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CUPE 3911 GRIEVANCE REPORT

ATTEND THE CUPE 3911 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022

Our next general meeting, open to all members, will be held Saturday, **March 26, at 930 AM**. The meeting will be conducted remotely via ZOOM. Details of how to connect will be sent out.

AU UNIONS SIGN TRI-UNION SOLIDARITY PLEDGE

In anticipation of a work stoppage, the unions representing support staff, faculty, and tutors and academic experts at Athabasca University have signed a solidarity pledge:

AUPE Local 69, CUPE Local 3911, and AUFA agree that, in the event of a strike and/or lockout affecting one union, the other unions will encourage their members to refuse to perform work beyond their normally assigned duties, specifically work typically done by striking and/or locked out workers, as is their right under s.149(1)(f) of the Labour Relations Code.

What this means is that the three largest unions at AU will ask their members to **not** take on the work of any striking workers.

We anticipate that this pledge will intensify the operational disruption any strike will cause AU and, thereby, increase the pressure on AU to come to a reasonable settlement.



AU INFLICTS TUITION FEE INCREASES ON STUDENTS

By DOUGAL MACDONALD

Athabasca University Provost Matt Prineas announced on January 31, 2022 that AU is raising student tuition fees. The increases are a 7 per cent increase for grad programs in the Faculty of Health Disciplines, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Faculty of Science and Technology, and a 7 per cent across-the board increase to all undergraduate tuition. These increases will obviously cause increased hardship for AU students and are a direct attack on their right to post-secondary education.

The announcement is framed in the usual edubabble which tries to suggest that AU followed some kind of rational, evidence-based process. It states that AU “conducted research, consulted with learners, and established tuition and affordability principles to find the right balance between having competitive fees...while providing excellent value as well as enhanced services.” Note that AU “conducted research”. Have we seen the results? I don’t think so. Note that AU “consulted with learners”. Oh, so surveys were sent out, focus groups were formed, and town halls were held in which students were consulted and the result was that the majority of students wanted their tuition fees raised? Really? I guess we all must have missed that because we were having our afternoon naps.

Of course, the AU Board of Governors has approved the increases. Since August 2019, when the BoGs of Alberta PSEs were blitzkrieged by UCP business appointees, the administrations of all PSEs have been even more docile in the face of government cuts than they were in the past. At AU, the UCP appointed a new board chair and two public (corporate) members. The new Board Chair, has held senior positions in major energy companies including Shell and Encana. How does this qualify her to run a university?

AU also claims that “This work has been carried out in the context of challenges facing the entire post-secondary sector.” In other words, in the context of the UCP’s vicious cuts to the post-secondary education budget which AU has never opposed. The announcement goes on to give a grocery list of ten motherhood/apple pie principles which allegedly ground AU’s fee structure. It’s like reading a thesaurus. In fact, motherhood and apple pie seem to be the only principles missing from the list!

Carefully avoiding any criticism, direct or implied, of the UCP, AU attributes the need to “improve efficiencies” (i.e., raise fees) to an “unprecedented downward shift in undergraduate enrolment”. Unprecedented? Well, effects do actually have causes if you want to figure them out. As well, the absurd argument that “The tuition increase AU will introduce is in line with those approved at other Albertan post-secondary institutions” is trotted out. That’s like saying, “If their river is polluted then it’s okay if ours is”. The announcement ends with the expected wrap-up: “We must make tough and strategic decisions now to ensure the sustainability of the university while we improve the learner experience.” How making students pay higher fees improves their experience is never explained.

Should our critique seem too negative, let’s mention one positive option to raising fees. That is the freezing and then progressive reduction of all fees until post-secondary education at AU is free, leading the way for all Alberta PSEs to provide free education to all their students. It is clear this can be done. At present, there are many countries in the world where PSE is free, including some where it is free to international students. Countries with free PSE include Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Czech Republic, France, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Estonia, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, and the list goes on. Even in the United States, the whole University of California system (UCLA, UCSD, etc.) was tuition-free until Ronald Reagan became governor.

Just think, by eliminating tuition fees, AU could become the Alberta champion of the right to post-secondary education and set a positive example for the entire country! So, put an end to tuition fees as soon as possible and make us all proud, AU! We know you can do it!



UPDATE: CUPE 3911 BARGAINING

The bargaining committee met with the employer again on February 16. We made further progress with non-monetary proposals and were able to sign off on one more article. We have further dates scheduled for April and will be meeting in March as well, if some dates free up for the employer. We hope to begin discussing monetary by the spring.

We have been meeting regularly with representatives from the other two bargaining units at AU. We are also keeping in close contact with groups who are in the middle of bargaining in other post-secondary institutions. We are working with colleagues across the province to create an atmosphere of support and strength in these unprecedented times for post-secondary workers in Alberta.

Kind regards, Glynnis Lieb PhD

AUFA BARGAINING: WHO'S ZOOMING WHO?

BY DOUGAL MACDONALD

The AU Faculty Association (AUFA) is locked in collective bargaining with Athabasca University. One thing that has been interesting is that each side is giving a somewhat different version of bargaining events. I guess this is to be expected. The core contradiction of capitalism, a system where workers sell their wage labour to owners, is that employers try to drive down wages to increase their profits and workers continually fight their employers to get the highest possible wage so they can live at a Canadian standard.

So, a constant struggle goes on between owners and workers over wages and working conditions. Part and parcel of that struggle is the fight for public opinion. Both sides want public opinion on their side, e.g., both AUFA and AU want the support of students, staff, the public, other PSEs, and so on. This could help to explain why both sides try to cast themselves in the best possible light. Recently, AU Human Resources suggested that AUFA was putting a “spin” on their information releases, suggesting that they were not telling an accurate story. Similar comments have been made by AUFA about AU’s announcements.

Logic suggests that in the main CUPE and AUPE, the other two organized groups of workers at AU, will more readily believe what AUFA is saying and would be of the opinion that it is AU that is

spinning. The main reason is that these groups are also either bargaining themselves or else have bargained in the past. Bargaining, no matter how “friendly”, is always an occasion when sides disagree, even to the point that accusations are made that the other side is not being entirely honest as to what actually happened at the bargaining sessions. Yes, notes are kept but those notes can also get questioned.

So it is likely that as AUFA bargaining progresses, CUPE and AUPE members will judge that the AUFA report, which is published regularly on their blog, is more accurate than the AU accounts getting sent out to members on the listserve. Also, with CUPE 3911 in bargaining too it would be a good idea for members to not only keep track of what is going on with our own bargaining but also with AUFA’s bargaining and AUPE’s bargaining.



Lessons learned by AUFA and AUPE may help us as our own new contract is hashed out in the next few months. Others’ experience can be very valuable. As I always tell my students, “Why “reinvent the wheel?”

ULFA STRIKES JUST AFTER CUEFA SETTLES

BY DOUGAL MACDONALD

Members of the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) went out on strike on Thursday, February 10, the second Alberta faculty association to walk out since the year 2022 began. The members' vote was overwhelmingly in favour of going on strike. Over 90% of the votes cast supported taking strike action, with more than 80% of the ULFA members casting ballots. The one-sided nature of the vote provides a strong mandate to ULFA and sends a sharp message to the university administration.

ULFA membership consists of all U of L academic staff, including about 500 faculty and instructors and approximately 100 sessional (contract) lecturers. U of L students have rallied to support ULFA and solidarity messages have poured in from other faculty associations and unions. This is no surprise as contract disputes are also ongoing at Mount Royal University (Calgary), the University of Alberta and Athabasca University. Since the ULFA strike began, rallies have been held both in Lethbridge and across the province, manifesting the same strong support shown for the previous strike won by Concordia (Edmonton) faculty.

When ULFA went on strike, ULFA and the university had been locked in bargaining for over 600 days, with the university dragging their heels on everything. The situation is the same at a number of other Alberta universities where the basic employer strategy seems to be to bargain as slowly as possible, perhaps hoping for a sympathetic mediator. Some suspect that the UCP government is giving secret bargaining mandates to the universities; it seems more than coincidental that all employers began by demanding faculty take a 3% wage rollback. Also, in August 2019, the UCP blitzkrieged Alberta's post-secondary institutions by implanting their minions into Board of Governor's positions, including appointing new UCP-friendly board chairs, so the government could have a strong influence over board decision-making.

At University of Lethbridge, as is often the case, the financial proposals are a major sticking point. A complication is that each side seems to be giving different numbers as a basis for their proposals. Also, as usual, the university is moaning about the need for "fiscal restraint" in an attempt to drive down wage demands even though UCP Premier Kenney and the financial pundits are loudly bragging about the province's "economic recovery". Another important factor is that the cost of living has risen 4.8% in the past year, which means that any wage increase less than 4.8% is a de facto rollback.



The strike is one by-product of the vicious and ongoing UCP cuts to the post-secondary education budget. University of Lethbridge saw its 2021/22 operating and program support base grant reduced by 5.8 per cent (\$5.7 million). Overall, the province budgeted only \$4.608 billion for all post-secondary institution operations in 2021-22, a 9 per cent cut from \$5.046 billion in 2019-20. The budget also shows that the amount of post-secondary education's financing outside of the province's contribution is expected to increase from 47 per cent in 2019-20 to 52 per cent by 2023-24. A major component of this will be increased student tuition fees, a direct attack on students' right to post-secondary education.

Both in Alberta and across Canada there is a rumbling in the post-secondary sector due to the sharpening of the contradictions caused by decades of cuts to social programs. Aside from what is happening in Alberta, at the moment both Acadia University and Ontario Technical University are on strike, 16,000 professors, counsellors, instructors and librarians at all 24 colleges in Ontario are working to rule, and the University of Manitoba struck for 35 days, settling on December 7, 2021.

With their strike, the ULFA faculty are defending their rights and those of their students, just as the faculty at Concordia Edmonton (CUEFA) did, emphasizing once again that faculty working conditions are students' learning conditions. ULFA, CUEFA, and all their supporters across the province and the country are also standing up for the right to education and are fighting hard for the public education system upon which the future of the whole society, especially the youth, depends. Education is a Right! Increase Funding to Education!

MULTI-UNION SOLIDARITY LETTER CALLING OUT ULETHBRIDGE PRESIDENT MAHON

Dear Dr. Michael Mahon:

We, the undersigned, are the unions and associations representing 32,610 faculty, staff, and students at major post-secondary education institutions across Alberta, as well as non-post-secondary education unions and associations representing 295,000 working Albertans. We are calling upon you, as the President and chair of the Board of Governors, to put forward a fair contract to the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA). We remain united in solidarity with ULFA during their strike.

ULFA members have shown extraordinary commitment to their work throughout this pandemic. They stepped up to support their students through exemplary teaching and actively engaging in valuable academic research for the university. There is no doubt of the value of their work for their students, the University of Lethbridge, and the City of Lethbridge as a whole.

It is surprising to see that in return, the University of Lethbridge is not proposing a fair contract that recognizes their contribution and hard work. The Board of Governors has yet to offer them a fair deal after two years of bargaining. ULFA is asking for increased job security and benefits for its sessional instructors, modest salary increases that are still lower than comparator institutions, increased access to member contact information, and a non-voting position on decision making bodies. However, the Board of Governors has refused to grant these reasonable asks, forcing ULFA to turn towards job action.

During the recent strike by Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association, our organizations stepped up to demonstrate our active support for the striking members. We walked the picket line, we became active on social media, and we wrote a letter to the employer to voice our commitment to their cause. We recognize that solidarity is a verb, and are willing to show our support to ULFA members through direct action, especially during a strike.

Ultimately, it is the current provincial government that remains the root cause of difficult financial bargaining conditions facing unions in the post-secondary education sector. It is no secret that there are not two but three parties at the bargaining table - the employer, the union, and the government. It is the government's reckless policies that have resulted in the loss of over \$700 million of the post-secondary education budget over the past three years. Such a loss directly impacts faculty, staff, and students alike as we struggle under wage cuts, job losses, unfair working conditions, and rocketing tuition prices. We applaud ULFA's decision to fight back in defense of their members against such difficult conditions.

But the Board of Governors is not a bystander. ULFA is also proposing improvements to collegial governance, career opportunities for instructors, and support for your most vulnerable employees. All of these lie in the power of a "Destination University" to negotiate. We are concerned about the intransigence your side has shown on both money and language, and encourage you for the good of your community to come to the table willing to work with ULFA on these important issues.

In the end, ULFA's fight is our fight, and we remain committed to actively supporting them through their struggle. Regardless of the pressure by the government, the Board of Governors at the University of Lethbridge is ultimately the employer, making them responsible for their employees. As such, they make the final decisions regarding their employees' contracts. We ask the Board of Governors to do the right thing. Come back to the table and offer a fair deal to the ULFA members.

Sincerely, Alberta Federation of Labour - coalition of unions representing 170,000 Albertans, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees - representing 95,000 workers in diverse sectors, Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association – representing 99 faculty, Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta - representing 3,780 faculty, Athabasca University Faculty Association - representing 447 faculty and professional staff members, AUPE Local 039 - representing over 500 non-academic staff at SAIT, AUPE Local 052 - representing 5,200 non-academic staff at the University of Calgary, AUPE Local 053 - representing 500 non-academic staff at the University of Lethbridge, AUPE Local 071 - representing 2,800 non-academic staff at 11 Post Secondaries and 2 School Boards, Bow Valley College Faculty Association - represents 500 faculty, Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association - representing 82 faculty, CUPE Alberta - representing 40,000 members throughout Alberta, CUPE 3911 - representing 370 part time instructors at Athabasca University, Grant MacEwan University Faculty Association - representing 950 faculty, Lethbridge College Faculty Association - representing 328 faculty, Medicine Hat College Faculty Association - representing 165 faculty, Mount Royal Faculty Association - representing 800 faculty, Mount Royal University Staff Association



- representing 800 staff, NAIT Academic Staff Association - representing 900 staff, Non-Academic Staff Association - representing 5,000 staff at the University of Alberta, NorQuest College Faculty Association - representing 400 faculty, Portage College Faculty Association - representing 113 faculty, SAIT Academic Faculty Association - representing over 1,200 faculty, The University of Calgary Faculty Association - representing 2,400 faculty, The University of Calgary Faculty of Arts Students' Association - representing over 8,000 students

WHAT IS AHEAD FOR MRFA?

On February 15, Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) and Mount Royal University, which have been bargaining for a new contract, announced that they have reached an agreement in principle. This follows a period of mediation that ended with the mediator issuing a report recommending terms of settlement. Details of the agreement remain confidential as it will now be submitted to the faculty association membership for ratification. The faculty association will provide further comment once that has been done.

MRFA represents the faculty at Mount Royal University in Calgary and is just one of the many Alberta faculty associations that has been locked in negotiations with their employer for some time over a new collective bargaining agreement. The struggle is significant as Mount Royal is an important post-secondary institution and plays no small role in

terms of Alberta's education system; it is Calgary's second-largest university with almost 10,000 students.

MRFA represents nearly 800 full-time and contract faculty including professors, clinical instructors, counselors and librarians. They have now been without a contract for 22 months. The formal mediation process, mandated under the province's labour code, began with negotiations in a deadlock. Outstanding issues include no wage increases since 2017, increasing workloads and the uncertainty surrounding contract instructors (sessionals), who generally lack job security and benefits yet do a large percentage of the teaching.

If MRFA and Mount Royal University do not come to an agreement, a two-week cooling-off period will begin. When that ends, both the university and the association will hold votes to decide if they will hold a lockout or strike. So far in January, the Concordia University (Edmonton) faculty have gone on strike and then settled a new contract and the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association has just gone on

strike. It would be no surprise for MRFA to also vote to strike, with their university employer continuing to stall meaningful collective bargaining and trying to pressure their employees into granting damaging concessions.



THE BARGAINING SITUATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA (AASUA UPDATE)

Like many of Alberta's universities, colleges and technical institutions, University of Alberta has for some time been locked in negotiations trying to hammer out a new contract. Also like many of Alberta's PSEs, the employer seems to be seriously dragging their feet in terms of sincerely trying to resolve matters in a timely way. The 4,000-member Academic Association of the University of Alberta (AASUA) has issued the following update:

“Contract negotiations between the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA) and the University of Alberta went to mediation on February 18, 2022. (Note: Next scheduled day of mediation is February 25.) If mediation fails, AASUA can apply to the Alberta Labour Relations board for a supervised strike vote of its members following a 14-day cooling off period.

“If a settlement is not reached, AASUA could join what is already an unprecedented wave of labour unrest among Alberta's academic staff. In January, Concordia University was home to the first ever faculty strike in Alberta's history, and the University of Lethbridge faculty are now headed for a strike this Thursday. The faculty and administration at Mount Royal University are in mediation, and contract negotiations at Athabasca University could also face a breakdown.

“Kenney gave himself the power to interfere with university contract negotiations with Bill 29. We're concerned that his government is now pressuring universities to deny fair cost-of-living increases to educators and researchers, like our members.” said AASUA President, Tim Mills. “No educator or researcher wants to go on strike, but we're worried that Kenney will force our hand and disrupt our ability to deliver the quality education our students deserve.”

“Cost of living has soared. Alberta's universities can't compete for world class talent if pay doesn't keep pace,” said Mills. “Investing in innovative research and a world class education for this generation should be a cornerstone of Alberta's economic recovery. Quality education should not be on the chopping block.



SHOULD UNIONS SAY NO TO CLOSED-DOOR NEGOTIATIONS?

By RHEA ROLLMAN, JUNE 28, 2018, PARTIALLY REPRINTED FROM BRIARPATCH

Unions are throwing open the doors to collective bargaining meetings, hoping to win stronger contracts and more engaged members.

Two teams negotiating behind closed doors. Media blackouts. Gruelling late-night sessions. The culture of secrecy around collective bargaining is well anchored in the public imagination.

But a growing number of unions in both Canada and the United States are bucking the historical trend, throwing the doors open to their full membership in a controversial approach known as open bargaining (or open negotiating). While some union activists cite pitfalls to opening up negotiations, resistance to the old-fashioned, closed-door process is growing in popularity. More unions are taking a chance on the new model, as they see the potential wins of opening negotiation – not just in collective agreements, but in building member engagement during a time of withering unionization rates.

Historically, the North American norm is that unions elect a small bargaining team (often only three or four members), which meets behind closed doors with their employer’s bargaining team over the course of several weeks or months. If the two sides reach an agreement, that tentative document is presented to the union’s membership to vote on, and this will typically be the first time most members set eyes on it. Open bargaining is defined differently by the various unions that use it, but the goal is to achieve greater transparency around the hitherto secretive bargaining process. In practice, this ranges from openly publishing the union’s negotiating proposals to allowing the entire union membership to sit in on negotiations.

The stakes are high. According to Statistics Canada, unionization rates have fallen from 37.6 per cent in 1981 to 28.8 per cent in 2014. While the Canadian workforce is diversifying, union leaderships remain starkly white, cis, settler, and male, and union memberships are aging rapidly (between 1981 and 2012, unionization rates for the 25-to-44 age group dropped by over 11 percentage points). In the U.S., organized labour has been under legislative attack by state governments and courts through “right-to-work” laws designed to undermine unions’ resource and membership bases. In Canada, union solidarity has also been given short shrift – Canada’s largest private-sector union, Unifor, quit the Canadian labour Congress in January 2018 and has commenced raiding a U.S.-headquartered international union, UNITE HERE, for members.

Given the grim backdrop, how important is the negotiation process, and how meaningful are the efforts of some unions to revolutionize that process? Labour scholars and activists have never agreed on what formulae are most likely to strengthen workers’ movements. But for many of the activists involved, opening up negotiations has had exciting results, ranging from better collective agreements to stronger relationships with the local community. Perhaps most importantly, experiencing change first-hand has been an empowering process for these activists, and one that’s strengthened their resolve to be creative and innovative in the struggle to improve workers’ rights...

CUPE 2903 Toronto: “The number one reason we have strong collective agreements”

Megan Hillman is a member of CUPE 3903, the union representing teaching assistants and contract faculty at York University in Toronto. She served on the bargaining team in 2011. While the union has been on strike four times since she became a member, she credits its adherence to the open negotiation model – all negotiating meetings are open to any member to attend – as the reason it has one of the strongest contracts (in terms of wages and benefits) in the sector.

“It means that we have a membership who has ownership over our proposals, and who are invested in things that they may not otherwise have a personal connection to,” she explains.

She cites the union’s recent demands for breastfeeding facilities on campus. When members heard first-hand from other members affected by the issue, this turned a largely ignored equity issue into a focal point for rallies, petitions, and even a “lactation-in” protest and march to the president’s office.

Receiving personalized bargaining updates from colleagues who were present strengthens the relationship between the bargaining team and the membership, she feels. “One of the things about [closed] bargaining itself is [the bargaining team] can get very closed off from the membership, and really conservatized by the process, where all of a sudden that 0.5 per cent wage increase does sound reasonable,” she says.

In addition to strengthening the union’s ability to identify hidden concessions in the employer’s proposals, Hillman feels having a diverse membership in the room renders equity issues like race and gender more prominent and personal; the process keeps them on the agenda more effectively than closed-door negotiating, especially while union leaderships are still predominantly white and male.

“When you are trying to bargain improvements to equity language, it can be very important and very helpful to have a room full of equity seekers,” she says, “so that the employer has to face people, and say ‘No, we don’t think you, as a Black woman, should have more right to a position than the white man.’ Or to say ‘No, we don’t need to make the university more accessible,’ to a room of people with mobility devices, who couldn’t get into the room. When the employer has to face the people that they are saying no to, it gets harder to say no.”

(Note: There is more. To read the complete article, go to <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/should-unions-say-no-to-closed-door-negotiations>)



International Women's Day 2022: Fighting For Our Rights – Fighting For Our Future

As we approach the second anniversary of the pandemic, it is urgently apparent that working people need to put forward our own solutions and develop our own leadership. W4RE has been focused on analyzing the current conditions of “care work”—from childcare to seniors care—and imagining what that work would look like if it were actually structured to meet human need, not corporate profit.

Many other women in Alberta are also coming together to identify problems and solutions on a range of issues—from protecting public education and sensitive environments from neoliberal attacks, to asserting Indigenous rights and reordering colonial relations. Grassroots groups have also filled the void of leadership and action left by governments that have abandoned their responsibility to care for people struggling under both the coronavirus and opioid crises.

Now is an important moment to gather our collective strength as we are increasingly told to stop worrying about COVID and get back to “normal”—a future of accelerated cuts to public services, privatization and attacks on workers’ rights and working conditions.

Internationally, IWD is also an occasion to salute the people’s forces around the world who led inspiring fights over the past year from Chile to Cuba, from India to Wet’suwet’en territory, and many more. It is also an important opportunity to take a firm stance for peace, in opposition to the ever louder call to war, especially the current US/NATO-led escalation in Ukraine. When the powerful panic about losing grip on their so-called democracy, war and destruction become their only solution.

WHO DECIDES? WE DECIDE!

About IWD

One hundred and twelve years ago, International Women’s Day was established to highlight the fight of women for the right to vote and for their rights as workers. In the years leading to the outbreak of World War I, IWD also became a significant day to oppose war and call for peace. Today IWD is celebrated all over the world.

[Click here to learn more about IWD.](#)

About W4RE

Women for Rights and Empowerment has been educating, organizing and mobilizing in Edmonton in the fighting spirit of IWD since 2010. We provide a space for women and all who are fighting to affirm their rights and speak out in their own name—to come together to analyze our society, share our experiences and chart a new course for our future.

[Click here to learn more about W4RE.](#)

International Women's Day, Edmonton 2022

FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS! FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE!

Please share widely

Join Women for Rights and Empowerment:

Rally and March - Sunday, March 6 – 1pm

100 pm starting from Corbett Hall (112 Street and 82 Avenue)

March on Whyte Ave. [Click here for Facebook event](#)

Bring banners, placards, megaphones and march together on Whyte Avenue.

Whose streets? Our streets! Who decides? We decide!

The women united will never be defeated!

Web forum on Sunday, March 13 - 2pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3663238420> Meeting ID: 366 323 8420

Keep the momentum going to build a people's agenda to achieve our rights and empowerment! Hear what various grassroots groups have planned and build the connections between the "fighting women" from a wide variety of struggles and movements.

Women and all humans welcome!



International Women's Day Celebration, Calgary

March 8 @ 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Join us to celebrate International Women's Day virtually! Join from home or visit us to watch together at the Women's Centre! We will celebrate the day with poetry, art, trivia online mix and mingle and more! This event is free and open to anyone. Register to secure your spot!



STATEMENT RE OTTAWA BLOCKADE BY CUPE 905, FEBRUARY 4

As a union representing a diverse, multi-cultural workforce, CUPE 905 joins CUPE Ontario in condemning the hateful actions witnessed at this past week's Freedom Convoy.

While we understand not everyone participating in the Convoy or exercising their right to protest had ill-intent, we want to be clear in recognizing and denouncing the acts of white supremacy that were in full display, including images of confederate flags, swastikas, and other hate symbols.

Participants harassed staff and assaulted homeless folks at a shelter. They've threatened the physical safety of workers, particularly targeting low-wage retail and healthcare workers. There are accounts of participants throwing rocks at ambulances and anti-Asian slurs at paramedic workers as they attempt to provide aid to those in need. Participants are intimidating local residents while spewing homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic and other violent rhetoric. This is not surprising considering the Convoy's organizers have a long history of extremist actions and beliefs.

There's no doubt our lives have become increasingly difficult during this pandemic as politicians continue failing to stop the spread of COVID and the spread of hate and division. CUPE 905 stands with communities that are the targets of hatred. The role of unions is to bring workers together in a common fight for better and safer working conditions. The things we have witnessed stemming from the Convoy stand in opposition to our united struggles for justice in the workplace and all society. Love and solidarity, CUPE 905.



LACK OF ACTION SHOWS RACIST INTENT OF BILL 1

(SHARI NARINE, FEBRUARY 3, REPRINTED FROM WINDSPEAKER)

As truckers restrict traffic at the Canada/U.S. border at Coutts, Alta. (now into its sixth day), the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation is calling racism. "If it was a

First Nation standoff or blockade, I guarantee you the RCMP would have been in there in the first hour," said ACFN Chief Allan Adam.

The blockade stopped traffic at the Alberta/Montana border starting Saturday. One lane each way was opened on Wednesday, although truckers remained on the road. Thursday, a second truckers' blockade went up near Milk River also restricting traffic at the Coutts border.

Truckers were initially protesting the federal vaccine mandate for truck drivers to cross the border back into Canada. The U.S. has a similar mandate to cross over into that nation. Now, the protest has grown to include provincial restrictions and mandates around controlling the spread of the coronavirus.

The lack of enforcement of Alberta's *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act* is the only proof Adam says he needs that the act is racist. "Here we got the truckers protesting on critical infrastructure, trucks in Alberta going into Montana. There's a supply line there of trucks and oil and everything, and that's a critical major infrastructure. Why was there no intervention by the law enforcement in that regard?" said Adam.

The Critical Infrastructure Defence Act (or Bill 1) came into force on June 17, 2020. It was introduced by the UCP government a few months earlier in response to blockades over a pipeline dispute in northern British Columbia that had shut down Canada's rail network. That dispute was being led by Indigenous people and environmentalists.

"Bill 1 is geared only towards First Nations when it comes to major development on traditional territories of First Nations people when they advocate for a clean environment or clean drinking water or for economic development. When things don't go their way, there's a dispute and when a dispute comes up, tensions grow between two organizations. And that's why they put this Bill 1 up, to alleviate First Nations from protesting on traditional lands," said Adam.

The Critical Infrastructure Defence Act protects essential infrastructure from trespassers, damage or interference of any kind. Anyone found guilty of an offence under that act is subject to a fine between \$1,000 to \$10,000, jail time of up to six months, or both. A second offence at the same location carries a maximum fine of \$25,000 and a possible six-month jail term. If the offender is a corporation, they can be fined between \$10,000 and \$200,000. The fine is implemented each day of the offence.

On Feb. 2, the ACFN tweeted a statement condemning the lack of enforcement of the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*. Adam says they have received favourable response from other First Nations, including Treaty 8, and “they’re all thankful of the fact we sent out the letter in that regard.”

In a commentary published Feb. 2 at lawnow.org, author Jessica Steingard, a staff lawyer at the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, states, “We are seeing blockades of the highway in Coutts, Alberta, near a major Canada-USA border crossing. . . Police have said safety is their first concern, and they do not want violence to erupt. We do not know whether any arrests or charges have been laid under this Act since it first came into force. So, the question is how and when will this law be enforced?” The ACFN’s statement says, “It is important to recognize the disparity between how Indigenous and non-Indigenous protests are approached by our government. It is shocking to see this blatant disparity as we watch the complete government inaction to address the blockade at Coutts.”

Fraser Logan, spokesperson for Alberta RCMP, said he is aware of the ACFN’s statement. “It’s nothing we would compare as Indigenous and non-Indigenous. We look at it as simply what is occurring right now,” said Logan. “Our disposition is always different. It would be a disservice to make any comparison until this incident has been concluded.”

Logan did not know why charges had not been laid under the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*. “Everything is a slow escalation. It’s a slow movement from peaceful, try to negotiate, to moving up to the next step. You never start at 10 if you’re on a scale of one to 10. So, I can’t speak for the operational decisions that are being made . . . All of those acts from traffic safety all the way up to (the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*), those are all in consideration,” said Logan.

A Feb. 3 joint statement from the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police, says, “As these events have unfolded, all of Alberta’s police services and Alberta Sheriffs, throughout the province, have worked together to ensure public safety has been balanced with the right to protest legally and peacefully.”

As far as Adam is concerned, the fact that the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act* has not been implemented “actually, it’s a blessing. Now we’re calling on the premier, Jason Kenney, and his caucus to do away with Bill 1 because they’ve been caught red-handed that this is a racist bill.”

In an email statement to Windspeaker.com, Adrienne South, spokesperson for Alberta Indigenous Relations, said, “Alberta’s government is committed to true and meaningful reconciliation. We recognize there is frustration regarding the recent blockades. Indigenous Relations and government as a whole is continually working against racism to ensure people are treated fairly and improving outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, communities and organizations.”

South noted operational enforcement decisions for the



blockade were the responsibility of police services while enforcement at the border crossing was a federal responsibility. “The government does not and never has directed police actions or enforcement,” said South.

RANDOM THOUGHTS: It appears as if governments have decided that they are going for herd immunity and the sooner they infect everyone, the cheaper it will be. It is a very irresponsible gamble, given it is a fact that the virus will continue to mutate as it spreads and the appearance of more severe and lethal strains is possible. Similar to the way vaccines were presented as the panacea so as to get everyone to give up their own initiatives and demands for proper working conditions in places like schools and hospitals, so too the Omicron variant is being presented as a panacea that will produce herd immunity to justify abandoning even basic public health measures which were followed previously. One has to ask: why has public health been reduced to gambling on an outcome that those who make the decisions may want, but that may not pan out?



CUPE 3911 MONTHLY GRIEVANCE SUMMARY REPORT

BY ERNIE JACOBSON, 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 FEBRUARY 2022

CUPE 3911 is working on several individual, group and policy grievances on behalf of members. 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-chairs.
- Employer dismissed grievance re termination at step one. This grievance is continued to step two.
- Supported member facing employer sanctions due to charge laid by students. Employer decision to uphold the sanctions is being grieved at step two.
- Grievance filed at step 1 re harassment faced by the member.
- Discussions with member re possibly filing a harassment grievance based upon communications from a supervisor.
- Discussions taking place re a technological change in one centre with a change to electronic marking. This may lead to a group grievance.
- Arbitrator selected for a grievance that has now moved to arbitration.

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

Summary comments: AU HR is taking a very aggressive stance in moving to disciplinary action in certain cases, and CUPE finds that AU is not respecting article 23.02 of the Collective Agreement, which is: “The employer accepts the principle of progressive discipline.”

Respectfully submitted, Ernie Jacobson, CUPE3911 Grievance Officer
February 18, 2022



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting, Saturday, March 26, 2022.

International Women's Day will be celebrated in Edmonton on Sunday March 6. Gather at Corbett Hall, 112 St and 82 Ave on U of Alberta campus, at 100 PM. March on Whyte Avenue.

May Day, Sunday, 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.