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CUPE 3911 Monthly Grievance Report

Attend the CUPE 3911 Monthly Meeting on April 24, 2021

Our next general meeting, open to all members, will be held on Saturday, May 15, 930 AM. Suggested agenda items should be sent to the administrator's email address by 1100 PM, Tuesday, May 11. The meeting will be conducted remotely via ZOOM. Instructions as to how to join the meeting will be sent to you.

Catching Up With Athabasca University's Board of Governors

The final decisions at Athabasca University are made by the Board of Governors. This makes it important to know who the BoG members are. Currently there are 16 members, including the Board Chair, 8 "public members" (a euphemism for corporate members), 1 alumnus (usually a "pubic member"), 2 academic staff members, 1 tutor member, 1 graduate student member, and two undergraduate student members. Note that the Board Chair plus the public members plus the alumnus can easily outvote the remaining six employee members.

FYI: Current "public members" of the BoG and their backgrounds are:

- Nancy Laird, Board Chair, senior energy executive at Shell Canada, Norcen, Pan Canadian Energy and Encana.
- Robert Balay: Public works superintendent for Town of Athabasca
- Sharon Anderson: Numerous community and provincial organizations
- Tracey Maguire: various positions with BP Canada; OCL Group (pipelines)
- Shannon Neighbour: partner in a recruiting agency; past president Edmonton Business Association
- Brian Berg: Global Investment Energy Banking Group; Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce

- Ilario Spagnolo: Emerson Zedi Cloud Scada Business Solutions (oil and gas production data); former executive at Telus, Sony
- McDonald Madamombe: Unit Leader at Alberta Pacific Forest Products
- Lynn Hamilton: Hamilton Investments: aviation, aerospace, property
- Sandip Lalli: entrepreneur, investments; former executive at Cargill; former CEO Calgary Chamber of Commerce

According to Athabasca University, this describes how AU is governed:

“Athabasca University governs itself through a bi-cameral governance structure, as set out in the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act and the Athabasca University Regulation. The Board of Governors is the senior governing body, but shares academic governance with the General Faculties Council, the academic governing body. The University Secretariat provides support for all areas of the Board and GFC, enabling both bodies (and their respective standing committees) to govern the institution in an efficient and effective manner.”



Whether the above is an accurate description of how governance actually functions at AU is a whole other question. Note particularly the statement that “the Board of Governors is the senior governing body.” In other words, when all is said and done, the BoG, not those who produce all the added value at AU, has the last word.

University of Alberta Staff Launch Mass Campaign to Protect Post-Secondary Education (AASUA)

The nearly 4,000 workers making up the Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta (AASUA) are taking matters into their own hands to protect the future of the university and Alberta, after Jason Kenney and the UCP government's devastating 2021 budget.

"We are concerned about our province's future and that's why we are stepping forward to protect it with a campaign to mobilize our 4,000 members alongside the entire U of A community and beyond," said AASUA President, Ricardo Acuña. "Our university drives innovation and makes our province strong. Now is when we should be investing in our future and protecting Alberta, not

cutting it like the Kenney government has recklessly done."

"In the 2021 UCP provincial budget, the University of Alberta's provincial grant has been cut again by a further 11 per cent, which is \$60.1 million, or almost half of the total cut to Alberta's post-secondary sector. This means that while 25 per cent of the province's students attend the U of A, our school will bear 50 per cent of the reduction in funding."

Given these extraordinarily challenging times at



the U of A, the AASUA, which is made up of the university's educators, researchers, librarians and administrative professionals, is launching the largest campaign in its history. Called, "Protect Our Future: For Our University. For Alberta," the

campaign will mobilize thousands of AASUA members, the broader U of A community of workers and students, as well as Albertans across the province.



A petition in support of the campaign can be signed at [ProtectOurFuture.ca](https://protectourfuture.ca)

"These are not normal times at the U of A and by attacking our university, the Kenney government is taking a jackhammer to the very foundation of Alberta's history and its future," said Acuña. "We are launching our campaign knowing we are up against huge challenges. But now more than ever, we need to come together to protect our future for our university and for Alberta."

Huge Outcry Against Attacks on Laurentian University *(reprinted from Workers' Forum)*

All sectors of the community in northern Ontario are condemning the dealings of the Laurentian University administration with the Ontario Ford government and their declaration of insolvency and application for protection under the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA). This outrage has occurred behind the backs of the faculty, staff, students and the communities in northern Ontario that are served by the University. (Editor: At last word, 100 tenured faculty have been fired and 70 programs have been cut).

Who Decides? The People Decide!

This CCAA ambush begs the key question facing everyone: *Who Decides?* The system of governance at Laurentian and other post-secondary institutions disempowers those who should be the decision-makers. The system empowers private entrepreneurs who have no stake in the academic mission of the institutions, in the development of the communities and in nation-building. The broad opposition to this dictate takes many forms but raises the singular demand for nation-building not nation-wrecking and for this to happen the people must be empowered to decide.

Laurentian Community

Laurentian faculty, staff, retirees, students and concerned members of the Sudbury community are speaking out and finding creative ways of defending their interests. They have organized a group called Save Our Sudbury -- Sauvons Sudbury (SOS) with a Facebook page of the same name to advance this work, where information and comments and expressions of support are posted. SOS organized a virtual Town Hall meeting on March 3 co-hosted by Jamie West, MPP for Sudbury, and fourth-year student Katlyn Kotila in which over 500 people participated. The demand of the meeting was that the province must provide secure funding for Laurentian.

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations

In a statement posted on its website on March 9 the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) denounced the CCAA process writing, "Laurentian University President Robert Haché's recent claim that the *Companies Creditors' Arrangement Act* (CCAA) process provides a constructive format to engage with stakeholders is not reflected in reality. Instead, the costly CCAA process reduces students, faculty, and staff to the status of creditors, from which the university seeks to protect itself."

OCUFA condemned the "unprecedented, inappropriate, and costly decision to seek CCAA protection" by the University administration because, it writes, "In this process, faculty, staff, and students are placed in an untenable position where the university is trying to force them to take cuts to programs, jobs, and research. Students, faculty, and staff should not have to pay the price for the poor governance practices of an underfunded public institution."

Sault Ste. Marie District Labour Council

The Sault Ste. Marie District Labour Council on March 11 joined with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations to hold a lively rally at the office of the Minister of Colleges and Universities, Ross Romano in Sault Ste. Marie. Workers from private and public sector unions rallied to demand that the CCAA process be stopped and the government provide proper funding for Laurentian.



Laurentian University Faculty Association (LUFA)

LUFA, representing 612 faculty members at Laurentian and its federated universities: the University of Sudbury, Huntington University and Thorneloe University, resolutely opposes the actions of the administration. Charlie Sinclair, counsel for LUFA, said the association is currently in contract talks with Laurentian and the union is concerned that the university will use the CCAA proceedings to eliminate programs and jobs that it would not be able to achieve through collective bargaining.

"The university is going to use the insolvency process to achieve concessions (from the union)," he said. "I just want the parties to know LUFA is up to the challenge. While we have been negotiating in good faith, it's not LUFA and its members who put the university in this position and it's not up to members alone to clean up the mess."

Canadian Union of Public Employees

CUPE writes, "The pandemic has exposed chronic underfunding of universities, which are increasingly reliant on tuition fees and private sources of funding. While many major universities in urban centers continue to attract students and private donations, schools in smaller communities such as Laurentian are struggling in the pandemic due to declining enrolment rates, exacerbated by the four per cent reduction in government funding for universities in 2019."

Ontario Branch of the Canadian Federation of Students

The Ontario Branch of the CFS writes, "Laurentian is also known for its tricultural mandate and, in particular, offering a hub for Indigenous learning and research. These programs are now faced with funding cuts that are a major loss to the local communities that benefit from such research. Northern communities thrive on the educational and employment opportunities generated by the University. The news from Laurentian University needs to be a wake-up call to the provincial government that Ontario's post-secondary institutions are underfunded and cannot take any more austerity."

The Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeurs d'université (FQPPU)

In a statement issued on March 17 the FQPPU, which represents university faculty in Quebec, "urges the Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities, Ross Romano, and the Ford government to work with the various parties, in particular the Laurentian University Faculty Association (LUFA), to find solutions to Laurentian's funding problems. A fundamental aspect of the mission of this institution is to offer university courses to the Francophone and Indigenous peoples of Northern Ontario. The maintenance of these programs is vital to the social and economic development of these communities."

Our Demands Are Essential to Solving the Crisis in Education - *Interview, Geneviève Royer –*

(Geneviève Royer is a secondary school remedial teacher in Montreal.)

Workers' Forum: Teachers employed by the school service centres put forward their demands for changes to their collective agreement in October 2019, and the agreement expired on March 30, 2020. What is the status of negotiations with the government?

Geneviève Royer: The two organizations that represent the approximately 122,000 teachers in Quebec have both taken strike votes. On February 1, the Federation of Teachers' Unions (FSE-CSQ) adopted a mandate for rotating strikes over five days, and the member unions of the Autonomous Teachers' Federation voted for an unlimited general strike starting May 31.

In 67 meetings, government officials have had ample opportunity to hear our demands, which were tabled, as you said, in October 2019. But our negotiators are being told by their employer counterparts, "We don't have the mandate to negotiate that." Now, if the education experts, if the people who work every day, have no power to change the situation, to have a say in the decisions that are made, we have a serious problem.

It can be said that after all these negotiation meetings and 12 mediation sessions, the only thing that has changed is that teachers are now in a legal strike position. It is the government that is inciting teachers to take this action. The newspapers have already begun to talk only about the strike issue and not about our working conditions.

But what is it that the public needs to know? It must be what the teachers have proposed to the government, which is responsible for the education system. We say that reducing the number of students per class, increasing direct services to students (more educators, speech

therapists, etc.), creating specialized classes for students with special needs, is what is needed to improve our working conditions which are the the learning conditions of our students.

It is important to know that the number of students in Quebec who, according to the criteria of the Ministry of Education, are entitled to educational services for at-risk students and students with disabilities, adjustment or learning difficulties (EHDAA) increased by 71.8 per cent from 2001 to 2016. In 2018-2019, there were 216,821 EHDAA students in our schools, and of these, 164,936 or 76 per cent, are in regular classes, not special classes.

The government is engaging in provocations against teachers in the negotiations regarding our wages and our working conditions. For example, it wants to add wording to the collective agreement saying that it is "the responsibility of the teacher to adapt his or her pedagogical approach according to the needs and abilities of each student entrusted to him or her." This will allow the government to deny services to teachers and students on the basis that it is the teachers' responsibility to implement personalized intervention strategies.



The government is also proposing to add two reasons why class sizes will be allowed to exceed planned ratios. None of these conditions address the mental, physical or educational well-being of students and teachers at a time when we are all witnessing multiple forms of distress in our schools.

WF: Do you want to say something in conclusion?

GR: We want our proposals to be discussed in the public domain. We feel that we are taking up our social responsibility by raising the real problems in education and proposing solutions based on our expertise and experience. The question for us is not whether or not to go on

strike. The issue is that it is our working conditions and our demands for change that must be publicly discussed and that the government must be held accountable for its repeated refusal to negotiate with us.

CUPE 3911 Co-Chair Glynnis Lieb for Edmonton City Council

(Updated by Glynnis Lieb)

Now is the time to make bold changes that we know will make our city stronger and our community a more vibrant, rewarding home for ALL.

For years, I have wished for a representative who would listen to every person with sincerity and honestly value diversity of experiences and opinions, who would use their time in office to get results for those people, as opposed to focusing on getting re-elected. I've decided to be that person. I've decided that, instead of desperately hoping someone would step up and run as a voice for working families and people who never get seriously prioritized, I would answer that call.

Ipiihkoohkanipiahtsi is a ward full of working people; young working families, people new to Canada, people moving into retirement. We are facing more difficult economic times. People are struggling to pay their mortgages or rent. People are struggling to keep food in the fridge. We need to encourage community participation in reaching out for support and supporting those in need. We need our neighbourhoods to be safe, desirable spaces where we can live, work and play. From students to seniors, our city should be an attractive for every life stage. Those looking to buy a home, raise a family, build a strong career path, settle into retirement, or those just trying to make ends meet, all deserve reliable, affordable public services and a government that has their back and puts them first.

I want to increase the number of gathering places in this ward. Communities are strengthened when there are opportunities to get to know each other

and to actively engage. I would like to see more recreation options and even coffee shops and local music and other active spaces. These are the things that make neighbourhoods fun and attractive and act as economic and social stimulants.

I am in the process of consulting with Ward residents, and they will direct my ultimate prioritization of issues because I am here to fight for them and make sure they have what they need from their city. I bring a lot of passion to local issues and a number of themes have emerged through my conversations with residents that I care deeply about in relation to my life and work:

Affordable Housing: For as long as I have been paying attention to experiences of people and how governments respond to them (this includes my own experiences and childhood of desperately needing housing), I have listened to governments wax lyrical about the tragedy of homelessness and the priority of addressing homelessness. Yet, I've seen precious little change in all these years. We know how to address homelessness and housing insecurity. We just need people in elected office who truly want to change it, who truly do see the people who are struggling as valuable and deserving of secure housing.

Accessible Public Transit: The linchpin of any healthy city that prioritizes inclusion and helping people live to their best potential is quality, plentiful, affordable public transit. We need to ensure that all corners of this city are well serviced by transit. We also need to do better in making transit financially accessible for the people who need it most. In an ideal scenario, that would be fair-free transit. At the very least, there should be

sliding-scale fare options that do not further penalize Edmontonians with the least disposable income. But, first and foremost, transit needs to be safe, accessible, and efficient at getting people where they need to go.

Maintaining Public Services: The tired yet clung-to way of responding to tougher financial times is to cut public services and frontline workers. These are the expenses that cost the least but make the most impact on the quality of life for Edmontonians. Having been a researcher and managing not-for-profits as well as volunteering for charitable organizations, I have spent my whole adult life having to find money and manage creatively within tight budgets. There are ways that we can do better. For example, there are expenses resulting from inefficient contracts and unnecessary consultant fees that we could reduce to prioritize services that allow frontline workers to keep their jobs and city residents to enjoy good recreation and public services.

Addressing Systemic Inequities: We need to take a good hard look at how this municipal government works. We need to specifically look at what makes it more difficult for Edmontonians to access services and supports, experience a good quality of life, and participate in government. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry, the COVID pandemic and the events leading to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement have shown us how deeply ingrained in our social and systemic fabric racism and inequities are. The times of wearing pins and bracelets and thinking our work is done are passed. We need to do things differently.

Main Goal of Science Curriculum Should Be Scientific Literacy

by Dougal MacDonald, Communications

Alberta's ruling United Conservative Party (UCP) recently released a draft of a proposed new Alberta elementary school curriculum. Educators and many others are heavily criticizing the draft for its inappropriate content, its reactionary political bias, the fact that some of it was plagiarized from a U.S. site, and for numerous other good reasons. Over 41 (out of 61) Alberta school boards, including Edmonton and Calgary, are refusing to pilot it. On April 15, the Alberta Teachers' Association called for the UCP to stop work on the draft until a rewrite and review can take place.

Climate Action: We need to be responsible about the decisions we make and choose climate health wherever possible instead of cutting corners or letting the problem keep getting more expensive. There's undisputed scientific evidence that we are on a fast track towards climate catastrophe if we do not drastically change how we live and function. I believe we need to do ALL aspects of our work under advisement of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and climate experts.



My team and I have dropped almost 12,000 fliers, held two visioning sessions and one community town hall to date. As I continue to meet and hear from residents, I will further develop my priorities and platform. I am looking forward to finding creative ways to engage with community over the Spring, until it is safer to door knock. Look for community event notices in the near future! I am proud to represent the voices of working people and families in this journey.

Certainly, the UCP draft is a major fail and deserves all the criticism it is receiving. At the same time, in the current era, solutions are what is needed. Thus, the key question is, "What should the curriculum be?" Integral to this is the question "What should the aim of the curriculum be?" That is a very broad question indeed so as a science educator of long experience, I am limiting myself here to discussing what might be the aim of the science curriculum.

The current pandemic has once again emphasized the importance of scientific literacy. Most people are relying on the expertise of experienced scientists such as infectious disease specialists as their source of reliable knowledge about COVID-19, how it spreads, how dangerous it is, what to do about it, and so on. This approach is sometimes sarcastically contrasted to the unsavoury option of relying on the social media rantings of some random crank.

If scientific literacy is the main goal of science education then what is it? At one time, it simply meant being in possession of a large number of established scientific facts, e.g., knowing that viruses are living organisms that cannot reproduce without a host cell. This older conception limited the acquisition of scientific literacy to accumulating somewhat disjointed bits of scientific knowledge, similar to preparing for a science-oriented quiz show.

More recently, scientific literacy is being more broadly defined. In this approach, the key is to link science with the student's (and teacher's) lifeworld. There is much more emphasis on the importance of an understanding of science by those who will not pursue science-related careers. The basic aim could be summed up as shaping informed, socially responsible, competent citizens who can deal more effectively with the science-related social problems that face us all, e.g., the pandemic.

What might be some of the attributes of such a scientifically literate person, fostered over a period of time? They might include the following, applied of course to specific areas of science content: bases conclusions on evidence, distinguishes experts from the uninformed, is aware of how science is done and how its findings are validated, distinguishes science from pseudoscience, can analyze and process information, recognizes that scientific knowledge is reliable but can change, can distinguish knowledge from opinion, and so on.

Certainly, scientific literacy still includes understanding scientific knowledge. It is quite impossible to address a science-related social issue without having the relevant knowledge. For example, dealing with the issue of the efficacy of wearing masks to limit virus transmission clearly requires some knowledge of how viruses travel. At the same time, acquiring the scientific knowledge alone is not enough.

Besides scientific knowledge, the other very important aspect of scientific literacy is knowing about the distinguishing characteristics of science itself, a topic often called "the nature of science," particularly how science is "done." This is because accepted scientific knowledge is ultimately based on evidence from reliable scientific studies. Those studies must stand up to critical scrutiny, e.g., regarding methodology, controlling of variables, conclusions drawn, and so on.

Further, scientific claims must be evaluated both in terms of the validity of their content and their relevance (or not) to the issue. Also, while students need to learn to exercise some intellectual independence in evaluating scientific claims, it is difficult to avoid at least some dependence on the views

of scientific experts, even when said experts might disagree. Inquiring into what those reasons for disagreement might be is another aspect of scientific literacy.

While reliable scientific knowledge comes ultimately from scientific research studies, most exposure to such knowledge comes through popular media rather than scientific publications. Popular media can be unreliable, as anyone familiar with social media knows, so students must be both scientifically literate and media literate. Also, everyone must take into consideration their own confirmation bias which is the tendency to favour information confirming one's already-held beliefs.



Focusing science curriculum on scientific literacy provides an overarching purpose and framework. It links science to students' lifeworld and is in harmony with the current ethos and practice of science. For a long time, the approach to science curriculum improvement has been simply to update the subject matter of the traditional scientific disciplines. Instead, what is needed is to create a curriculum that focuses on the utilization of science for the common good, on a science that is not just for a select few but rather for the benefit of all of society.

CUPE 3902 Unit One Vote 94.2% to Ratify New Agreement!

(Editor: This is an announcement from CUPE 3902 Unit One at University of Toronto regarding their new collective agreement. Note especially the sentence: "Our high participation in strike prep actions and other membership-wide shows of support have made so many of the gains in this new agreement possible.")

"We opened a Unit-wide vote on our Tentative Agreement on Tuesday, March 30th, and closed it on Thursday, April 1st. In total, **1914 of us** voted on the ratification of the Tentative Agreement and **94.2%** voted **YES** to form a **new Collective**

Agreement (renewed for the term from January 1, 2021 until December 1, 2023)!

This new agreement will have wide-ranging impacts on our lives as Unit 1 workers, and has resulted from well over a year of preparations and four months of bargaining. Our high participation in strike prep actions and other membership-wide shows of support have made so many of the gains in this new agreement possible. Although these changes are

technically coming into effect immediately, it will take up to six months to finalize the Collective Agreement.

Some time will be needed, especially for financial changes to take effect (including our retroactive pay increase for this semester). As always, Executive Officers and Staff are available to address questions



and concerns about enforcement. The Memorandum of Agreement (i.e., the Tentative Agreement) is still viewable in its entirety on the main page of our [member portal](#) until the Collective Agreement is finalized.

Also, now that this round of bargaining has ended, we will be electing a Collective Agreement Implementation Committee (CAIC) responsible for

reworking our financial assistance funds: goals set for the CAIC at our platform meeting in the Fall included streamlining tuition/funding assistance, and creating an equity fund for BIPOC workers. A

meeting dedicated to electing this committee will likely be called in the coming weeks.”

WORKERS AT CALGARY COCA COLA PLANT WIN NEW CONTRACT!

Some 268 workers at the Coca-Cola Refreshments Calgary plant went out on strike effective 9 a.m., March 15, the first strike at the plant since 2004. The dispute involved members of Teamsters Local Union 987 of Alberta (Teamsters 987) who were asking for access to job security and protection from unnecessary third-party outsourcing as part of their collective agreement.

Plant workers have steadily been losing job hours to third-party contractors, reducing their ability to earn a suitable livelihood for themselves and their families. Coca-Cola’s actions are limiting employees’ ability to fulfill their hours on good paying jobs, creating an insecure and worrying work environment while some of their work is fulfilled by non-union contractors.

On April 1, the workers approved a new contract, ending their two-week strike. The new agreement improves job security for the workers and gives them a 9 per cent wage increase over six years. The deal also gives some employees more flexibility to change their jobs within the plant if they are getting inadequate hours of work. The new agreement was approved by 73 per cent of the membership.



WORKING PEOPLE OF ALBERTA AND THEIR ALLIES CONFRONT AUSTRALIAN COAL BILLIONAIRES *By Dougal MacDonald, Communications*

A powerful mass movement has been building in Alberta directed against the recently revealed plans of the UCP government to sell out Alberta’s coal reserves on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains to Australian coal monopolies for a song. The mined coal is to be shipped to Asia. Hundreds of thousands of Albertans from all walks of life are protesting the attempted sellout through organized groups, alliances, public forums, and petitions that have gathered over 100,000 signatures. The protestors view open-pit coal mining in the province’s critical watersheds as a big threat to their communities, the environment, and their livelihoods.

The UCP revealed their plan in May 2020 when the government rescinded Alberta’s Coal Policy which for 44 years has kept 1.5 million hectares of lands in the eastern slopes of the Rockies off limits

from open-pit mining. The UCP axed the 1976 policy with no public consultation, although they did consult the Alberta-based Coal Association of Canada which represents the mine owners. The UCP denies that its aim was to open up the eastern slopes for strip mining but Australia-based Capital Investment Partners, which owns four coal



companies with leases in the central Rockies,

reported to investors in 2019 that “the Alberta government is in the process of changing the coal policy to allow more open pit mining”.

The intensity of the protests to date has forced the UCP to backtrack or at least to pretend to backtrack. Alberta’s Minister of Energy Sonia Savage announced in a news release on January 18 that due to public opposition the recent sale of 11 coal leases to the Australian monopolies would be cancelled and that no more would be sold on land where open-pit mines were forbidden under the old policy. Protestors pointed out that the cancelled leases were only a tiny fraction of the leases sold since the Coal Policy was quashed. On February 8, Savage reversed the decision to rescind the 1976 coal policy, claiming that the UCP now plans wide-ranging consultations on a new coal policy.

Between 2003 and 2013, the Australian monopolies mined at home and made huge profits, supplying growing Asian markets with iron ore, steel-making coal, and coal for generating electricity. But dwindling resource quality as well as increased opposition to open-pit mining in Australia has forced the Australian monopolies to look elsewhere for coal to rip and ship. Australian coal monopolies are now hoping that Alberta’s sellout UCP government will offer the same formula underlying their past success at home: low royalties, low corporate taxes, minimal regulations, and cooperative politicians. In other words, the same formula the UCP uses with the fossil fuel monopolies operating in Alberta.

The UCP’s shady moves in the interests of the Australian coal billionaires illustrate once again how the global monopolies privately own and control the contemporary economy and dominate official politics. Their private ownership exists in contradiction with the modern economy’s socialized nature and the billions of actual producers who create the social product necessary for the existence of the people and society but have no say over the economy’s direction.

The aim of private ownership is to make maximum profit from the parts of the economy the owners control, for example, coal mining, and force the state to do their bidding and pay the rich. This leads to dysfunction in the economy and recurring crises as the competing parts conflict with each other and with the interests of the actual producers who have no say. The narrow aim of the monopolies for their private gain clashes with the need of the various sectors and enterprises of the economy to function in harmony for the common good.

The objective conditions pose the issue of how to deal with environmental problems and the despoiling of nature, such as is the case with open pit coal mining, where the tops of mountains are literally cut off and the “waste” thrown into nearby river valleys, blocking flow and polluting waterways with dangerous chemicals such as selenium. The key problem is that people lack control over their economies and official politics. Without taking into account the domination of the global monopolies over everything, most efforts to deal with environmental problems are manipulated by the very forces causing the problems and turned into programs to pay the rich.

Of course, issues such as industrial and other pollution, land degradation, soil dispersal, dust, incessant noise, poisonous gases, and water contamination, all effects of open-pit mining, can be raised on their own. Suggestions, campaigns and remedies can be fought out to a temporary resolution such as the UCP’s cancellation of some coal leases, reversal of the rescinded coal legislation, and the “promise” to hold consultations to develop a new coal policy. However, to turn any success into lasting victory, the problem of the monopolies’ domination of all aspects of life must be raised and confronted in a serious way and major efforts put into overcoming this domination and building the New.

April 28: Mourn for the Dead. Fight for the living.

April 28, is the National Day of Mourning held to commemorate workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to workplace-related hazards and conditions. In Canada, each year more than 900 workers are killed and over 250,000 claims are filed for lost time injuries/diseases, the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada reports. This year, under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also express our deepest sympathies to the families of those essential workers who have lost their lives while performing their duties without adequate protections, thanks to governments that have given up any pretense of serving the public good.

All accidents can be prevented by making sure the workers are put in charge of the conditions and safety measures they require at work. Furthermore, the Workers' Compensation systems in every province and Quebec must be made to fulfill their original mandate to properly compensate injured workers and their families.

While this year workers cannot gather in person to mourn for the dead, unions are calling on everyone to show our solidarity with frontline workers and remember fallen workers by lighting a candle in our homes and posting a photo to social media with the hashtag #WorkersDayofMourning and #StopthePandemicAtWork.

Workers have the right to participate in decisions that affect their health and safety. They have the right to refuse work that could endanger their health and safety or that of others. Any attempt to intimidate or criminalize workers for exercising this right should be dealt with severely as should the wilful neglect of workers' health and safety by governments and employers that is taking place as a result of the anti-social offensive in fields such as health care and education.



May Day is Coming!

On May Day, revolutionary greetings are sent out across Canada and Quebec and around the world to all the fighting contingents of the working class. At this time, examples abound of the ruling forces aligned against the working class and also of vigorous resistance where collectives of fighting workers are building their unity and taking initiatives to defend their rights and the rights of all.

Governments at all levels have changed laws to enable pay-the-rich schemes, dismantled state arrangements which protected the workers' rights, and subordinated all resources of the society to the profits of the monopolies. This anti-social offensive is being fought with courage through mobilizing the unity and strength of numbers of the working class to defend its individual and collective dignity and rights and open a path for society's progress.

The state measures to deny the working class its right to solve problems in the economy and society reveal ruling elites that are obsolete and have lost their right to rule. They are obsessed with defending their private interests and class privilege to the point of being blind and indifferent to the problems the economy, society and people face. This means society is ripe for fundamental change and the working class is the social force capable of leading the charge to democratize the political

processes so that the working people can establish a system whereby they decide the direction of the economy and all questions of war and peace.

For the working class to assume its central role it must become the leading human factor in the affairs of the economy, politics, society and state with regard to every issue the people and the social and natural environment face. The working class has proved its competence in dealing with the modern productive forces and becoming the essential human factor in the economy. The working class must now transfer this competence into leading the economy and society by bringing



into being new forms of governance, politics, relations and aims in conformity

with the modern socialized forms of producing and living.

On May First, let the working class express its competence and confidence in itself as the essential human factor. Let us pledge to increase our efforts to unite, organize and engage in actions with analysis to democratize the political process and thereby usher in the *New!*

Random Thoughts:

Certain commentators who know nothing about math curriculum are railing on endlessly about the non-existent plague of "discovery math" in Alberta schools and other such nonsense. Having taught math in elementary school as well as math curriculum courses in university



I am actually qualified to speak on this. OK, here's the deal on elementary school math. Some of math involves committing key ideas to memory, like learning basic computation facts. All teachers know this and take responsibility for it. Other aspects of math involve teacher-guided inquiry (not "discovery" which implies the teacher is not there) which builds thinking skills as well as content knowledge. All teachers also know this and take responsibility for it. So, to set this up as an either/or argument with

"discovery math" as a straw man to be knocked down by rubbish about "core knowledge" is completely misleading. It is nothing more than a feeble excuse to write endless drivel in a newspaper column.

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 April 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

- IST hire around related to Article 30 - Seniority. Working on arbitration conveyance
- Historical grievance regarding a termination that was conveyed to arbitration. Found union nominee to convey to arbitration hopefully in early 2022. Received correspondence from employer: preliminary objection based on timelines, doctrine of laches, abandonment, and jurisdiction of arbitrator ((Note: The **doctrine of laches** is based on the maxim that "equity aids the vigilant and not those who slumber on their rights." The outcome is that a legal right or claim will not be enforced or allowed if a long delay in asserting the right or claim has prejudiced the adverse party.)
- Continued work on grievance filed in September regarding GFC committees going to arbitration. Nominee found.
- iPhone policy grievance regarding Article 32 (lack of consultation). Step 2 meeting held April 13; awaiting Step 2 response from employer
- Filed new iPhone group grievance related to denied timesheets for time spent setting up iPhones. Canvassing for dates for Step 1
- Organizing April Grievance Committee Meeting date TBD



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

Announcements

CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting. May 22.

Alberta Federation of Labour virtual convention, May 13-15, 2021.

Canadian Labour Congress virtual convention. June 16-18, 2021.

Municipal Elections, Alberta. October 18, 2021

CUPE 3911 Website. We have a 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.