

**FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL
CONVENTION
2021** 







**REPORTS OF
NATIONAL COMMITTEES
& WORKING GROUPS**



Published March 8, 2021

The following reports to the 2021 provincial division convention were provided by Saskatchewan members on CUPE National Committees and/or Working Groups.

NATIONAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS:

- ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PENSIONS 
- CHILD CARE WORKING GROUP 
- COMMITTEE ON RACISM, DISCRIMINATION, AND EQUITY (RAINBOW) 
- CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION COMMITTEE
- ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
- GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
- HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
- HEALTH CARE ISSUES COMMITTEE
- INDIGENOUS COUNCIL
- LIBRARY WORKERS COMMITTEE
- LITERACY WORKING GROUP 
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTEE 
- PINK TRIANGLE COMMITTEE
- POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
- POST-SECONDARY TASK FORCE 
- WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
- YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE



= **Indicates Report Filed**

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PENSIONS

The National Advisory Committee has conducted its meetings via Zoom this year. It is so encouraging to meet with others through out Canada who are concerned about the issues that could threaten our pensions. **We have taken the approach the CUPE should go on the offensive to defend and hopefully improve our members' retirements.**

Our committee had a very informative session with CUPE'S National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee about keeping our pensions out of privatization. We were saddened to hear that Revera is wholly owned by the investment arm of the Federal Public Service Pension Plan. Sadly, Revera has failed to care for our most vulnerable seniors in their Long-Term Homes. The Federal Public Sector unions have called on their pension fund and the government to make Revera Public.

We are deeply concerned about potential changes to public sector accounting standards pertaining to pensions. The Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) is considering a series of changes to how pension liabilities and costs are calculated. These liabilities could show dramatic increases to liabilities. These changes could pose a threat to our pension plans.

Today, we are facing volatility in the markets from COVID-19, historical low interest rates, possible PASB accounting changes and increasing government debt due to COVID. These conditions could lead to push back from our employers. **We are wanting to strongly defend our pensions from any future attacks.**

Emily Niles and Mark Janson from CUPE National are a tremendous support to our committee.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the members of CUPE.

Respectfully submitted by,

JANICE WOLFMUELLER

CHILD CARE WORKING GROUP

The National Child Care Working Group (NCCWG) met virtually on October 9th, November 9th, and December 14th, 2020.

Members of the working group participated and encouraged other CUPE ECEs to participate in the Child Care Now's virtual lobby meetings with MPs in October 2020. The members of the working group are now rolling out their campaign for fair wages and benefits in a universal child care programme. The members continue to work together to share policy analysis and support grassroots child care advocacy efforts in their own regions.

CAMPAIGN FOR UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE

While 2020 brought many challenges with the global pandemic, it did highlight the need for universal child care in Canada making our campaign message resonate strongly for families with young children. The results of numerous surveys have shown women, more than men, have left the workplace to provide care for their children. **An economic recovery from the pandemic cannot occur until women are able to return to the workplace — and that will require affordable, accessible child care spaces across the country.**

Child care workers are needed throughout Canada. The child care sector has an acute problem with recruitment and retention due to the low wages and the undervalued nature of care work.

The NCCWG is working with Child Care Now and other allies to draw provincial and federal attention to the need for increased wages, benefits, and pensions for child care workers. They are working on an MP/MPP/MLA letter writing campaign, a virtual rally, and family friendly activities to put pressure on the government for fair compensation. With better wages, benefits and pensions, recruitment and retention will be easier and pave the path for a successful universal child care system.

The NCCWG invited Morna Ballantyne from Child Care Now to their November meeting to discuss their advocacy plans for universal child care. Together the CCN and NCCWG made a plan for helping build new provincial chapters of the NCCWG. It is a mutually symbiotic relationship where CUPE will be able to forge new relationships with workers not yet unionized.

Child Care Now is excited by recent government announcements on a universal child care plan, which were heard in the throne speech and the federal economic update. They are cautiously optimistic about the promised announcement in the 2021 budget.

However, child care today remains woefully underfunded. A commitment for an immediate infusion of \$2 billion and an additional \$2 billion each year for the next 10 years is needed in the March budget. **There are growing concerns that this will be punted into the Liberal's spring election campaign, and we will miss yet another opportunity to realize universal child care in Canada.**

The details of the plan include:

- Boost public spending by increasing Canada's ELCC budget by \$2 billion each year over 10 years to meet international benchmarks and reach the goal of affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care for all across Canada.
- Negotiate ELCC agreements with the provinces and territories that tie federal transfers to meeting evidence-based policy criteria:
 - Direct public funding to expand public and not-for-profit child care, not vouchers, tax credits or fee subsidies.
 - Provide funding and set fee guidelines to make child care affordable for parents.
 - Improve the quality of care and stability in the workforce through public spending on set wages and fair working conditions.
- Continue to work with Indigenous leaders and communities to operationalize, implement and expand on the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework to realize the goals and aspirations of the Indigenous Peoples.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH ON FOR-PROFIT CARE

NCCWG members are continuing their work with Martha Friendly from the Child Care Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) who is presently working on a CUPE-supported report that CRRU is producing on the expansion of for-profit care across Canada.

This report will provide an analysis of the quality of care, working conditions in the sector, and equity issues in child care, as well as recommendations for action. It will provide a valuable basis for campaigning for policy change that can support the creation of Child Care for All.

BUILDING OUR ALLIES

The NCCWG is focusing on building our relationships with allies both inside and outside the normal child care community. The committee wants to continue building its relationship with Migrant Rights Network and Landed Status Now. There are plans to invite them to the next meeting of the NCCWG. Racialized, migrant women in this sector face structural exploitation because they have fewer rights. Dangerous and exploitative work for migrant care workers is unacceptable, and further devalues care work. Without care work, the economy doesn't work.

In the campaign for child care worker wages, the NCCWG will be reaching out to the Canadian Federation for Child Care, provincial child care associations, and Migrant Rights Network to strengthen our relationships and increase our voices.

Respectfully submitted,

KARLA SASTAUNIK
(Local 4784)

COMMITTEE ON RACISM, DISCRIMINATION, AND EQUITY (RAINBOW)

Our committee promotes and defends the rights of all workers of colours in our communities, locally, nationally, and internationally.

The CUPE National Rainbow Committee has been meeting almost monthly to do check-ins with our regions for CUPE National. The committee has been amazing to work with. The committee consist of:

- Debra Mason (Manitoba),
- Sharon Stanley (Ontario),
- Veriline Howe (Ontario),
- Nadia Aristyl (Quebec),
- Mona Yammine (PEI),
- Cora Mojica (BC),
- Michele Alexander, Chair (BC), and

Our NEB Liaison is the amazing Yolanda McClean. One of the most amazing people I have ever meet and am proud to say a friend.

Our staff liaison is another amazing activist and leader Tammy Kelly. Her spirit and joy for life makes our meetings.

All our meeting has all been online for the last year. Most of our meetings have been on Monday evenings.

Our committee has been very active in these very trying times around North America right now. We have been active in several Black Lives Matter Rallies across Canada. As well, Indigenous Lives Matter Rallies and Anti Racism Asian Rallies. Our Committee NEB Liaison, with our input, put together the amazing video that CUPE made called *CUPE Stands Against Racism*. Our committee was very proud of our leader, Mark Hancock, who recognized the Black Lives Matter campaign in his video to all our members as well.

Our main objective as requested by you the members at CUPE National is **Resolution #4: Create and implement an anti-racism strategy, including anti-black racism, for the workplace and union that builds on CUPE's 1999 policy statement on racism in the workplace.**

We worked very hard on your request, with strategy session across all Canada. I am very proud of our praises that had a session and with an amazing turn out. We will be bring our new Anti Racism policy strategy at the CUPE National Human Rights Conference as well to all members at the 2021 CUPE National Convention for delegates to adopt.

I also, look forward to see our updates and revisions that we also put forward to CUPE National education branch in regards to the steward learning series module "Challenging Racism in the Workplace".

I want to say "Thank You" to CUPE Saskatchewan, and to all our members for the support as well during these trying times.

In solidarity,

J.R. SIMPSON
(Local 2268/3730)

LITERACY WORKING GROUP



BENEFITS OF A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM

- ✓ Better reading skills will result in improved health and safety in the workplace (members are able to better read and understand Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), job postings, signs, etc.
- ✓ Less time will be needed to supervise and correct mistakes
- ✓ Members will have the ability to complete the required paperwork to perform their job duties
- ✓ Improves skills for dealing with co-workers and customers
- ✓ Members will have more self-confidence and more self esteem
- ✓ Members will be more active in their Locals, Communities and Families

CLEAR LANGUAGE

- ✓ It is important in the workplace to be able to read and understand all communications including instructions, notifications, safety information, etc.
- ✓ Clear language puts the reader first by ensuring the information is presented so it can be easily read and understood by using simple words.
- ✓ Graphics and visual designs are also important communication tools which can be used to help the reader better understand the message. Examples are in the table below.

Instead of This	Use This
In the absence of	Without
Give consideration to	Consider
Carry out an examination of	Examine

- ✓ Use clear concise sentences
- ✓ Avoid the use of acronyms
- ✓ Use headings



In solidarity,

PATRICIA GAUSMAN

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTEE

2018 – 2019 NPWDC WORKPLAN:

MARCH 6, 2018

ACTION

- 1) Air Travel Problems:** The National Persons with Disabilities Committee will communicate with CUPE National to request that our National Union contact Air Canada and any other utilized air transportation services to address the serious travel problems experienced by members with disabilities on all flights and take steps to ensure that all carriers used by WE Travel for CUPE meetings and events provide a safe and dignified travel experience for passengers with disabilities. All airline staff, including front-line employees and baggage handlers, and in particular ground crew, should have appropriate training on the needs of persons with disabilities and their mobility equipment. Consistency must be maintained across regions and carriers to ensure that passengers with disabilities do not continue to experience safety risks or damage to mobility equipment.
-

- 2)** Continue to promote and expand the *Solidarity of Abilities* campaign to raise awareness about disability rights and their enforcement in our workplaces, our Union and our communities. Any reference to persons with disabilities includes all visible and all non-visible disabilities.

Prepare additional fact sheets, including ones on the following to topics:

- Invisible and episodic disabilities
 - Benefits of site audits,
-

- 3)** Promote the 9-hour Duty to Accommodate workshop and disability related courses (i.e.the potential development of a Disability Empowerment course) amount members in every region, ensure that all members have access to disability related training and take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities co-facilitate disability-related courses. Develop alternate means of delivery in order to remove barriers of participation.

IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE TOP 3 PRIORITIES

- 4)** Encourage the use of site audits to all CUPE regional and local meetings and events and ensure that the onsite setup organizers receive the recommendations from the site audit and a copy of the CUPE National-approved accessibility checklist

IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE TOP 3 PRIORITIES

In solidarity,

LAURIE HUGHES

POST SECONDARY TASK FORCE

THE FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TASK FORCE MEETING HELD IN DECEMBER, 2020:

Updates from across Canada:

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR:

Memorial University has a new President, Viane Timmons, who has taken on a more of an activist role than the last President.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Budget for 2020 maintained the status quo for PSE, including the tuition freeze in effect for NL students (tuition increased 30% in the fall for non-NL students).

The public sector in NL has a master bargaining table. All the other partners have settled with the government, but CUPE has held out, refusing to accept concessions on the pension plan to offset the increase in CPP.

While instruction will remain remote for the winter semester, MUN is requiring non-academic staff to begin working on campus two days a week in January.

PEI:

The minority Progressive Conservative government was able to achieve a one-seat majority through a by-election. Their provincial budget increased base funding for PSE but otherwise maintained the status quo, taking a wait-and-see approach to what will be required post-pandemic.

All five unions at UPEI are due to renegotiate their collective agreements this year. The solidarity that they built during the campaign to negotiate a jointly sponsored pension has paid off this year when the Faculty Association signed a two-year extension with wage increases on the understanding that the same deal would be offered to the other unions. When the other unions were offered a lesser deal, the Faculty Association showed up to protest too.

CUPE Local 1870 signed a MOA with UPEI allowing them to move CUPE members to new positions without posting them first and retiring members have not been replaced, but so far the local has been able to avoid layoffs due to the pandemic.

Staff were forced to return to campus to work in August, but as of December, a new lockdown is in place. This time, departments deemed essential have had to stay open, so there are some workers who still have to go to campus every day.

NOVA SCOTIA:

Stephen MacNeil is stepping down as Premier. He has not called the legislature to sit since March.

Dalhousie is in bargaining, although there are no dates set currently. CUPE Local 3912 are putting forward some proposals on benefits, as currently they have none, but Dalhousie is refusing to discuss them until the end.

Instruction will remain online at Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent, and Saint Mary's through the summer at least. Dalhousie and SMU have had difficulty adapting to online instruction, but MSVU had more experience with online courses so it has been an easier transition.

There have been a few high-profile incidents of racism at NS universities, including anti-Black slurs and anti-Indigenous comments. Both CUPE Local 3912 and the student unions are working to promote more diversity in hiring and recruitment, anti-oppression training, and measures to improve the experience of racialized faculty, staff, and students.

ONTARIO:

The Ford government passed Bill 124 which limited increases in public sector wages to 1% per 12-month period. However, locals are finding ways around it by bargaining increases to benefits and training instead.

The government also adopted Bill 195, which allows the government to use emergency orders which override collective agreements. The emergency orders allow management to cancel scheduled vacations, take away rights to seniority-based layoffs, and change schedules and work assignments. In some cases, the emergency orders suspend grievance procedures.

The Ontario government signaled a move to micro-credentialing in the Ontario budget. They have doubled down on performance-based funding with 60-70% of funding tied to labour markets.

SASKATCHEWAN:

As the University of Saskatchewan has gone from 20,000 students on campus to 5,000 students on campus, they have closed buildings and laid off approximately 25% of caretaking staff. The remaining custodians are not being given enough time to do the extra cleaning that is expected of them.

The number of people on permanent and temporary layoff has come down, but the university is refusing to pay benefits for workers on temporary layoff as of January 1. They are also refusing to offer these workers a buyout.

CUPE Local 1975 usually budgets \$5,000 a year to offer forgivable loans to members in financial difficulty. This year, they budgeted \$50,000 and changed their by-laws so that they can send their members a \$500 cheque when they are temporarily laid off.

Sessional lecturers at the U of S have about 20% less work than usual. They are calling for class sizes to be limited and for classes to be copyrighted so that the videos can't be used to offer the courses without the instructors.

ALBERTA:

Jason Kenney's government is even more regressive and destructive than Ralph Klein. His government has adopted Bill 32, the "Restoring Balance in Alberta Workplaces Act" which seeks to hamstring unions by requiring them to get permission from all of their members on how they use union dues; requiring them to get permission from the government in order to be allowed to picket, and making it easier for employers to lay off workers en masse. CUPE is sponsoring one of two constitutional challenges against Bill 32 with the Alberta Federation of Labour. AUPE is sponsoring their own challenge.

Kenney's government also cut funding to post-secondary institutions. Athabasca had only 2% of its funding cut, but the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary saw large cuts, so they had large layoffs in response.

At Athabasca University, CUPE Local 3911 is dealing with a "designation" issue. The legislation in AB gives the Board of Governors the power to designate which workers are academic staff. The fact that CUPE Local 3911 members were considered "non-designated academics" is what allowed them to unionize. The BoG is now threatening to change the definition.

BC COLLEGES:

BC now has a majority NDP government. It is dealing with a serious second wave of COVID but the government's response has been much stronger in BC than in many other provinces.

Students are mostly online, but policies vary significantly between campuses as to whether workers are back at campus and if so, what protocols they need to follow.

The BC Colleges Committee is dealing with two main issues right now: mental health for students and workers and tracking who is on Boards of Governors, who are the activists, and how we can get more activists appointed.

At Vancouver Island University, 80% of casual staff have been lost due to hours not being offered. Among temporary and regular positions, 11% have been laid off, mostly in ancillary services. VIU is currently running a \$13 million deficit.

BC UNIVERSITIES:

The BC university locals have now concluded bargaining, achieving a three-year agreement with 2% a year.

The government directed public institutions to offer wage continuity through August 31, providing workers with their full wages and benefits. Since then, locals have concluded MOAs on temporary layoffs, including first right of recall, a top-up to EI, and paying whatever benefits they are legally allowed to.

Sexual violence and harassment policies across the sector are up for review this year, so the BC Universities Committee is having a conversation as a sector about what these policies should look like and where the issues are. Concerns were raised specifically about anonymous tiplines and workers being disciplined on the basis of anonymous complaints.

CUPE Local 2950 got some funding to get their local's historical documents digitized and archived at the University of British Columbia, creating a fonds that can be used by students, academics, and labour researchers: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/auce>. They also put together a video telling the story of their locals' creation: <https://vimeo.com/336116722>.

Anti-Racism:

CUPE National Representative Preethy Sivakumar spoke with the Task Force about the anti-racism work being done by the CUPE post-secondary locals at the University of Toronto and how we can adapt their strategy for our own locals.

The pandemic has exposed the massive wealth inequality at the heart of our society – the billionaires getting richer while low-income workers bear the brunt of the pandemic, taking on the most risk while being paid poverty wages. We're also seeing the impact of years of shifting away from public funding towards a privatized, corporatized model of post-secondary education. In this context, CUPE can't just defend public services as they are, but needs to put forward a vision of what they could and should be. This vision must include respect for all workers and all types of work.

The people who are most likely to be low waged and to have the worst working conditions are overwhelmingly racialized, Indigenous, or newcomers. They are more likely to be women. International students are also the most exploited category of students at our post-secondary institutions.

Being anti-racist requires us to ask ourselves whose work is valued and how we can improve the wages and working conditions of those at the bottom. Not all workers share the same interests, but they need to demonstrate solidarity. At U of T, the PSE locals are doing this through a campaign on decent work and by starting a Decent Work Chapter at U of T. They pursued training through Jane McAlevey's Strike School, and are adopting a Plan/Act/Evaluate model of campaigning.

Locals who want to do the same at their own institution should follow these steps:

1. Form a campus coalition or strengthen your local's participation in your existing campus coalition. Make sure you have a shared campus vision that is both concrete and local. And make sure you are providing training to your local members so that they have the tools and resources they need to carry out the campaign.
2. Start with a scan. Who is making the lowest wage? What is the profile of those workers? Whose jobs are most at risk of being contracted out?
3. Develop a bargaining strategy to address the issues that you've addressed.

4. Campaign for government funding. This isn't just the result of one employer's decisions.

Mental Health – Building Resilience:

CUPE Senior Health and Safety Officer Troy Winters discussed ways of building resilience and supporting your mental health in a difficult time. Troy told the Task Force that there are two ways to cope with stress: reduce the stress load or increase resiliency. Troy reminded us that this is not about taking on infinite amounts of stress in the workplace but about ensuring our own health and safety. He urged members to identify which factors are affecting our resiliency and to put together a plan to address them, including getting a good night's sleep, turning off screens, building a schedule, getting enough exercise, and making sure to do things you enjoy regularly.

Members who want to share a resource on mental health with their locals can share Troy's Counterpoint article on resiliency: <https://cupe.ca/improving-mental-resiliency-during-covid-19>.

Updates on BC and Ontario Campaigns:

For the first time, the CUPE BC Colleges and Universities sectors are collaborating together on a campaign, along with the student union staff, to defend the public funding of the post-secondary sector and fight back against austerity. The cost-share aspect of the campaign has been approved and the campaign will be launching sometime in 2021.

The Ontario post-secondary sector has also embarked on a campaign to build the capacity of members to defend public services, fight austerity, and oppose corporatization, privatization, and contracting out. The campaign is looking to book off a member at every campus who will work to ensure that members at each campus get the training that they need to carry out the campaign, whether it's learning about the issues, learning how to read institutional budgets, or how to have one-on-one conversations with other members, family, and friends.

PSE Funding:

Public funding for post-secondary education has declined significantly over the past thirty years, leading to a shift from the majority of funding coming from governments to less than half. As a result, universities and colleges have become more reliant on tuition fees and private money from corporations and donors. Universities and colleges have tried to fill the gap with tuition dollars from international students, leading to

a major increase in both the rates of tuition for international students and the number of international students who are recruited to come to Canada. But the nonregulation of this system is creating a very unfair and unsustainable situation where international students are being exploited and universities and colleges ended up being very precarious as soon as the pandemic hit and affected international enrollment. The Task Force discussed the need to increase public funding to make the system more sustainable, to decrease the exploitation of international students, and to prevent the shift to private donations and contracts that allow corporations and wealthy donors to dictate the priorities of post-secondary institutions.

Education for All Campaign:

CUPE National is participating in a new, multi-partner campaign called Education for All to promote a vision of what high-quality, publicly funded post-secondary education in Canada could and should look like. The campaign is being developed with the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Federation of Students, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. It will be launching at the end of January with a website and a Zoom panel, with another launch aimed at media and politicians in early February.

The campaign will have research reports, digital ads, and social media shareables to raise awareness of the issues and engage members and the public to sign up. Once they have signed up for the campaign, there will be a ladder of engagement to move people from small steps of support (signing a pledge, posting a Tweet) to larger steps of support (calling their MP, having conversations with friends and family). Chandra will circulate more information on the launch as soon as it is available and Task Force members are asked to share it with their locals and their regions.

Update on CUPE National work on PSE:

Chandra updated the Task Force on work that is underway at CUPE National, including:

The development of tools for locals, stewards, and members on the issue of sexual violence and harassment in post-secondary institutions. Depending on the timing of our next meeting, Chandra may bring these tools to the next meeting for review or may circulate them by email for comments.

Mapping contracting out of food services, custodial services, and student residence

management at colleges and universities in Canada, including looking at wages, benefits, and working conditions, and digging into the corporate finances of the big contract holders.

Mapping the corporate connections of Governors and senior administrators in the sector, beginning with universities, identifying who is from the corporate sector and what corporations they have links to.

Indigenous PSE and Indigenization of PSE:

The Task Force discussed the issue of Indigenous post-secondary education and Indigenization of our post-secondary institutions and what resources and tools would be helpful to CUPE members and CUPE locals. Task Force members agreed that we need to start with the basics, developing a vision statement of what Indigenization means to CUPE members. That statement can then be used for a conversation about what tools or resources are necessary to locals and to members to implement the vision. Task Force members highlighted the potential for audiovisual tools, including videos of Senator Murray Sinclair or survivors. Finally, Task Force members noted that it would be helpful to have an update on Senator Sinclair's presentation to the Vancouver convention. What has been Canada's progress in implementing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Where do we need to do more work?

In solidarity,

BOB JONES
(Local 1975)



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