your colleagues when you never see them, let alone meet them in person? Then, of course, there is the impact on the community. Fewer people living and working in the Athabasca region means less revenue, impacting everything from roads to schools to medical services. Likewise, our province will suffer as government-supported jobs migrate elsewhere.

It's important to remember that the decision to locate AU in Athabasca was a deliberate one, part of the Lougheed government's commitment to rural development. He understood then what others are failing to understand now: Alberta is the sum of its communities. Yes, we need vibrant urban centres such as Edmonton,

but we also need thriving villages and towns. AU's board of governors has turned its back on Lougheed's vision, imperilling the university, the community, and our province in the process.

Let's also not forget AU is a publicly funded institution. Last year, the provincial government provided over \$47 million in funding, representing 30 per cent of the university's revenue. What's Alberta getting in return? Since the announcement of the near-virtual plan, employees have been moving and recruited out of the province. Why is the provincial government supporting employees who pay taxes and spend their salaries outside of Alberta?

The UCP government has the power to overturn the board of governors' disastrous decision. We believe the government when it says it's committed to high-quality education that positively contributes to Alberta's economy, society, and culture. We believe Premier Jason Kenney when he says he's committed to job creation and development in rural Alberta. With a single decision, his government can do both.

The window of opportunity to do so is narrowing by the day. Unless action is taken, and soon, the only thing uniquely Albertan about AU will be the money it gets from Alberta taxpayers.

BITCOIN, POWERED, AND ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

A recent announcement by Athabasca University asserts that AU will soon be offering a "Bitcoin course". The announcement states: "There's a lot of hype about cryptocurrencies these days, but if you can't tell the difference between bitcoin, blockchain, or fiat currencies, you could be missing an emerging opportunity to gain financial freedom. Fortunately, help is available—and for free."

Bitcoin Academy is a new course created by an Edmonton-based bitcoin broker, Bitcoin Well, in partnership with PowerEd by Athabasca University, and a creative agency, Sticks and Stone. According to the founder and CEO of Bitcoin Well, "Bitcoin Academy was created to be a fun and approachable educational curriculum, offering fact-based insights from industry experts all in one place. This curriculum will teach you how bitcoin is the next step in the monetary evolution."

Well, that's all fine and dandy and the hype sounds promising, as it usually does, but the burning questions really have to do with BitCoin itself, not the course being offered. So now let's segue into the real world and see if we can gain some insight into what

Bitcoin is all about. Especially since much confusion exists on the topic.

First, the Bitcoin speculative surge reflects how pay-the-rich schemes and scams have become normal and officially acceptable. Those who buy bitcoin to circumvent the stranglehold of the banks or U.S. dollar should beware. The rich are quite happy and eager to seize money-value without work or having any workers produce, distribute or circulate actual commodities.

Bitcoin is said to be operating as a medium of exchange. Virtually any commodity can act as a medium of exchange if enough people recognize it as such. Cowrie shells were traded for goods and services throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, and used as money as early as the 14th century. That is not the issue with Bitcoin or any of the other numerous and competing digital currencies.

The problem stems from the aim of the economy for the highest possible profit on all transactions and to pay the rich regardless of the social and economic consequences. The aim has led to the current extreme concentration of social wealth in the hands of a few. One estimate is that 1% of the population control 82% of the wealth. Bitcoin and other digital currencies may act as means of exchange but for the rich the point is to use it to make money for nothing, to push up its speculative value so that those who buy it or created it

in the beginning will become rich beyond their wildest dreams.

Bitcoin is a Ponzi pyramid scheme on digital steroids. As long as people continue to put money into a Ponzi scheme or continue to buy Bitcoins at the price demanded, the scam will persist. **But Bitcoin's speculative value only exists if the buying continues.** When the buying stops for whatever reason, including state regulation forced by a certain section of the rich who want to rein in the Bitcoin competition, and the faith begins to fade, people will cash out, demanding the current inflated speculative amount -- which no one will want to pay -- collapsing the bubble.

The money-value will evaporate similar to a run on a bank as people pull out their money in panic. The actual amount in the bank's vault is far less than the amount people are owed because ten or a hundred times the total of their accounts has gone out the door in loans that cannot be called back

The value a Bitcoin represents when cashed out, if people are willing to buy them, has to come from somewhere in the productive economy, a value

workers have produced through work-time transforming the natural bounty of Mother Earth into the use-value of a good or service. The Bitcoin speculative value may move from hand to hand as they are bought and sold and new ones are "mined" but they cannot increase the initial money-value that was put into them. Any increase when cashed out and used to purchase commodities must come from value workers have produced, thus decreasing or robbing value from somewhere else in the economy. To repeat a well-known fact: What workers have not produced cannot be consumed.



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY EDMONTON FACULTY ASSOCIATION VOTES TO STRIKE

(information from CUEFA)

On December 1, members of the Concordia University (Edmonton) Faculty Association (CUEFA) voted just over 90% in favour of strike action. 77 out of 81 members cast their vote. The bargaining unit includes full-time faculty, lab instructors, librarians and placement-coordinators (education). At this time, the many contract faculty at Concordia are not members of CUEFA.

Concordia is a small private university in Alberta with five faculties and 2333 students. Concordia offers Arts, Science and Management undergraduate degree programs, as well as Graduate degree programs in Education, Information Technology, Information Security, and Psychology. Concordia was founded in 1921 by the Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod but in 2015 it effectively self-identified as a secular institution.

The overwhelming strike vote means that CUEFA members now have the option to choose to strike in the next 120 days. The current collective agreement expired June 30, 2021. The bargaining committee plans to continue bargaining and will share further plans and developments as they happen. On December 6, the Alberta Labour Board gave Concordia University permission to lock out the faculty.

The main issue being bargained is instructor workload. It is currently significantly higher than at any other university in Canada. To provide further information to members, students, and the public, CUEFA has created

a space for “Recent Questions” on the faculty website. It currently displays the following seven questions, with CUEFA replies.

“Why is the Faculty Association going on strike?”

The FA is holding a strike vote, which may potentially lead to a strike. We are seeing if there is support among the Faculty Association members for job action given where things sit in the collective bargaining process. A strike vote does not necessarily mean a strike is inevitable

Why would Faculty be at the point of holding a strike vote?

We have been bargaining with the University for a number of months. While we are making progress on a number of parts of the agreement, we stalled on Workload in August. We went to mediation, where we bring in a labour expert to work with both sides on the issue. There was no movement and despite asking, no response to revisiting the article beyond what was last offered.

What are the biggest issues?

Workload, as mentioned above, is the biggest issue for the Faculty. Currently the workload is significantly higher than at any other university in Canada. The bargaining team for the Association asked for a streamed approach, where some faculty would stay at the current teaching load (4 courses a term) but have no required research component and some faculty would have a lower teaching load (3 courses a term) and would have research requirements. We understand that having to fill those courses with instructors would cost money, and so said that we would be flexible on how many Faculty they could move to the lower teaching load. The University offered a 4-3 teaching load (so 4 courses one term, and 3 the other) but increased research for everyone. While there is less teaching involved here, there are increased research expectations meaning that workload itself does not improve, it is just moved around.

Language was also introduced into the Discipline article that allows the University to discipline members for no cause. Currently there must be just cause to initiate any disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal (or firing).

Generally, when discussing a package, you want the whole picture. The university will not present any proposal or language on Salary and Benefits. The Faculty Association provided our proposal as a part of our initial proposal package back in June.

Why did we hear about a strike vote from the President?

The bargaining team made the decision to not tell the students about the impending strike vote. We do not know what the results of the strike vote may be so it is rather premature. As well, we know what an odd and stressful term this has already been for students and did not believe that the added anxiety that may be caused by this was needed at the end of term and before exams without even knowing what the results might be.

What happens if the Faculty vote YES?

Then the Faculty Association Executive has been given a mandate from the members that they are not happy with the current state of negotiations. We have continually kept the members updated on bargaining and the offers from the University. If we have a mandate, then we continue to bargain with the University, hoping that we can come to some middle ground that works for both sides. If the University will not continue to bargain with us or will not work with us on the articles that are of utmost importance to our members, then we have the right, under the Labour Code of Alberta, to go on strike. We would have to give 72 hours notice to the University. A strike notice can be cancelled right up until the moment that the strike starts. A strike can be cancelled whenever an agreement can be made between both sides.

What does this mean for students?

It is our goal to keep any disruption to students to a minimum. We understand the stress and anxiety that may come from this, but we still do not know the results of the strike vote. We are hoping for a productive bargaining process where we can come to agreements with the administration. We do not want to strike, but the current Workload offer from the University is detrimental to the well-being of our current Faculty and will cause severe issues with both retention of our faculty as well as recruitment of new faculty.

So, has bargaining stopped?

The Faculty Association is fully committed to continued bargaining with the University regardless of the outcome of the strike vote. We provided an initial proposal to the University outlining all changes we hoped to bargain in the Collective Agreement. The proposal we received in return from the University was a commentary on the intention to make changes but very little information on the specifics that they are asking for. The chart on the University website is very misleading as there has been language provided on every article that we have proposed changes for.”

Everyone in post-secondary education—faculty, staff, students—should support the Concordia University (Edmonton) Faculty Association. With their strike vote, they are defending their rights and those of their students, pointing out that their working conditions are students' learning conditions. They are also standing up and fighting for the public education system upon which the whole society depends.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STAFF ASSOCIATIONS AND ALLIES PICKET IN SOLIDARITY WITH BARGAINING TEAMS

By DOUGAL MACDONALD

The Association of Academic Staff (AASUA) and the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) at University of Alberta (U of A) held a noon-hour information picket on Friday November 26 at the U of A campus. Both associations exchanged initial proposals with the university in May 2021. U of A workers were joined at the picket by community allies, including Athabasca University Faculty Association, CUPE 3911 from Athabasca University, the MacEwan Faculty Association, and the Alberta Federation of Labour. Rachel Notley, former premier of Alberta, and David Eggen, MLA and Critic for Advanced Education, were also present.

The U of A picketers were expressing their solidarity with their bargaining teams which are currently embroiled in very slow negotiations with university administrations over new collective agreements.

Delay, delay, delay seems to be the employer's main tactic. The picket began with a statement from the AASUA representative who said: “the labour movement in Alberta is alive today — and we are part of it. This is new for us professors at University of Alberta — [especially considering] we have never been on strike before in the over-a-century that this university has been operating.”

In response to the picket, the University of Alberta claimed the aims of their collective bargaining were to “reflect the importance of staff work” and achieve “labour stability” through negotiations and avoid “unnecessary” job losses, even though they have already cut thousands of jobs since the UCP took over. The U of A also tried to peddle the usual patronizing drivel about reflecting “the importance of the work carried out by our academic staff and non-

academic staff, while recognizing the realities of our financial constraints.” Of course, they failed to mention as usual that the “restraints” were imposed by the current UCP government which the U of A administration continues to support.

At present, post-secondary workers in Alberta are facing administration demands for a 3-4% wage cut plus proposed cuts to the existing salary grids and to the existing benefits packages. The fact that every post-secondary institution is facing the 3-4% cut suggests that the UCP government is behind the takeaway, which means it is interfering in collective bargaining. A number of workers have also been cut from U of A and other universities due to privatization of services. Of course, the precarious part-time sessionals who teach many university courses are still paid a pittance and have no benefits to lose in the first place. If the U of A administration continues delaying the next collective agreement, a strike vote is a real possibility.

The associations at University of Alberta are part of a growing movement in Canada’s post-secondary education sector fighting for the right to education. As a famous folk-singer once said, “There’s a rumblin’ in the land.” The Concordia University (Edmonton) Faculty Association (CUEFA) voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike on December 2. Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA) is preparing its tactics for a potential strike. Both AUFA and University of Lethbridge Faculty Association have been without contracts for over 500 days. The Manitoba University Faculty Association has been on

strike since the beginning of November. Meanwhile, in 2018, York University held a 143-day strike, the longest in the post-secondary sector in history.

Friday’s AASUA and NASA picket initially began beside University of Alberta campus because the university fraudulently claimed that due to COVID restrictions it could not grant the associations permission to conduct the picket on university property in the Main Quad. However, when returning to their workplaces, picketers decided to march right through Quad. Both AASUA and NASA asserted that the staff associations were not concerned with potential consequences that could accompany their choice to march on-campus, declaring that it is workers’ right to choose to be present in their workplaces or in any public spaces, whether any university administration objects to it or not.



LISA WAS ONE OF US

Dr. Lisa Priebe, Athabasca University tutor and member of CUPE 3911, passed away unexpectedly on November 15, 2021. Lisa was born in 1975 to Dennis and Danielle Priebe. The beautiful, spirited girl with flaming red hair was always causing mischief, making her family laugh, and teasing her two older sisters.

Lisa had a brilliant mind and a passion for learning. From the moment she could read, she was never without a book in hand and this quest for knowledge quickly laid the groundwork for her future. She happily attended university was soon awarded a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Science. She then furthered her education with a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and finally a Doctorate in Clinical Health Psychology. Her research interests during her graduate studies were Psychosocial Oncology and Psychoneuroimmunology.

Lisa was a proud alumna of the University of Athabasca. During her time as a student, she was elected as a Councillor and then President of the Student’s Union. She founded the AU Science Student’s Society and

served as its president, and she contributed to the AUSU Mentor Committee. In 2011, Lisa was inducted into the Order of Athabasca University in recognition of her dedication to ensuring a high-quality student experience. In her working life, Lisa was a registered Psychologist and she practiced for several years before turning her attention towards the study of Medicine. Before her passing, she taught psychology at several post-secondary institutions. In addition to her studies and her work, Lisa enjoyed creative activities such as playing music, making candles and soaps, and cooking delectable goodies for her friends and family. She loved all animals and joyfully shared her life with them. She was especially close to her horse, Willow.

Lisa is survived by her loving partner Ken McKinnon and their numerous fur babies. She is also survived by her parents Dennis and Danielle, her sisters Corrina (Bradley) and Cindy (Bill), and her two nieces Amy and Nicole.

Although Lisa's life was brief, the world is richer for her having been in it. Lisa's spirit is no doubt continuing to cause mischief and laughter and is shining as brightly as the grandest stars in the sky.

At Lisa's wish, no services will be held. In lieu of flowers, a donation to the Humane Society at <https://www.calgaryhumane.ca> or to the Calgary Zoo at <https://www.calgaryzoo.com> commemorating Lisa's love of animals would be welcome.



June 27, 1975 – November 15, 2021

UPDATE: OPEN LETTER TO STUDENTS

(University of Manitoba Faculty Association/UMFA)

Professors, instructors and librarians, over 1,200 members of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA), have been on strike since November 2 after negotiations between the association and the university administration reached an impasse. The main issue in dispute is increased salaries needed to recruit and retain staff whose salaries have been frozen since 2016, with the result that, according to Statistics Canada data, the university has the second-lowest average salaries for full-time teaching staff out of the 15 largest research-intensive universities in Canada.

UMFA recently wrote an "Open Letter" to UM students, which is reprinted below:

"Dear UM students,

We know you are worried about the strike. It's a disruption for you, and has created difficulty and

confusion for many of you. This makes us truly grateful for all the amazing support we've received from student groups, as well as individual students. Every student who has attended a rally, walked on a picket line, or shared some of the amazing memes on social media, has had a huge impact on our efforts, and we want you to know that we are truly grateful for your contributions to UMFA members. Getting back on track after this will be hard work, but we will do it together.

We didn't want to go on strike. We felt that this was the only option available for us to stand up for ourselves and insist that we be treated fairly by our employer.

As part of the process of bargaining a new contract, UMFA's professors, instructors, and librarians, voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike if necessary. Why? Because of how concerned we are about issues

covered by our contract that are negatively affecting our university.

We are trying to solve these issues by:

- earning salaries that will allow the University of Manitoba to attract and retain excellent teachers and researchers (because we believe in creating a thriving educational and research environment for all of you)
- requiring consent from the faculty member or instructor for courses to be taught online (because we believe that while some courses can be taught remotely, we also know that some don't belong online, and as your teachers, we have a responsibility to make sure that your courses are delivered in the best possible way)
- ensuring members aren't teaching every single term for years on end without a break. We need time without work, time to do research, and time to update our knowledge and course materials.

We believe that achieving these goals for UMFA members will also be good for students – because when we have good teaching and research conditions, you have good learning conditions.

We were forced to strike because the UM administration, our employer, didn't make an



acceptable contract offer, largely because of continued interference by the provincial government. The government was not solely responsible for the original unacceptable offer – we doubt the government has strong opinions on whether or not an individual faculty member teaches online, or if instructors in nursing, education, dentistry, engineering, and other faculties burn out from teaching all year, every year.

Now the administration says it's willing to have the unresolved issues settled by an arbitrator, which would end the strike. UMFA is open to arbitration, though we need to make sure that the arbitration process wouldn't be stacked against us, which it would be unless the administration agrees to a number of conditions, including settling non-monetary items through negotiations. Arbitration is an acceptable way to settle our differences on compensation, but not on terms of our contract that influence our working conditions." End letter.

With their strike, the University of Manitoba faculty are defending their rights and those of their students, pointing out that their working conditions are students' learning conditions. They are also standing up and fighting for the public education system upon which the whole society depends.

CONDEMN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-WORKER BILL 32

(by Peggy Morton, former president CPE 2111; reprinted from Workers Forum)

The Kenney government in Alberta tabled Bill 32, the *Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020* on July 7, 2020. The bill passed second reading on July 23, and, in an all-night marathon sitting that ended the current legislative session, the bill was passed on the morning of July 29 and has become law after receiving Royal Assent.

Bill 32 makes significant amendments to the *Employment Standards Code* and the *Labour Relations Code* in ways that trample workers' rights. The government has launched this attack on workers under the hoax of supporting economic recovery, restoring balance in the workplace, and getting Albertans back to work. In fact, the aim is to consolidate the power and privilege of the rich within an old normal of recurring economic crises, devastating insecurity of employment and a state-organized bias favouring employers over workers within the social relation at the workplace.

The bill features an anti-worker aim to lower the working and living conditions of all Alberta workers both unionized and not. It openly favours private profit of the few to the detriment of the workers who produce all value through their work. For example, the bill shamelessly amends the *Employment Standards Code* to allow employers to eliminate most overtime pay for non-union workers by averaging worked hours over 52 weeks!

The bill also greatly widens arbitrary powers of the Director of Employment Standards or the Minister of Labour to grant exemptions or variances to the *Employment Standards Code*, giving employers the ability to trample on workers' rights with impunity. An exemption removes the obligation of employers to meet the minimum criteria in the Code when they make requests for exemptions or variances, and allows such exemptions to be renewed indefinitely.

These retrogressive changes contained in the bill are backed by a direct attack on workers and their right to defend themselves and society collectively through their defence organizations. Bill 32 seeks to cripple workers and their unions so as to drive down the living and working conditions of working people generally.

The government claims individual workers need "freedom of choice" with regard to their own organizations and that government dictate through Bill 32 will give them that "freedom." In this regard, the bill takes aim at the right of workers and their unions to decide their own affairs. The government vows to stamp out workers' and their unions' "political activities and other causes," which the ruling elite in power do not like.

The legislation gives the Kenney government the authority to determine that the only "legitimate" activity of unions is "collective bargaining and representation of members" and nothing else. Even this is a farce as workers know full well how the Kenney government neither respects nor defends collective bargaining. This can be seen in practice in its absolute refusal to negotiate with public sector workers, as well as its legislated attacks on them. The Kenney government's aim is all rights for employers and no rights for employees!

The legislation directly interferes in the affairs of unions and the decisions their members may take collectively. It requires individual workers to declare that a portion of their dues can be used for "political activities," otherwise the union is deprived of that portion of their dues. The government has the audacity to give itself the right to decide what activities of a union are "political" or not and how it spends its money. The government is dictating to workers and their unions how to conduct their affairs and manage their own money.

No Mr. Kenney, workers and their unions are independent organizations. You are not a member of a workers' union and if one of your government members were a member in good standing of a union then they would have the right to discuss and decide the direction of their union and how it spends its money according to the rules and regulations of the union.

Bill 32 increases government interference in the affairs of Alberta workers and their unions. Its purpose is to paralyze the unions in order to stop the organized working class from opposing the government's anti-social agenda and from putting forward their own pro-social solutions to problems facing the working people of Alberta and their economy. The Alberta working class, both unionized and non-union workers, will never accept such attacks on the rights of workers and of all Albertans to organize and speak their minds against a

government agenda that is anti-social and anti-worker and to fight for the right to set a pro-social direction for the economy.

In anticipation of the passing of Bill 32 the Alberta Federation of Labour announced on July 27 that "a large coalition of Alberta unions will launch a legal challenge to Jason Kenney's draconian new labour bill on the grounds that it violates key democratic rights enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." The Federation organized a press conference on July 29 to denounce the legislation and the gamut of the Kenney government's anti-social measures imposed on Alberta and reminded the Premier that Albertans in their thousands -- youth, seniors, workers, women -- have already joined in mass actions against the government's attacks. Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan reported that so far 26 unions and the AFL have agreed to participate in the Charter challenge to Bill 32. He quoted the bible in his message to Kenney: "You have sown the wind, now you will reap the whirlwind."



RANDOM THOUGHTS: Back in the 1960s, American folk singer Tom Paxton wrote and sang a protest song called, "A Rumblin' in the Land." I and many others from that era feel like we are getting that vibe in Alberta right now, particularly in the post-secondary sector. Take, for example, the overwhelming strike vote at Concordia University (Edmonton). At other Alberta PSEs, the bargaining teams are refusing to be forced into concessions. Meanwhile, other PSE action is going on across Canada, for example at University of Manitoba. Check out the last verse of Tom's song and see if you think it captures the tone of the times:



"Well I've been walking through this country and my eyes are open wide
And the things I've seen and heard you couldn't imagine if you tried
I've been listening to some people and one thing I understand
A great flood is a-rising fast and there's a rumbling in the land."

If you like, you can listen to Tom sing his entire song on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTOWmVdjiQ>

SPEECH BY PAM PALMATER

Dr. Pam Palmater was our keynote speaker at COCAL 2016, which CUPE 3911 organized. COCAL is the Coalition of Contract Academic Labour which meets biannually in one of Canada, Mexico, or the United States. Pam is a well-known Mi'kmaq lawyer, professor, activist and politician from Mi'kma'ki, New Brunswick, Canada. She is a frequent media political commentator. Since 2016, we have relied on her to provide an indigenous perspective on various issues. The speech at the link below is from the Parkland Institute Conference, November 2021. It is one and a half hours in length and covers a number of current issues.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNNTmyQiG3w>

CUPE 3911 MONTHLY GRIEVANCE SUMMARY REPORT

By ERNIE JACOBSON, GRIEVANCE OFFICER (NEWLY ELECTED)

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 December 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 and with members of the CUPE 3911 grievance committee.

- Supported numerous members on understanding their rights and contract challenges, especially around seniority issues and supporting workplace accommodations
- Worked on arbitrations with National Representative, CUPE National, and union Co-chair. Deferred two arbitrations indefinitely for strategic reasons
- Supported a member regarding possible bullying and harassment in the workplace, including defending them against a countercharge by a student
- Supported a member facing employer sanctions due to a charge laid by students

The union currently has 2 active grievances, 3-4 grievances going to arbitration, and several areas of discussion with the employer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting, January 22.

EDLC Annual Labour School, February 26 & 27, 2022

International Women's Day, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

May Day, May 1, 2022

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

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.