

# OUTSIDER: THE VOICE OF THE TUTOR

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**CUPE** / Canadian Union  
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## Attend the CUPE 3911 General Membership Meeting

Our next general meeting, open to all of our members, will be Saturday, May 27. To join the meeting please use this link to register, [https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZErceGurTkjHtFXWDAT8\\_v6w8SbIfdPlpHU](https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZErceGurTkjHtFXWDAT8_v6w8SbIfdPlpHU), once you've registered you'll be emailed the link. Agenda will be sent on Thursday to those who have registered.

## UPDATE: CUPE 3911 BARGAINING REPORT

*(by Glynnis Lieb, co-Chair and Lead)*

CUPE 3911 has not met with the employer since the first week in April, at which time we made the mutual decision to involve a mediator. In Alberta, "Labour Mediation Services is set up to help labour and management resolve disputes in collective bargaining negotiations. Legislation requires mediation before parties can legally strike or lock out." We are still waiting the mediator's availability which will likely be in June. In the interim, we held our fourth virtual Townhall this year to discuss the importance of mobilizing to protect the integrity of post-secondary education. We saw our largest attendance yet, with members enthusiastically participating and sharing ideas to engage even more of our colleagues.

Kind regards,

Glynnis Lieb, PhD, co-Chair and Lead Negotiator



*CUPE 3911 has never, and does not now, advise its members on supporting any political party. The views expressed in the article below are those of the author and do not represent the views of CUPE 3911.*

## Alberta Federation of Labour Releases Election Report Card

The Alberta Federation of Labour reviewed the platform commitments from the New Democratic Party and the United Conservative party to see how they stack up on the issues that matter to workers.

### REPORT CARD FROM ALBERTA WORKERS

## How do Alberta's political parties measure up on the issues that matter?

Issue	NDP	UCP
Cost of Living and Wages	✓	✗
Health care	✓	✗
Pensions	✓	✗
Jobs and Economy	✓	✗
K-12 Education	✓	✗
Post-secondary Education	✓	✗
Worker's Rights	✓	✗

Continue reading: <https://action.afl.org/report-card-from-workers/>

Reminder to our members living in Alberta: Remember to vote on May 29. Advanced voting available May 23-27.

We are sharing this Election Report Card from the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL). It is endorsed by CUPE Alberta. CUPE 3911 is affiliated with both labour bodies. While our local does not endorse any parties or candidates, we want you to have the most up to date information on election issues affecting working people in Alberta. Ronnie Joy Leah, CUPE 3911 Co-Chair

## ALBERTA GENERAL ELECTION MAY 29: WORKING PEOPLE FACED WITH NEED TO TAKE CONTROL

(by Peggy Askin, former president TWU, former co-chair CDLC Women's Committee)

Alberta has a fixed election date, with the election taking place on the last Monday in May of a four-year term, which falls this year on May 29. The writ was dropped on May 1 and nominations close on May 11.

The people of Alberta face many serious problems in this election but the most serious is that because of the cartel-party system of government, they exercise no control over the election process. They do not choose the candidates of the parties who are contending for seats and to form the next government. They do not set the platforms of these parties, nor control what the ruling elite and their media say are the issues, nor are their views sought on any issue which they might set themselves.

All that the people of Alberta can say for certain is that the definition of democracy as rule of the people and rule of the majority is a fraud because they constitute the majority and they do not rule. The fraud lies in how the votes cast are said to represent this or that view which constitutes a mandate. How can you aggregate  $x$  number of votes to make one view? It is mathematically impossible. Views are views and numbers are numbers.

The feat is accomplished by claiming the democracy is representative. Your vote authorizes a representative to speak and act in your name. The party that wins the most votes gets to wield power and set a course in sync with the ruling elite's values which, because you permitted the representative to act in your name, become *ipso facto* your values.

The challenge facing the workers' movement is how to intervene in the elections on the basis of the independent politics of the working class. These are established on the basis of the mass democratic method which requires holding informed discussions amongst the people. Such exchanges of information, views and proposals provide the participants with the orientation they need to work out their own vantage point. This means how to intervene in a manner that goes to their advantage, that works in their favour. Under all conditions and circumstances they need to be an organized force which can discuss freely, provide itself with information so that it can distinguish what is relevant and what is not, and decide for itself how it can speak for itself.

During the past four years, Alberta workers have put forward solutions to the problems that society faces in order to fight a barrage of anti-worker legislation that is attempting to crush the unions and criminalize collective action. Even the existing minimal employment standards and health and safety legislation was subject to the UCP's slash and burn. Under its current leader Danielle Smith, the UCP is hell-bent on pursuing what it calls "real health care reform" and measures which will further dismantle the system of public education.

Many unions as well as community organizations have been waging campaigns for the resources needed to meet the demands of the workers, without which there is no solution to the crisis of health care, education, and other social programs. Working conditions in hospitals, seniors' homes, long-term care, and community and home care continue to deteriorate, while real wages have been declining for over 10 years, resulting in acute shortages of staff.

Paramedics are leading the fight for ambulance services, which are literally a matter of life and death. Nurses and other health care workers are demanding higher wages, which are necessary to resolve the staffing crisis. Long-term care workers are insisting on mandatory staffing ratios, and an end to privatization.

Teachers continue to organize their *Stand for Education* campaign, for a curriculum which meets the needs of their students and a modern society; for class sizes which allow them to meet the needs of their students; and for

wages acceptable to them. Community activists are organizing for an end to homelessness and deaths from street drugs, the number of which is rising.

Indigenous Nations are holding the government to account for massive "leaks" from the tailings ponds (actually giant lakes) in the Tar Sands and other serious pollution endangering their communities and the land and water they protect.

Workers in the meat processing plants took the lead during the pandemic and continue to fight against speed ups and for safe working conditions. Railway workers are continuing their fight for safety on the railways while a staggering number of derailments take place across Canada and the U.S., in which rail workers continue to be killed. Warehouse and delivery workers are waging a fight for a union while the anti-worker labour board upholds Amazon's fairy tale that the drivers are not Amazon employees.

Camp workers at the giant Wapasu work camp in the oil sands are fighting to force the company to retract layoff notices after they refused to re-open their contract and accept massive wage cuts at a time of soaring inflation. The layoffs amount to an illegal lockout by the U.S. monopoly Civeo whose CEO received \$5 million in total compensation in 2021. Migrant workers are courageously demanding *Status for All* including immediate permanent residency for all undocumented workers.

Farmers have experienced huge increases in the cost of inputs such as fertilizer, fuel, machinery, and commercial feed for livestock. They have never received a smaller share of the retail price of the food they produce, while the oligopolies that control processing and retail food distribution are making record profits.

There is strong sentiment to rid the province of the UCP and its anti-worker, anti-social agenda, with its racism, misogyny, homophobia and all-round attacks on rights. For the rulers, the issue is to stave this off by dividing the people along so-called right-wing and left-wing politics and political parties, despite the fact that they are all part of the same cartel which blocks the people from coming to power and speaking for themselves.

The vacuum of leadership is such that during Jason Kenney's term in office, and now under Smith, the society has experienced anarchy and violence, including increasing violence against women, racist attacks, preventable deaths, growing poverty and homelessness, and a profound refusal by government to carry out its social responsibilities. Far from addressing the problems the working people are raising, the people of Alberta are being subjected to a barrage of attack ads and incessant polling as to who is leading, who is gaining, and what the numbers supposedly mean.

It is said that the UCP will take the vast majority of seats outside of Edmonton and Calgary, with Edmonton a sure thing for the NDP and the final outcome of the election dependent on Calgary. The disinformation presents the election as a popularity contest between NDP Leader Rachel Notley and UCP Leader Danielle Smith, with each presenting the other as the devil incarnate. One poll after another is touted to promote the one who is allegedly the most popular in a manner which makes a mockery of the word popular.

And all of this before the writ was even dropped!





## ALBERTA ELECTION INFORMATION

There are 87 constituencies in Alberta. On adjournment of the fourth session of the 30th legislature on March 23, the United Conservative Party (UCP) held 60 seats; the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP), 23 seats; and Independents, two. One Independent was elected as a UCP candidate, the other as an NDP candidate. Two seats were vacant.

There are 13 registered political parties. Only the UCP and NDP have put forward full slates. As of May 13, twelve parties had nominated candidates before the writ was dropped:

- Advantage Party of Alberta: 3
- Alberta New Democratic Party: 87
- Alberta Party: 22
- Buffalo Party: 1
- Communist Party-Alberta: 3
- Green Party: 41
- Independence Party of Alberta: 7
- Liberal Party: 15
- Pro-life Alberta Political Association: 1
- Reform Party of Alberta: 0
- United Conservative Party: 87
- Wild Rose Independence Party: 2
- Wildrose Loyalty Coalition: 54

## SUNCOR WORKERS: CONTROL OVER WORKING CONDITIONS

(By Peggy Morton, former President CUPE 2111)

Suncor, one of the "big five" oligopolies in the oil sands, and contractor Christina River Construction entered guilty pleas on one count each of violating Alberta's *Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act* on April 14 in the death of Patrick Poitras. He died on January 13, 2021 after being directed to clear snow from a tailings pond. The ice gave way and his bulldozer crashed through the ice. Conditions were so dangerous that rescue workers were not able to recover his body for two days.

Patrick Poitras was only 25 years old. He had worked in the oil sands for six years and was planning to return home to New Brunswick for good in mere months. He spoke to his father the night before he died, expressing fear about the dangerous conditions in which he was expected to work.

Twenty-eight charges were initially laid against the companies in November 2022, 19 against Suncor and nine against Christina River Construction. The charges involved ignoring safety protocols, failing to properly check the thickness of the ice while ignoring previous measurements showing the ice was too thin to bear the weight of a bulldozer.

Available ice measurements showed the minimum ice thickness was less than 17 inches as required by Suncor's safety plan. Suncor was also charged with



failing to take the weight of snow into account when working on a frozen pond and failure to ensure the site was under the supervision of an ice engineer.

Christina River was also charged with failing to use ground penetrating radar to determine the ice thickness and failing to test if the ice could handle the load of the vehicle. Charges also cited the failure to provide a flotation device and a safety plan in case the bulldozer was submerged.

When the case came to trial on April 14, 26 of the 28 charges were dropped without explanation, and Suncor and the contractor each pleaded guilty to one charge, a deal proposed through a joint submission from the Crown and the defence, and accepted by the presiding judge. They were handed fines of \$420,000 and \$325,000 respectively.

Patrick Poitras was the twelfth worker to die on the job at Suncor since 2014, not including COVID deaths, which were never reported. Yet the Crown

prosecutor dropped most of the serious charges, and instead made a deal, so that those responsible could walk away unscathed.

Suncor had gross profits of \$27.707 billion, and net income of \$9.077 billion in 2022. It may be legal, but in no way can it be called justice when governments and the state permit these oligopolies to carry on, issuing their rote apologies, and noting the fines in their account books as a minor cost of doing business.

Patrick's heartbroken family has been speaking out strongly about this completely preventable death. His mother, Cathina Cormier, said the Alberta courts failed to provide justice for her son's death. "It's a joke," Cormier told the *Journal of Commerce*, calling the \$420,000 fine of the multibillion-dollar corporation Suncor, a "slap on the wrist." His father spoke of the fact that his son had been very worried about the danger of the job he was expected to do, and that he had urged his son to refuse dangerous work.

Every death of a worker, every precious life ended, brings to the fore the question of how workers can defend their right to safe and healthy workplaces. Even the limited rights of workers that exist in law through the Alberta OH&S legislation have been hollowed out by the Kenney government through Bill 47.

*Workers' Forum* wrote at the time, "Bill 47 is the latest in a series of legislated attacks on workers and their defence organizations. While the safety and rights of workers are acknowledged in words, Bill 47 significantly lowers the bar when it comes to employer obligations, deprives workers of the right to select their own health and safety representatives, guts the joint worksite health and safety committees, imposes new definitions of unsafe work, and opens the door for employers to discriminate against workers who refuse unsafe work." Bill 47 established a new process for investigating potentially unsafe work, where the employer alone investigates when a worker refuses unsafe work. The worker no longer has the support of a member of the joint workplace OH&S Committee or a fellow worker of their choice.

According to the *Criminal Code* of Canada, a person who in doing anything, or omitting to do anything that is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons, is guilty of criminal negligence. Duty means duty imposed by law for the purpose of this section. The death of a person through criminal negligence is considered a culpable homicide, that is manslaughter or murder. Yet the usual penalty when a worker dies is a fine.

The *Westray Act*, which came into force in 2004, was the culmination of over ten years of work by workers and their organizations for legislation to hold employers criminally responsible for injuries and deaths of workers due to their actions or inactions. Almost 20 years later, there have been only two convictions, and only one person has gone to jail for criminal negligence causing a workplace death. In the twenty-one years from 2001 to 2021, 320 workers died in the oil and gas sector in Alberta and Saskatchewan alone.

Workers and their families continue to speak out and to resist these attacks on their rights and show their determination to hold governments and employers to account. Workers know from experience that they must rely on their own unity and organization. They are the ones who take up their social responsibilities for safe workplaces, and it is the workers who must exercise control over their working conditions.



## PROPOSED CALGARY ARENA WILL TRANSFORM PUBLIC MONEY INTO PRIVATE PROFIT

Edmonton's Rogers Place hockey arena, home of the Edmonton Oilers, opened for business in September 2016. In a way its beginnings can be traced to former Oiler owner Peter Pocklington who used what is now a well-worn ploy: "If you don't give me money for a new arena I'll move the team." Creating the new Rogers Place arena involved the interests of the Oilers, Northlands, city officials, the Katz Group owners, and various others.

The authors of the well-researched book *Power Play* estimate that the total "public gift" to the Katz Group, owned by a billionaire, amounted to about \$1.5 billion. The true figure was obscured throughout the public discourse that threw around such high-sounding terms as "community revitalization levies". All in all, this helped to sell the argument that the city was only investing a relatively small amount of money to "revitalize" downtown Edmonton and that the benefits of the arena would spread out well beyond the arena itself.

This promise was repeatedly made even though independent study after independent study over the years has shown conclusively that there is NO statistically positive correlation between sports facility construction and economic development. These results of course stand in distinct contrast to promotional studies that are typically done by consulting firms hired by teams or local chambers of commerce supporting facility development and which invariably end up validating the claims of their sponsors.

So, the reality of the Edmonton situation was not economic benefit but an incredible sweetheart deal achieved by bending over backward for a billionaire at least in part impelled by implied threats that he would move the team. The song-and-dance routine of team owners, developers and local boosters is totally familiar and predictable. Other familiar tactics from the playbook include noting the relative age of the current facility, claiming the team struggles to make a profit, citing the benefits that will accrue to the city, etc.

The Calgary Flames ownership, Calgary Sports and Entertainment Corporation, which is controlled by four billionaires and multimillionaires including CNRL owner Murray Edwards, has checked all those boxes. (Two other billionaire owners recently passed away.) Strangely enough, even with all those billions floating around, the Flames owners have adamantly claimed that private financing of a new arena is impossible. Yet all non-Olympic North American arenas and stadiums built before 1953 were privately funded, for example, in 1931, Toronto Maple Leaf General Manager Conn Smythe sold shares in a new private company to finance the building of Maple Leaf Gardens.

When it comes to the debate now playing out over Calgary's arena, there are many similarities to what happened in Edmonton. First off, the whole plan for a new arena in both Edmonton and Calgary is simply rooted in the desire for increased profits for the owners, not some actual social need. In fact, the most fundamental divide in the arena debates is whether scarce public resources should be spent building something that will generate further profits for very rich private owners and which the vast majority of ordinary citizens will not reap the benefits of.

So both Edmonton and Calgary city councils have chosen to spend enormous sums of money on arena projects rather than

fund transit expansions or social services to address, say, the deadly opioid crisis or homelessness or keep libraries open late. Again, the main argument is that the cities will derive major economic benefits but once this claim is punctured by actual studies, everything boils down to further paying the rich. Then again that is no surprise. The people of Alberta already provide billions of dollars in subsidies to the highly profitable oil companies. So what's a few hundred million handed over to a wealthy hockey club now and then?





## UPEI CLASSES RESUME AFTER DEAL ENDS 4-WEEK STRIKE

A tentative agreement reached early Friday has now been ratified, ending a labour dispute at the University of Prince Edward Island on the 26th day of a strike by the union representing faculty members. UPEI Faculty Association president Michael Arfken said 98 per cent of members voted in favour of the agreement.

"That's a strong vote in support of the agreement and support of the union," Arfken said. "We're very pleased, and our members are excited to be going back to campus, and going back with some of the supports they need to preserve the educational quality of our institution."

Among the highlights in the deal, Arfken cited:

- UPEI committing to hire 20 additional full-time faculty members.
- More research support for faculty.
- More supports for sessional staff and the adjustment of clinical nursing instructor ratios.
- An annual three-per-cent wage increase for union members over four years.

"Those are some pretty meaningful changes," Arfken said, adding that the wage increase is a "significant improvement" over what was originally offered. "We recognize it's a compromise, but we're comfortable with where it landed for the time being."

With the agreement ratified, the strike will now end and faculty will return to work. Classes are set to resume Monday, following an emergency meeting of the university's senate Friday afternoon to finalize a return-to-class plan. A UPEI Student Union survey sent out to full-time students found the vast majority of students preferred either a refund (53.9 per cent), or for credits to be awarded as normal or on a pass/fail basis (42.8 per cent). Only 3.2 per cent of 2,273 respondents wanted an extended semester.

Faculty association members have been on the picket line for nearly four weeks since March 20. The UPEIFA's last collective agreement had been set to expire on July 1, 2020, but the parties signed a two-year extension that ended last June. The two sides had been in negotiations on and off since April 2022.



## CELEBRATIONS OF MAY DAY! PHOTO DISPLAY

*(photos courtesy of Ray Harper and Paul Kirman)*

The primary sticking points at the bargaining table were workloads, improved health and safety, higher pay, and the hiring of more full-time faculty members to cope with a growing student body. On May Day on Monday, May 1, a large contingent of enthusiastic workers and their allies in Edmonton came out and rallied to celebrate the international working class holiday, May Day. Speeches were delivered at the McIntyre Park gazebo and a spirited march took place on Whyte Avenue. Here are some excellent photos of the celebrations taken by Ray Harper (1-4) and Paula E. Kirman (5-6). Your CUPE 3911 Communications Director is visible in Photo!









## PENSION FUND INVESTMENTS SHOULD REFLECT WORKERS' VALUES

*(Reprinted from Empower Yourself Now, edited for length)*

On April 14, 2023, in Toronto, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) held its annual meeting for shareholders –all those holding a valid Ontario teachers' certificate who are employed either as classroom teachers or in other positions by an Ontario board of education, designated private school or designated organization. The meeting was held in person at the Toronto Reference Library and virtually with at least 300 people participating.

The chair of the OTPP board, Steven McGirr presided over the meeting while its President and CEO, as well as a number of other officers, addressed the meeting on the Plan's performance in the last year, both from the standpoint of the returns it delivered as well as its provision of services for Plan members.

The Plan currently has 183,000 working members contributing to it, and 153,000 members collecting a pension. The average plan member collects a pension for 32 years. In 2022 the plan grew by 4 per cent and had assets of \$247 billion at year end, an increase of \$5 billion from the year before. It is fully funded for the 10th year in a row and has a 9.8 per cent growth rate since its inception in 1990. In 2022 the plan paid \$7.2 billion in pensions and benefits, compared to \$6.9 billion the previous year, and has increased its pension benefits by 6.3 per cent to provide inflation protection to its members — something that was recognized by Plan members in the audience as an important mechanism to ensure pensioners' incomes are maintained.

Throughout the presentations, officers emphasized diversification of their portfolio holdings as a means to weather global storms. This theme came up on a number of occasions to justify its global expansion as well as its investment in what are called risky ventures as well as industries which are large carbon emitters.

Plan President and CEO Jo Taylor addressed the concerns of many about the Plan's investment in a now defunct cryptocurrency exchange, FTX, as well as large fossil fuel companies and the growing presence of representatives of oil and gas

monopolies on its Board of Directors. The Board is appointed by the Ontario Teachers' Federation and Ontario government which jointly manage the plan.

Taylor presented their loss of \$95 million in FTX as an experiment in the field of cryptocurrency of the Plan's new Venture Growth team. Despite their due diligence and the use of outside consultants the company kept information hidden, he said.

According to him, the investment in the crypto exchange was a means to gain entry into the cryptocurrency markets and learn about their functioning. They are learning from their mistake, but own the decision, he said.

Concerning investments in fossil fuels, Taylor presented the investments not as something that contributes to increasing carbon emissions, but as a means of influencing large carbon emitters by using the pension fund's power and influence to get them to reduce their carbon emissions. He cited natural gas generation in particular as a "transitional fuel" which will contribute to transitioning to the "green economy." He emphasized that the fund was investing \$5 billion in "high carbon transition assets." All of this, he said, was a better strategy than divesting and would make a real world impact.

Following the presentations, questions submitted in advance and from the floor were taken. A number of questions targeted the assertion that the fund should maintain its investments in fossil fuels as well as permit representatives of some of the biggest polluters to sit on its board. Concerns were also raised about the Plan's need to ensure that all its investments comply with the right of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent regarding what is done on their lands.

The same argument about influencing the companies they invest in was not forthcoming when it came to the Plan's investments in the union-busting holding company which is not negotiating in good faith with the workers at Windsor Salt in Windsor, Ontario. Both the President of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Barb Dobrowolski, and the President of District 9 of the Ontario Secondary

School Teachers' Federation in Windsor-Essex, Erin Roy, raised pointed questions about why the Plan was not using its influence from its seat on the Management Board of Stone Canyon Industries Holdings Inc. and its 15 per cent stake in the company to uphold the values of Plan members in the face of the company's union-busting activities in three provinces. Both noted that they have received many concerns from Plan members about the actions of Stone Canyon and their pension monies being invested in union-busting.

The response from the Plan officers was that because they were not owners of the company, they could not really direct its management to do business differently, but that they would "have a conversation" about it. They did not respond to the question about why they were investing in a company that goes against the values of the Plan's members in the first place, nor the clear double standard in how they say they are using their investments in fossil fuels to influence companies to

comply with their obligations to reduce carbon emissions, but are unable to intervene when it comes to workers' rights.

Overall, the concerns raised show the consciousness of the Plan's members — that they want the investments of their pension plan to reflect their values as teachers and educators of the younger generation. The fact that their role is limited to a once-a-year AGM in which they get to ask 60 second questions for one hour and do not really have a way to direct their pension fund in a meaningful way was obvious. No real way yet exists where they can participate in deliberation on their own Plan and its role and make their views known. This is a challenge facing all workers in Canada with respect to their pension funds. That the aim of the pension industry to make the highest returns irrespective of where the members' money is invested, and that "business is business," does not meet with the expressed desires of the majority of teachers.



## HOW ELECTIONS MIGHT BE DONE DIFFERENTLY: THE EXAMPLE OF CUBA

*(Editor's Note: Albertans are in the middle of an election. Those who live under a particular political system for a long period of time tend to lose sight of the fact that things could be done differently. We are all familiar with how elections are carried out in Alberta and Canada and sometimes it seems like there could be no other way. At the same time even here in Canada we have ongoing controversies such as first-past-the-post vs proportional representation or elected indigenous chiefs vs hereditary chiefs. More generally, as food for thought, here are four main ways that another country, Cuba, does things differently.)*

### Selection of Candidates

A major distinguishing feature of Cuba's electoral system is how candidate selection takes place and the importance it is given. Candidates are not chosen by a political party as is the case in so many countries that have virtually eliminated any role for the people other than voting for candidates they had no part in selecting. Or perhaps serving to distribute campaign materials prepared with the aim of selling a given party's candidate to electors.



Candidates are selected through a rigorous, inclusive process starting at the grassroots level, with proposals for pre-candidates put forward in plenary sessions of the mass and student organizations to which 90 per cent of Cubans belong -- the Cuban Workers' Federation, Cuban Women's Federation, the Federations of University Students and of Middle Level Education Students, the National Association of Small Farmers and neighbourhood Committees in Defence of the Revolution. Members of these organizations are not restricted to proposing only people from their own organizations.

The proposals received (in the last election there were over 19,000) then pass to candidacy commissions, made up of representatives of the aforementioned organizations and headed by the Cuban Workers' Federation. The commissions in each municipality analyze the biographies of the proposed candidates and prepare their own draft proposals from among the names they have received after reviewing and deliberating on them one by one, coming up with a smaller pool of pre-candidates (just over 4,100 in this election).

Eventually, a slate of pre-candidates corresponding to the number of deputies to be elected in each electoral district, is presented to the delegates in each of the country's 169 Municipal Assemblies of People's Power for their consideration and approval (or rejection) through votes taken on each of the pre-candidates. New pre-candidates are proposed to them by the candidacy commissions for any that are rejected. Nationwide, this involves some 12,000 municipal delegates, all recently elected themselves, confirming the nomination of 470 people to fill the same number of seats in the National Assembly.

The electoral law adopted in 2019 calls for there to be one deputy for every 30,000 inhabitants or fraction greater than 15,000 (Note: Alberta's ridings average about 50,000). Those nominated are expected, as a group, to reflect as closely as possible the current diverse makeup of Cuban society. Electors have the option of voting for all candidates named on the ballot for their electoral district, for some of them, or just one. To be elected, candidates must receive over 50 per cent of the votes cast by their constituents in a secret ballot.

### **No Campaigning, Election Promises, or Use of Money to Buy Votes**

Another distinguishing feature of Cuba's system is that there is no campaigning for or against any candidates or making of "election promises" by candidates. Electoral authorities must also ensure that no assets or means belonging to any candidates, their close relatives or others, that compromise their impartiality, or give rise to disagreements and discord among voters, are used in elections.

### **Provisions for an Informed Vote**



In order for electors to cast an informed vote they are provided well in advance of election day with the following information together with a photograph of each candidate: their name, date of birth, sex, marital status, highest grade of schooling or post-secondary education completed, professional or trade qualifications, current occupation, place of residence, organizations they belong to, and a short description of their personal qualities and capacity that demonstrate why they are qualified to fulfil the responsibilities of a deputy. The information is prominently posted in public places as well as online. Candidates themselves meet with workers in different sectors, students, and others in their

constituencies to listen to their concerns and expectations and engage in discussion with them, but not to compete with one another for votes.

Once elected, deputies are not paid for performing their duties but continue receiving whatever salary they normally get for the jobs they do if they are employed. To fulfill their responsibilities, they are obliged to maintain close ties with the people, listen to their opinions, suggestions, and concerns, as well as to increase their own knowledge in various fields and to keep themselves informed about national and foreign events, and importantly, render accounts periodically to their constituents. The same applies to those in the highest positions of leadership, including the president, vice president and prime minister of the republic. Under Cuba's electoral law all are subject to recall before their term expires, if the circumstances warrant it.

## **Deputies Elect Leadership of National Assembly and of the Republic from Among Their Peers**

A rigorous process similar to the one followed for selecting candidates for deputy is set out for the nomination of candidates for the leadership of the National Assembly and of the Republic -- all of whom must be elected by their peers in the new parliament. In this election, from April 3-9, members of the National Candidacy Commission travelled throughout Cuba consulting those elected on March 26 to obtain their written proposals for deputies they would nominate to serve as president and in other leadership positions of the National Assembly, the 21-member Council of State and for president and vice president of Cuba. To be elected to any of these positions, deputies must receive over 50 per cent of the vote of their peers in a secret ballot.

## **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 MAY 2023**

Summary of Activity for the past month:

A group grievance on time sheet denials was filed. CUPE 3911 asserts that one minute to close a ticket is too short a time, and to have an entire time sheet denied: "It is inappropriate that an AE's entire pay cheque be withheld from payment for decisions on discrepancies of what time is to be paid. The timesheets are currently held back from processing for payment until the employer's forced changes are made by the AE."

The employer has responded and denied the grievance at Step 1, so the grievance committee has added information and filed this as a Step 2 grievance on May 9, 2023.

A group grievance re Employer's unilateral decision (without consultation or notice to the union) to reduce assignment marking pay by 15% was filed. This unilateral and arbitrary decision by the Employer will result in loss of pay for CUPE 3911 members. Update: The grievance on arbitrary percentage pay reduction was replied to and AU has acknowledged that these demands are withdrawn. This does not mean that AU has not stopped looking for cost reductions but merely that they will not do it by arbitrarily reducing marking pay to AEs. We can regard this as somewhat of a victory but we must remain vigilant for other attempts by AU to reduce pay for tutors, markers, and AEs.

A member has been contacted by their program director about tardy responses, which seem to have been caused by the difficulty of working in the current learning management system (LMS) as well as simultaneously having students enrolled in the new LMS called Brightspace. Apparently, it is not evident when new emails or assignments are received in Brightspace in its current form. The notification to tutors, markers, and AEs is inadequate, it appears.

A discussion ensued concerning tutors who may be working outside Canada. AU has never provided any written proof that working outside Canada is prohibited. This is relevant to upcoming arbitration hearings this summer. The committee requested that a further communication go to AU management to inform CUPE where it is written that there is a definitive order/directive that prohibits Tutors, AE's and Markers from working outside Canada.

The committee requested that our CUPE National representative provide written details on who at CUPE National will be responsible for conducting the member arbitration in August.

Respectfully submitted.

Ernest Jacobson, CUPE 3911 Grievance Officer



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**RANDOM THOUGHTS:** I am intrigued by the concept of “shadow work”, which seems to help explain why all of us feel like we are always busy and never have any time for anything. Home and family life are the first and most familiar venue of shadow work, shadow work which is mainly done by women, not only physical work but planning what is to be done. Shadow work includes all the “invisible” unpaid tasks we do on behalf of businesses and organizations that have stealthily slipped into our routines with unmistakable presence and far-reaching effects, the unpaid unseen jobs that fill our day. These tasks seem individually insignificant but cumulatively they amount to many hours of annoyance. For example, we pump our own gas, commute to and from work, scan and bag our own groceries, drive our kids to their schools and sports, execute our own stock trades, book our own travel, assemble our own Ikea furniture, and manage and maintain our own computer data. For many, finding a partner is now shadow work. In some cases, we even choose our shadow work, for example, sorting and recycling our garbage. One social and psychological effect is that we are becoming increasingly isolated from each other as shadow work has us flying solo on tasks that once included human interaction, e.g., a chat with a travel agent. One main reason behind shadow work is that our economic and political system is stacked to discard workers; three main ways that is taking place are downsizing, automation, and outsourcing. Shadow work thus represents a major and hidden force inexorably shrinking the job market, in particular, erasing many of the entry level jobs that have launched countless careers. Want to hear more? Check out Craig Lambert's book, *Shadow Work*. And, yes, now that you know about it, you're going to start noticing it everywhere. Hmmm, now I gotta change that password again and what the hell is two-factor authentication anyway....

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CUPE 3911 Monthly General Meeting.** Saturday, May 27, 930 AM.

**Alberta Provincial Election.** May 29.

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

## EDITORIAL POLICY: THE OUTSIDER

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