

OUTSIDER: THE VOICE OF THE TUTOR

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CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees

Attend the CUPE 3911 General Membership Meeting

Our next general meeting, open to all of our members, will be Saturday, April 29. Additional information will be sent to all members as needed. Stay tuned.

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UPDATE: CUPE 3911 BARGAINING REPORT

By Glynnis Lieb, Co-Chair and Lead Negotiator

Regarding Bargaining. We met twice with the employer so far in March and will be meeting again the week of March 20. We have entered into negotiations on the last outstanding proposal, which is wages. We are all aware of the UCP government's mandated 2.75% increase so there will be no surprises here. But we are hoping for some language changes that will make payments more equitable across our members.

Negotiations continue regarding academic freedom. At present our contract only stipulates that we have the right to "academic opinion". In addition, there are a few other unresolved items.

As previously reported, the employer has a net zero mandate imposed by the UCP government. However, we are excited about many of the advances we've made through language changes. As well, we have agreements to work together with the employer on achieving equitable representation for our clinical instructors, as well as more effective labour management meetings that will continue through bargaining, beginning with this new collective agreement.

We are hoping to conclude bargaining by April.

Glynnis Lieb, co-Chair and Lead Negotiator



WHO SHOT THE SHERIFF? WHY THE PRESIDENT OF ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY HAS GONE AND WHY IT MATTERS (BY DR. TONY BATES, EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT, FEBRUARY 2, 2023)

Well, the gunfight at the Athabasca University corral is finally over. It was announced a couple of days ago that the university and the government have finally reached agreement on the location of AU staff. A further 30 staff will move to live in or near the town of Athabasca (down from the original government demand of 500).

While a temporary peace may now reign, the cost of the conflict has been high. As well as several distinguished Board members, the President, Peter Scott, has also been replaced. Scott was fired by phone, just three weeks after his wife died of cancer. The new President is the former Dean of Health Disciplines, and a friend of the government.

CONSEQUENCES



1. Loss of direction

In 2015, AU was facing insolvency. The government brought in an expert, Ken Coates, to do a third-party review. As a result, the NDP government in 2018 invested almost \$5 million in the university to help it get back on track. More importantly, the University in 2022 appointed Peter Scott as its new President. He was formerly at the UK Open University.

In particular, he was guiding the implementation of a new vision for Athabasca University, to make it the most digitally advanced university in the world. This included a major contract with Amazon Cloud Computing. Also importantly, the staff and students at AU were getting behind

this vision. There was a feeling that after many years, the university was at last moving in the right direction, for its students, its international reputation, and of course for the province.

However, part of that vision was for a world class digital workforce, both administratively and academically, that could be drawn from and work from anywhere in the world. This alarmed though the merchants of the small town of Athabasca, in the boondocks of Northern Alberta. They put pressure on the Alberta government to bring all staff to live in the small town. The government sided with the merchants and demanded that 500 staff should move to live in the town. When the Board and the President did not bow to the government's wishes, they were fired. With them has gone the ability to implement the vision required to re-establish AU as a world leader in digital and distance education.

2. Impact on future recruitment

The university lost one of the best people possible to run the university. It has also lost those members of the Board who had knowledge and experience of open, online and digital learning, replacing them with government hacks. There was no formal search for Scott's replacement, which smacks of a backroom deal. Several other senior members of the university administration have also resigned. I am sure there will always be ambitious people who will still come and work for AU, but will they get the quality in future, especially at the top level? What person of integrity would want to work for AU knowing the government will always interfere if its agenda is not followed?

3. Government interference in the running of a university

So much for the independence of Canadian universities. One expert in Canadian higher education, Professor Glen Jones of the University of Toronto, called the government's actions 'the most egregious political interference in a public university in Canada in

more than 100 years.' That was before Scott was fired.

4. No respect for open universities

Even the current provincial government would not behave in the same way to, say, the University of Alberta. Danielle Smith's government is truly awful in many ways. It has failed to understand or appreciate the uniqueness and value of Athabasca University, which serves students from far beyond the borders of Alberta. It placed the financial welfare of a few merchants in the town of Athabasca over the needs of 25,000 students –

and what for? 30 more people in town. It's a sick joke.

5. Impact on morale

My main concern though is for the future of AU now and its students. Morale will be terrible and none of the serious issues it has been facing will now be addressed, at least in the foreseeable future.

I can only thank God we have six rugged mountain ranges between Vancouver and the province of Alberta. It is time for the good citizens of Alberta to rise up and run these hoodlums outta town.

ALBERTA LABOUR CODE IS ANTI-WORKER AND ANTI-UNION TO THE CORE

BY DR. DOUGAL MACDONALD, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

(Editor's note: Recently, the president of an Alberta union of educational workers made the astounding claim in an email to members that the Alberta Labour Board is "an independent and impartial tribunal responsible for the application and interpretation of Alberta's labour laws". But what is the real story about the provincial labour laws and the apparatus created to enforce them? The following is part one of a two-part analysis of the Alberta Labour Code, the body of legislation which sets forth the laws that the ALRB enforces.)

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE WORKERS

The economic system is currently in crisis. The ruling circles are trying to shift the burden of the crisis onto the workers by forcing down their wages, increasing their workload, and laying them off. Workers in the public sector, such as health care and education workers, are particularly hard hit because the monopolies want to privatize everything for their own gain. The workers are resisting and fighting back against measures to deprive them of their livelihood.

Industrial "peace" is in the interests of the monopolies, not the workers. The monopolies want a stable labour situation to maximize their profits. That is why they say the workers' demands are "unreasonable" and there should be co-operation between workers and employers. Industrial "peace" means workers lose their rights to organize, to strike, and to picket. It means they stop fighting for their just demands and passively accept whatever is done to them based on vague promises that someday things will "get better".

FORCE AND DECEPTION

There is increasing use of force against the workers. There are attacks on workers' rights to organize and strike, attacks by police and scabs on strikers, court injunctions, fines, and jailings. One recent example is the current CESSCO lockout. Another is the 2005 Lakeside Packers strike. Two more examples are the Gainers' Strike of 1986 and the Finning Strike of 1996. These attacks show even the workers' "legal rights" are taken away whenever they are used effectively against the employer.

There is also increasing use of deception against workers. The main aim of deception is to turn unions into appendages of the state through labour legislation. (This is the same type of legislation used in Mussolini's Italy in the 1920's to set up the corporate state.) The inefficient procedure of going through

the courts is eliminated and replaced by the efficient procedure of going directly from the Minister to the workers. This is done under the hoax that the government is neutral and serves neither the monopolies nor the workers but works in the interests of an abstraction called “the people”.

The strategy of turning unions into appendages of the state was initiated in Canada in this era in 1974 when the BC Labour Code (Bill 11) was passed by the BC NDP government. Subsequent Labour Codes in Canada have been modelled on BC's. In fact, sections of the Alberta Labour Relations Code are taken word for word from the BC Code. It is no coincidence that the one of the past chairmen of the Alberta Labour Board formerly worked for the BC Ministry of Labour.

THE ALBERTA LABOUR RELATIONS CODE

Working people in Alberta fought for and won legal recognition of their unions and the right to bargain collectively in 1943. Since that time their legal rights have been steadily eroded through anti-worker labour legislation. The 2000 Labour Relations Code is the most recent and most blatant example of this retrograde trend.

The Code is openly anti-worker and anti-union. Rights of workers can be removed at will. For example, under the clauses of the Code, the Labour Relations Board can mandate compulsory arbitration of disputes, deny the right of certain sections of workers to organize, ban strikes, force mediation and arbitration on workers, legalize strikebreaking, and legislate workers back to work.

Other clauses in the Code are more deceptive. They purport to favour neither workers nor employers but are in essence as anti-worker as the rest of the Code. One method of deception is promoting the interests of employers under the hoax of legislating “equality” between employers and employees. Another method of deception is calling for “fairness” in words when it is well-known that unfairness to the workers is practiced in deeds.

EXCLUDING SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Code prevents important sections of the working class from organizing. The definition of an employee [Definitions, Part 4] excludes workers employed on a farm or ranch or in any other primary agricultural operation, for example, in hunting or trapping. Domestic servants are also excluded as employees.

Agricultural and domestic workers are among Alberta's lowest paid and most exploited workers. Further, large numbers of them are immigrants or aboriginal people. These workers very much require protection of their rights, yet under the Code they cannot organize themselves into trade unions. This leaves them open to exploitation both as workers and as national minorities.

UNLIMITED POWERS OF THE LABOUR BOARD

The Code perpetuates the existence of an all-powerful Labour Relations Board. All disputes are removed from the public courts and decided by the Board which is composed of persons hand-picked by the government. In fact, the Board has MORE power than the courts. The Board is not bound by the law of evidence and its decisions are final and binding with no appeals.

The aim of the Board is to streamline and speed up settlement of labour disputes to try to ensure “industrial peace”. It has been given sweeping, dictatorial powers. The Board can conduct inquiries and hearings, issue orders and directives, make rules, determine which unions shall represent which workers, decide when a collective agreement is in effect, demand the production of records and

documents, require statements to be furnished, enter and inspect union premises, question employees, restrict picketing, levy fines, decertify unions, etc. The Board is almost like a legislative body which makes up its own rules as it goes along.

It is pretended the 40-member Board is neutral and “fair” to the workers because it includes trade unionists. However, there are only 17 actual labour representatives, while there are 23 who represent employers, including the Chair and vice-Chair. On any 3-person arbitration committee, the 3rd member is selected by the government, which is invariably on the side of the employer. In any case, the union representatives on the Board have no independence and can only apply the statutes of the Code. They have no power to make or amend any of the legislation to make it favourable to the workers.

FALSE EQUALITY OF EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER

The Code presents a false impression by implying workers and employers are equal in front of the law and have equal “freedom” to organize in order to bargain collectively to achieve their aims. But the “equality” proclaimed is false equality and exists only on paper.

Employers organize and form associations due to the profit motive. Unlike trade unions, they do not need government permission to organize because they have the law of private property on their side. Employers own everything while workers possess only their potential labour power which they must sell or starve. It is false to talk of employer rights at all because the entire system is geared to guarantee their rights.

The workers organize to eliminate competition in their ranks and to fight for better wages and working conditions. Labour has to fight constantly just for the right to live and work under decent conditions because there are no laws which defend workers or forbid their exploitation. Workers must also fight to maintain any “rights” they win, which are constantly eroded. Employers are protected by the system and do not have to organize to defend themselves at all.

Many of the workers’ struggles are economic, with one important struggle being for higher wages. An increase in wages causes a decrease in profits. Since employers fight to increase their profits the aims of workers and employers are opposite. Increased profits and higher wages are contradictory aims. There can never be equality between them so there can never be equality between workers and employers.



FAIRNESS IN WORDS, UNFAIRNESS IN DEEDS

The Code calls for fairness in words while in practice the employer can do whatever he pleases. For example, the Code says no employer can discriminate against an employee because the person is a member or officer of a trade union or engaged in a strike. However, an employer will always have another reason for discriminating against a worker he wishes to punish for trade union activities.

Experience shows the employer works hardest to get rid of militant workers before a collective agreement has been reached, e.g., during initial organizing or while the collective agreement is being negotiated. The employer can suspend, transfer, or lay off any employee with no hassles simply by saying he is cutting back production. Meanwhile, the employee must go through a complex process to try to get reinstated.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MAIN GOAL OF ALBERTA'S NEW SCIENCE CURRICULUM SHOULD BE SCIENTIFIC LITERACY

BY DR. DOUGAL MACDONALD

(Editor's note: Alberta's UCP government is slowly trying to implement its much-criticized "new" school curriculum. This coming fall, assuming it is re-elected in the May 29 election, the UCP is planning to put its new elementary science curriculum into the schools. The science curriculum was last renewed in 1996, almost 30 years ago. In 2022, CUPE 3911's Communications Director Dr. Dougal MacDonald, a science education specialist, put forward a proposal that the new science curriculum be based on scientific literacy. The text of his proposal follows.)

Alberta's ruling 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, 2022, the Alberta Teachers' Association called for the UCP to stop work on the draft until a rewrite and review can take place.

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 unsavory 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, willingness to change ideas based 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 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.



LAVAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS ON STRIKE

CAUT, FEBRUARY 21, 2023

(Ottawa – February 21, 2023) More than 1,300 members of the Syndicat des professeurs et professeures de l'Université Laval (SPUL) have taken to the picket lines this week in their campaign for a fair contract.

Key issues are workload and salary as well as protection for academic freedom, collegial governance, and complement. Over the past twenty years, the number of full-time faculty has been reduced by 11% while student enrolment has increased by 26%.

The union said it has made ongoing attempts to resolve the issues at the table.

"We even pushed back by a month the execution of our strike mandate. ... Unfortunately, the employer has not taken advantage of these opportunities," the SPUL said in a statement released last week.

Over 750 SPUL members participated in a rally Monday to kick off the association's job action. Members had voted 96% in favour of strike action in January.)

HUNDREDS OF UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL PROFESSORS WALK OUT ON 1ST DAY OF STRIKE (Rachel Watts, CBC, March 13)

Hundreds of professors went on strike Monday morning, raising signs and marching with their families around the Université Laval campus in Quebec City.

A total of 1,300 professors are asking for a reduction in workload, more protection for vulnerable employees, better pay and 100 additional positions.

The strike comes a week after the professors voted 94.5 per cent in favour of an unlimited general strike. On Sunday, Université Laval management presented an offer to the union, the Syndicat des professeurs et professeures de l'Université Laval, to end the labour dispute. The union is expected to come back with a counter-offer.

Louis-Philippe Lampron, president of the union, says the professors are focused on decreasing their workload and increasing salary to be in line with other universities, particularly those in the so-called U15, the top 15 research universities in Canada.

"At Université Laval we are kind of disadvantaged for the last many years, when you compare our salaries to the average ... salaries offered to professors working in the U15," said Lampron. "We are doing pretty well in the kind of research, we are sixth in this group, but when you're talking about salaries we are not even in the chart, we're so far behind."

He says the union wants teachers to be at the centre of decision-making at the university and to offer protection to "vulnerable colleagues" — such as those who do not have tenure.

UNIVERSITY SAYS IT CAN'T PAY

But Université Laval management estimates that the union's demands would cost \$70 million for next year — an amount it says is beyond its means. The university says the Ministry of Higher Education says tuition fee increases must not exceed three per cent this year and that last year they went up 2.64 per cent.

"We had many discussions last week regarding the surplus that the union was saying that we had, and of course this was wrong," said André Darveau, vice-rector for human resources and finances. He said at a news conference Monday that the union's wage demands have not changed since last September and that they would represent an increase of about 20 per cent for the first year.

PROFESSORS 'OVERLOADED WITH WORK'

But Lampron says that the institution could meet their demands because it recorded surpluses totalling \$257 million between 2018 and 2022.

"It's kind of disappointing because ... since the beginning of our negotiation, they are trying to reduce what we are asking to the simple monetary question, to the simple salary question," said Lampron.

He said working conditions are also top of mind. "They are overloaded with work ... Because the directions and the decisions taken at the Université Laval since the last decade are not putting professors at the centre of the process."

Chantelle Sephton, an associate professor in the department of psychiatry and neuroscience, was one of the professors who joined the picket line on Monday outside the university.

She says professors' salaries need to be "brought up to national standards," especially considering how their workload has increased. "The pandemic's been a little bit special but I have seen the class size numbers go up and then that means there's more exams to mark, more reports to mark," said Sephton.

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' FAMILIES, INCOME

The university says the strike is affecting about 40 per cent of classes and if the labour dispute continues, the semester could be extended. Cathia Bergeron, vice-rector of academic and student affairs, says the best they can do right now is to keep the student body informed.

"We are focused on continuity so once the strike will be over we want to be ready Day 1 to continue offering classes, exam retakes, so that they can finish their session, their current term as quickly as possible," said Bergeron.

Sinan Kouadio Ibrahime, an international student doing his master's in epidemiology, says he is still anxious about what this means for the completion of his studies.



"We are not sure if the session will be saved," said Ibrahime. "If we have to pay \$10,000 for a semester and the session is not validated... it's not that easy for us."

He says he is unsure if he will be able to return home this summer because of the semester delay. "I return every year but I have to stay this year to finish the semester," said Ibrahime. "I don't know what will happen. We are going into the unknown and hoping they come to an agreement so that this can come to an end."

UNIVERSITY OF PEI FACULTY ASSOCIATION ON STRIKE (BY CAUT)

(Ottawa – March 20, 2023) After months of negotiations, academic staff represented by the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association (UPEIFA) have taken to the picket lines to achieve a fair contract. The union is seeking to secure mental health benefits for members, increase the number of full-time faculty, and improve salaries.

"For the last ten months, we've encountered an employer who has taken little interest in addressing [members'] concerns and a provincial government who has been all too willing to intervene to the benefit of our employer," said Michael Arfken, president and chief grievance officer of the UPEI Faculty Association in a statement.

The association says the employer's latest offer failed to address the key issues affecting academic staff's working conditions and students' learning conditions.

In the last decade, enrolments at UPEI have increased 26% and tuition has risen 30%, but the number of full-time faculty has fallen by 1% according to an update released on March 6. This has led to increased class sizes and a greater number of courses taught by contract academic staff who have few benefits and supports.



The UPEIFA represents over 400 faculty members, librarians, sessional instructors, clinical nursing instructors and clinical veterinary professionals.

UNIFOR RAISES ISSUE OF ONTARIO TEACHERS' PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT IN WINDSOR SALT (BY UNIFOR)

(Background: Where workers' pension funds are invested is a major concern for workers at this time. The OTPP (Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan) investment in SCIH (Stone Canada Industry Holdings), which controls Windsor Salt where workers are now on strike, and its connection with the board of SCIH is one such concern for all teachers. It should be sorted out in a manner that favours all teachers, education workers, their unions and all Canadians. The workers should decide whose values and which "mission critical global industries" they want to "support", e.g., through the judicious investments of their pension funds.)

Unifor President Lana Payne issued the following letter via e-mail to the Board of the OTTP on March 14, 2023. The letter has been published on Unifor's website for public information.)

"Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan board, Jo Taylor (President and CEO), Ziad Hindo (CIO) and executive team

SUBJECT: WINDSOR SALT LABOUR DISPUTE

Greetings,

Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union representing 315,000 workers nationwide in every major sector of the economy, including mining. As you may be well aware, 250 members of Unifor Locals 240 and 1959 working at the Windsor salt mine and evaporation plant have been on strike for four (4) weeks now. Stone Canyon Industries Holdings (SCIH), which acquired Windsor Salt in 2021, has refused to return to the bargaining table and discuss any financial matters unless its workers accept onerous concessions, including the contracting out of union work.

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) is in fact one of Stone Canyon's key investors and its significant purchases of SCIH equity offerings over the past few years have allowed the industrial holding company to expand its footprint into the salt industry where its subsidiary, SCI Salt, currently controls the lion's share of the market outside of China. Ashfaq Qadri, a managing director at OTPP, sits on Stone Canyon's board of managers.

Unifor shares with OTPP the philosophy that responsible pension investing must include stewardship – meaning active engagement and oversight over portfolio companies to promote positive change. As one of the world's biggest institutional investors safeguarding the pensions of tens of thousands of unionized workers, OTPP has the power to ensure that the companies it invests in behave responsibly, particularly when it comes to respecting labour rights.

To put it bluntly, the behaviour of SCIH in this labour dispute has not lived up to the OTPP's responsible investing principles and violates environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards, as clearly laid out in the OTPP Responsible Investing Guidelines. As you know well, one of the primary determinants of the social factor is a company's ability to build a positive relationship with its employees, which does not begin with a refusal to bargain unless workers accept painful concessions.



Unifor therefore calls on the OTPP to uphold its responsible investing and stewardship principles by using its influence to demand that SCIH return to the bargaining table without pre-conditions. No investment can be responsible unless workers' rights and the collective bargaining process are given their due respect.

I trust that you understand, from this letter, the high level of concern we wish to communicate. I am available should you wish to discuss the matter directly.

Yours truly,
Lana Payne, National President, UNIFOR"

Women are Renovating and Modernizing the Entire Society

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2023, CUPE 3911 salutes the women in our ranks, many of whom are in leading positions. It salutes the women in this country and around the world who have shown what they are made of by fighting for the better world required by humanity.

Women are involved in every struggle the working and oppressed peoples are waging. They are courageously opposing the consequences of the neo-liberal anti-social offensive. They are more and more refusing to accept the limitations placed on their actions while governments expand their powers to act with impunity against them. Women are courageously facing attempts to dismiss them, criminalize them, and dispose of them. They are empowering themselves by going all out to fully assume their social responsibilities, which includes contributing to the renovation and modernization of the entire society.

By leading the struggle for the creation of a society which affirms the rights of all, women stand second to none. This is because those who lead set the agenda and participate in taking the decisions which affect their lives. They do so by establishing their own vantage point and then organizing to make sure their decisions are implemented and achieve success.

By coming forward to take up the renovation and modernization of the entire society and its institutions, women are tackling the battle for democracy which requires the renewal of the political process. The aim is to put human beings and their relations with one another and with nature at the centre of society's concerns. This puts working women in the van of the struggles where they themselves define what is necessary and how to go about achieving it.

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2023, all out to fully assume our social responsibility! Let us together renovate and modernize society so that it recognizes the rights of all and makes Canada a zone for peace!



SUMMARY OF THE ALBERTA COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS WORKFORCE SURVEY REPORT

(BY ACWS)

(Note: The following is a summary of the report. The full report may be found at: <https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-02-15-Workforce-Survey-Report-FINAL.pdf>)

Domestic violence shelters provide essential services to thousands of vulnerable Albertans every year.

- Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, ACWS members sheltered 7,620 abuse survivors and their children.
- They provided outreach support to 7,303 survivors.
- They developed almost 3000 safety plans with survivors leaving abusive relationships.
- They provided shelter and life-changing programming for over 3,000 children.
- And they answered 65,390 calls for support.

This work provides an invaluable service to Albertans as a whole, but it is especially valuable to Albertans who experience high levels of vulnerability and marginalization, and who are at high risk of serious and imminent harm. In 2021/22, over 70% of clients surveyed by ACWS members had experienced significant exposure to oppression and marginalization, and 72-85% were at severe or extreme risk of being killed by their intimate partner. These survivors need highly specialized support from organizations and service providers that have been designed and educated to meet their needs. Receiving support from a domestic violence shelter can literally mean the difference between life and death.

DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER SERVICES IS GROWING

Shelters are struggling to meet the current levels of demand. In 2021-22 alone, shelters were unable to grant over 19,000 requests for admission, and 10,000 requests to shelter children who would have accompanied them, due to lack of capacity to house them or safely meet their needs.

While shelters will still actively work with survivors who are turned away to provide them with other resources and supports, these numbers speak to an extraordinary demand for an increase in the services and supports shelters are themselves able to provide.

We anticipate that this demand will continue to grow as survivors who delayed seeking help while pandemic restrictions were in effect reach out for help now. These survivors deserve to receive the support they need. They deserve a domestic violence shelter sector that is able to fully serve them.

THE ALBERTA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER SECTOR HASN'T HAD A FUNDING INCREASE IN 8 YEARS.

- The last increase in government funding for staff wages was in 2014-15.
- The last increase in government funding for operational costs was in 2015-16.
- The cost of living has increased over 20% since 2014.
- In 2021-22 alone the cost of living in Alberta rose by 6.5%.
- Current projections indicate that the cost of living will increase by a further 5.2% in 2023 and 4.3% in 2024.
- Shelters are being asked to pay 2023 prices with 2015 dollars, which is an impossible and unfair demand.
- Stagnant funding has a negative effect on shelters, staff, and survivors.
- The average wage of domestic shelter staff is 15% lower than the wage of the average Albertan.
- It is 21% lower than comparable business sector wages.
- It is 33% lower than comparable government wages.

LOW WAGES DIRECTLY IMPACT THE ABILITY OF SHELTERS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN COMPETENT STAFF.

In 2021-22, the staff turnover rate in domestic violence shelters reached 45%.

This is an unprecedented turnover rate in the Alberta domestic violence shelter sector, and it is 18% higher than the national staff turnover average for domestic violence shelters.

Researchers estimate that it costs domestic violence shelters 30-150% of a staff member's annual salary to replace them once they've left their position. Based on this estimate, in 2021-22 alone, it cost ACWS member shelters more than \$2.25 million to fill vacant staff positions.

- More than one third of domestic violence shelter staff report that they work an additional job.
- 92% of those who work an additional job report that they do so to supplement their income.
- 94% of staff who are thinking about leaving their job report that it is because of insufficient pay.

Domestic violence shelters cannot provide maximally effective support to survivors without the ability to recruit and retain competent staff.

Two thirds of shelters report that stagnant wages negatively impact the quality of care they are able to provide to survivors.

CALL TO ACTION

ACWS calls upon the Government of Alberta to immediately increase shelter funding to accommodate inflation since the last adjustment.

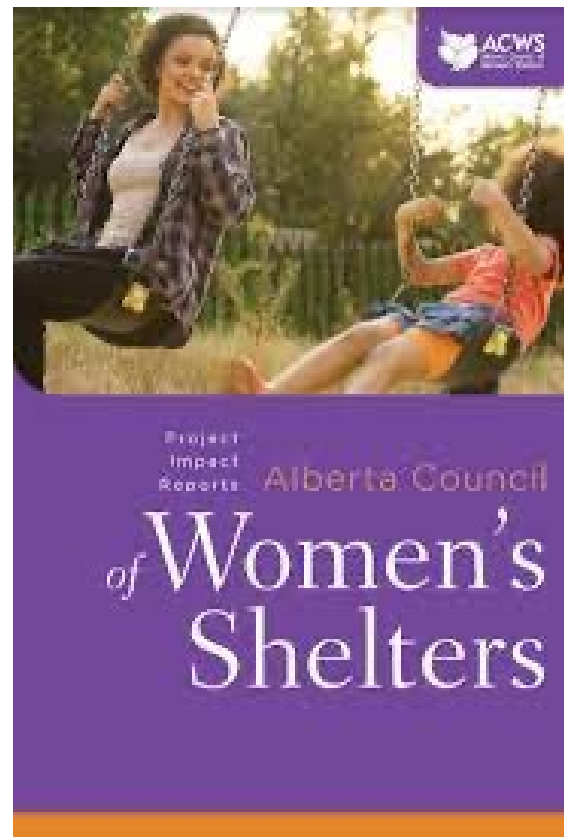
A cost-of-living adjustment from 2015 funding levels would cost the government approximately \$10.3 million. The government has already committed \$12.9 million in additional funding to the Office of the Chief Firearms Officer, beyond the annual funding already received by that office for the purpose of speeding up the process of buying and transferring firearms. By comparison the government has increase domestic violence shelter funding by only \$2 million since 2016 to fund additional spaces. If Alberta can invest \$12.9 million in facilitating speedy gun sales, it can afford to invest \$10.3

million in protecting survivors of abuse and gender-based violence.

We call upon the government of Alberta to work with ACWS to modernize shelter standards, upgrade the shelter staffing models, and review operational funding.

To accomplish this task, ACWS would establish a Domestic Violence Shelter Committee (DVSC) composed of ACWS members, other domestic violence shelters, and government representatives to review ACWS recommendations, including modernization of the staffing model, operational funding, and red tape reduction. The DVSC will provide the minister with recommended actions that stabilize the sector, support survivors, and work toward the end of domestic violence and abuse in Alberta.

Alberta, it's time to show some love to domestic abuse shelters and the survivors they support. It's time to show up for shelters as shelters show up for survivors and help ensure that every survivor who reaches out receives the care they need.



CUPE 3911 Monthly Grievance Summary Report

By Ernie Jacobson, CUPE 3911 Grievance Officer, March 15, 2023

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 MARCH 2023

Summary of Activity for the past month:

- Grievance for member who returned to work and is seeking restoration of their prior full workload is proceeding and nominees for AU and CUPE have been named as first step in setting up the arbitration hearing as soon as possible in 2023.
- Investigation meeting held regarding a member who was investigated under article 23 re determination if there was a cause for dismissal. CUPE was present along with the member, and the outcome was a specification of certain steps for the member to follow.
- Two grievances challenging dismissal of a tutor. Hearings in each grievance are scheduled for the summer of 2023.
- A policy and group grievance is being developed regarding the denial of Academic Timesheets when a specified time is entered into the timesheet, and as a result of denial of this claimed time, the entire timesheet is denied payment until the AE changes the item in question. This is arbitrary and does not respect the professional integrity of the CUPE member submitting the time allocated claim.
- Continuing discussions with members re not obtaining acting coordinator positions and ensuring that AU is engaging in a fair, transparent selection process.

The union currently has 3 grievances which are going to arbitration in 2023. Dates for two of these arbitration hearings have been set, with the other one not set at this point. Arbitration is the best opportunity for the case to be heard by an independent party rather than having the investigation being done entirely by the employer. In all cases, step 1 and step 2 grievance meetings were held and in all cases the CUPE grievance was denied by the employer, making it necessary to take the cases to arbitration.

Respectfully submitted,
Ernie Jacobson, CUPE 3911 Grievance Officer
March 20, 2023



RANDOM THOUGHTS: Last month's Outsider was well received by CUPE 3911 members. They were especially pleased at the amount of information about the UCP's abrupt firing of AU President Peter Scott for not being a good boy and following UCP orders. This was clearly blatant government interference in university affairs. Not every month's issue will be able to focus on such a major issue, although as long as the UCP holds power more arbitrary firings are certainly likely. In this issue we carry a follow-up article on Peter Scott's firing penned by well-known education consultant Dr. Tony Bates. We also include articles about the Laval and PEI strikes which continues the recent trend of militancy in the post-secondary education sector. In addition, we feature two analytic articles, one about the UCP's science

curriculum and the other about the Alberta Labour Code. Last but not least, I'd like to remind everyone that we welcome articles from members. So far we have a lot of good intentions but few articles. However, I know many of our members have graduate degrees so I have no doubt they still have the ability to write lol. Which gives me something to look forward to as I carefully navigate my Editorial Golden Years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting. Saturday, April 29. 930 AM.

May Day. May 1st.

Alberta Provincial Election. May 29.

Ragnarok. TBA.

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.