

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Public Services Recovery, Restoration and Enhancement – Post-Secondary Education
Canadian Union of Public Employees–B.C. Region • May 2020

This document is meant as a guide for CUPE National Servicing Representatives (Reps), locals, specialists and other CUPE activists working in the post-secondary sector in the coming eight to twenty-four months. It combines the issues likely facing members on the ground with the broad advocacy goals for the sector provincially to ensure that all elements of advocacy for CUPE PSE sector members work in collaboration towards a common set of goals. The document is thus a resource guide that will be regularly updated with up-to-date information that can be accessed on an as-needed basis.

This document was created in accordance with the B.C. Restart Plan and in consideration of the safety principles and protocols put forward by the Provincial Health Officer, Ministry of Health and WorkSafeBC.

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SECTION I – THE AIM OF CUPE’S ADVOCACY AND THIS DOCUMENT

As CUPE locals seek to restore and maintain full¹ and safe employment for all members, members and staff must ensure that collective agreements are respected, that necessary adaptations are in place to adhere to safety principles and that temporary amendments to collective agreements (LOUs, etc.) are negotiated where adaptations and operational changes are required. Also, vigilance is needed to prevent employers from using the current pandemic/recession and associated operational disruptions to advance agendas of privatization and contracting-out.

COVID-19 has revealed the damage done by austerity programs (neo-liberalism) that de-fund and privatize public services across all sectors, including post-secondary education in B.C. The economic downturn exposes and highlights the need for a fully funded, affordable and high-quality system of public post-secondary education. Coordinated and strategic advocacy is needed to repair the damage done, and to build capacity among our public colleges and universities to be engines of economic and social recovery.

Purpose & Goals

The following outline CUPE’s broad goals in seeking full operation of public colleges and universities in a safe manner, and for advocating for the expanded support and funding for public post-secondary education:

- Safeguard our collective agreement protections and our members’ economic well-being;
- Advocate for increased funding for post-secondary education, student supports and research to address systemic issues revealed by the pandemic and increase research and educational capacity in the system;
- Challenge the privatization of campus services and seek opportunities to contract-in previously privatized services;
- Advocate for a return to in-person learning and face-to-face instruction as soon as is safe to do so, even if on a reduced, part-time basis with the assistance of physical distancing practices, operational adaptations and engineered solutions;
- Provide guidance to locals on COVID-19-related workplace safety adaptations (physical distancing, engineered controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment) in the unique contexts of different campus services and operations;
- Engage in contingency planning to respond to the ongoing pandemic, including rapidly emerging or unexpected changes and the significant future uncertainty;

¹ Full employment in this context means the restoration of employment to pre-pandemic levels. These levels were themselves the subject of advocacy due to loss of regular employment through contracting-out and the increasing use of precarious workers in place of regular employees. Further, where full employment in this context is limited by the effects of COVID-19, locals are encouraged to seek solutions that maintain members’ employment relationship and avoid vacancies (which are easier to eliminate than occupied positions).

- Support institutional implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (specifically articles 14 and 31)², and advocate implementation of the applicable TRC calls to action, including 62 (ii) (iii) (iv) and 65³;
- Advocate for an increased role for post-secondary education in responding to the climate crisis through improvements to campus sustainability and increased investment in research and innovation related to climate change mitigation and prevention, green energy technologies, and habitat protection/ecosystem restoration.

SECTION II – COVID-19's IMPACT ON AN ALREADY UNDERFUNDED PSE SYSTEM

Read this section for information on CUPE's place in the B.C. PSE system, the design of the system, the effects of COVID-19 on colleges and universities, expected challenges and opportunities the current situation provides. This section is of higher value to those new to the sector or whose experience is limited to their own institution, to those unfamiliar with the breadth of CUPE's sectoral presence, or those seeking information on the threats and opportunities COVID-19 brings about.

CUPE is the principle education union in B.C., representing in every level of B.C.'s education systems, from early childhood education to post-graduate education and research. In post-secondary education, CUPE represents more than 8,500 members who provide support, trades/technical, clerical, teaching and other such services to each respective campus community. CUPE's post-secondary education workers are divided into the college sector and university sector. The college sector consists of all those who work at institutions falling under the College and Institutes Act as well as those universities that were colleges prior to 2008. The university sector includes members at the four research universities and those at Royal Roads University. A large number of CUPE members working at universities are themselves students, serving in teaching assistants, research assistants and in other graduate-study-related employment roles.

COVID-19 forced the majority of campus operations across the province to shut down completely, and those that remain open are operating at a fraction of their past capacities and roles. Programs and courses that could be transitioned to online learning have been moved online, and those that require in-person education (trades programs, science labs, professional programs with practica and other hands-on learning requirements) have been suspended, as have a range of research projects for which physical attendance is necessary.

Suspension of face-to-face (F2F) learning has gone hand-in-hand with closure of campus services, reductions in residence populations, and the shift to campus staff working from home. CUPE members in regular full- and part-time positions experienced continued full employment under the province's wage continuation mandate through to April 30. Casual, auxiliary and term/contract members had their employment discontinued at the conclusion of their appointments. As of May 11, a very limited number (51) of CUPE members in the B.C. college and university sector have been laid off as a result of COVID-19. This number is expected to

² https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

³ http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

change in the coming weeks as institutions make operational decisions about the upcoming fall semester. To date, the trend emerging is that wherever possible learning will be delivered online. For our members who provide instruction this may provide increased work, for our members who support college or university communities this will likely significantly decrease the amount of work available as on-campus attendance remains drastically reduced for at least the next seven months.

Moving forward in an environment of continued physical distancing means the ongoing suspension of most F2F learning, limited on-campus attendance by students, operational changes and potential scope reductions for campus services, and a range of other measures that will change the nature of campuses in the coming 8 to 24 months. Further, limits to international travel and changes to learning models have, and will continue to, stress international student enrolments causing substantial shortfalls in expected for-profit tuition fee revenue. This, coupled with increased domestic demand due to a deep and potentially multi-year recession, will cause immense financial strain on the post-secondary system, which is already suffering significant financial stress due to 16 years of decreased per-student funding under the B.C. Liberal government.

Universities and colleges are vital engines of economic recovery. They provide necessary retraining to unemployed and underemployed workers, which is of particular benefit to those whose skills and qualifications are misaligned with the current labour force demands. Additionally, post-secondary education provides an important mechanism to reduce unemployment as those entering the education system are temporarily removed from the labour market surplus. Taken together, these two roles mean that our colleges and universities are positioned to take surplus labour for which there is no work, and provide the skills and training necessary to reintegrate workers into the labour market in areas where demand outstrips supply. A further benefit is that while in study, unemployed workers have access to a range of programs and services that provide socio-economic supports and thereby relieve pressure from other government programs already stressed with record-high unemployment. The important caveat to the above is that the post-secondary system can only perform this critical role if it is properly funded, properly staffed and providing the services students and their families require.

All CUPE members in the post-secondary sector benefit from increased enrollment in post-secondary education, and many CUPE members both inside and outside the sector benefit from improved access to affordable post-secondary education and investments in college and university funding.

SECTION III – PROTECTING MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND WORK IN THE COMING MONTHS

Read this section for information on unique operational considerations for PSE in dealing with workplace adaptations and safety measures, and for PSE-specific challenges to members' rights. This section will be of most use to Reps and locals in guarding against regressive sector-specific trends when navigating operational adaptation issues, and also serve as a mechanism to help gather information from members and share it across the sector in B.C.

B.C.'s post-secondary system is somewhat fragmented with the 25 public institutions spread between four categories of college, institute, teaching university, and research university. Even within each category, each institution's culture, program offering, and governance can be quite different; however, the realities of service delivery and design across all 25 institutions include a number of similarities in operational models. This similarity enables CUPE locals to design their ideas for safety and operational adaptations on a service-by-service basis.

As institutions implement operational changes and adapt services to operate in the 'new normal' it is advantageous to share best practices across the sector. This will ensure services are able to continue safely across the province, providing employment for CUPE members and vital services for students.

Identification of CUPE Member Employment Areas

The following areas of operation consolidate the typical venues for CUPE member employment in post-secondary institutions into common categories. A full list can be found in Appendix I.

- Campus Recreation and Varsity Athletics
- Campus Life
- Student Services
- Facilities, Security and Maintenance
- Ancillary Services
- Residence
- Academic Services
- Registration Services
- Research
- Libraries
- Arts and other facilities
- International Education
- Teaching Services
- Administrative Departments and Functions

Development and Implementation of Operational and Safety Adaptations

Gathering Information

Work is required to assemble data on operational and safety adaptations for the functions listed above, which ideally can be consolidated into a smaller number. Processes to gather data include:

- Gather information internally on current work adaptations using surveys, conference calls, etc. with members and CUPE National staff.

- Online surveys to identify and assess student and facility needs, including gaps in services, to assist in advocating for restoration of suspended or reduced services/operations.
- Informal focus groups of CUPE members to gather input and bring forward ideas, guidance & recommendations.
- Gathering information from CUPE National sector staff, researchers and other regional coordinators.

Sharing Information

Information gathered on adaptations can be sorted into a list of best practices and provided to locals for use with employers. Information will be shared primarily through conference calls with presidents and Reps, and by the provision of written materials that will act as appendices to this document. Information can also be shared with the CUPE National sectoral staff, national and provincial committees, and sector coordinators in other regions.

Potential Threats to Member Rights and Safety

In seeking to support locals/members in averting layoffs and protecting their rights, and in advocating for the safe operation of the services noted above, the following sector-specific considerations should be contemplated when negotiating LOUs and/or framework agreements. The list below is in addition to the common issues facing all CUPE members equally.

- Work being devolved to student employment
 - Student employment programs create lucrative opportunities to leverage summer students to perform work that could be done by redeployed regular members, and in 2020, additional federal investments in funding of summer jobs increases this risk.
- Privatization, Contracting-out, and Service Discontinuation
 - Public sector budget shortfalls together with austerity politics are often used to justify contracting-out and privatization of good paying unionized jobs during times of crisis. This is equally true in post-secondary education where this pattern already exists across a variety of campus services and trades labour. Further, in post-secondary education financial crises has also been used to justify commercialization of campuses in the form of corporate sponsorships of buildings, rooms/spaces and programs.
 - Colleges and universities divesting of services could view the pandemic adaptation period as a time to accelerate such plans and cease offering services like tutoring, learning centers, and poorly performing food service outlets.
 - The private sector increasingly sees universities and colleges as venues for profit and this has manifested itself in the form of privately-run residences and recreational facilities, and in design/build/operate models for construction.
 - Vigilance is needed to ensure senior administrators are not using the current scenario to expand this trend, but rather locals should be using the current

situation to argue for contracting-in services and facilities that have previously been privatized or contracted-out.

- Working from home, and online teaching and learning - temporary
 - As elsewhere, members working from home lack necessary supports for data use, office equipment and ergonomic supports; however, additional considerations exist for several groups of post-secondary workers dealing with students and student data.
 - Supports should be provided to ensure that home office set-ups are sufficient to process the necessary data-intensive software and that measures are being taken to protect personal information being passed through home internet connections. Members being asked to use home internet connections should not bear liability for protection of privacy in regard to their home office, software and internet connections when it is the employer's responsibility to supply commercial-grade equipment, connections and protections
 - There should be clear standards for online teaching and learning, and online student evaluation that are set democratically by senates, education councils and others in order to protect academic integrity and freedoms.
 - Supports should be provided to sessionals, lecturers, teaching assistants, and other CUPE members participating in teaching/learning to where they are asked to convert to online learning models.
 - There should be an allowance (compensation) provided for additional time required to undertake online teaching and learning as compared to F2F models.
 - Some institutions may seek to increase the use of contract faculty in place of hiring regular sessionals or lecturers.
- Working from home, and online teaching and learning – permanent
 - Institutional administrators may seek to continue online learning beyond the pandemic as a means to save money where F2F teaching is more costly, and the initial cost barriers (the cost of converting to an online format) have already been overcome. Such a move would reduce on-campus attendance by students and potentially limit the quality of education, and access to campus services (which are run in large part by CUPE members), though may increase employment for TAs, lecturers and other CUPE members directly involved in classroom practice.
 - While some online learning provides benefits, moving courses, cohorts or programs online for cost savings undermines quality education and is a detriment to teaching and learning.
 - The topic of online and distance learning is complex with many considerations and variables. Please consult Appendix III for more information if your institution appears to be moving courses, programs or cohorts online on a permanent basis.
- Redeployment
 - Without a negotiated framework agreement or LOUs, what are the rules for redeployment and what are the implications for declining redeployment?
 - For institutions with multiple CUPE locals, could a member be redeployed to a different bargaining unit? Is this something CUPE wants to advocate for or

against? Thought should be given to this topic in advance of it being raised by the employer.

- For institutions with multiple campuses, could a member be redeployed to a different campus? What would be the considerations for such a redeployment?
- Multiple Workplaces/Campuses
 - Some CUPE members are required to work in different campus offices at different times of the week, including at different campuses. Given the need to keep communities small and limit travel, will this practice be discontinued?
 - The trend in B.C. over the past two decades has been the closure of regional campuses and centers, which has greatly disadvantaged rural and suburban communities. Work is needed to ensure this trend is not continued.
- Sectoral health and safety standards
 - Other sectors benefit from sector-wide health and safety standards that do not seem to be in place for colleges and universities and given the diversity of institutional operations there is unlikely to be one unified standard for all facets of an institution.
 - Consider in advance the standards for refusing unsafe work in the PSE sector, and in particular for the areas in which each local's membership works.
 - Consider what accommodations could be made for those with existing health challenges in the different areas in which each local's members works.
 - Transitioning to online learning reduces human connections between and among students, faculty, TAs and other staff. Institutions should have a pro-active mental health strategy to support positive mental health during this period of disruption.
 - Consideration should be given to what adaptations ought to be made to sexual violence and misconduct policies and procedures to address the more distanced learning models.
- Duration of Adaptive Period and Cyclical Nature of Institutions
 - Universities and colleges face unique challenges as they operate on a cyclical basis in four-month semesters (or in annual cycles for many trades programs). Changes to operating practices are difficult to alter mid-year and especially difficult mid-semester, and as a result institutional planning commonly occurs several semesters ahead.
 - How do these considerations affect pandemic-related changes in terms of applying and relaxing adaptations, and eventually ending adaptations post-pandemic?
 - Consideration is required on the implications, if any, of the cyclical nature of institutions on layoffs, recall, recall periods and other such elements contemplated by adjustment plans and LOUs. Each institution functions differently and has a different planning and operation culture, so these considerations may vary between different colleges and universities.
 - Where job sharing or EI-Job Sharing are considered, is there a benefit/opportunity to enable workers to work a semester-on/semester-off model rather than half days or week-on/week-off model?

- Disproportionate cuts and reductions leading to service/function elimination
 - Given the diversity of roles performed by CUPE members, it is quite possible that the impacts of the pandemic will be experienced very differently by different groups of members (by institution type, bargaining unit or by areas of work). Locals should work to limit disproportionate negative effects on members serving in different support, research, teaching, library and other roles.
 - Where an institution is allowed to greatly reduce or suspend a particular area of operation or service, that work will be more difficult to restore after a prolonged period of adapting to its absence.
- Equity
 - Some CUPE work at colleges and universities can be highly gendered and racialized, and/or feature a predominantly younger workforce. Given that the racialized workers, young workers and workers who identify as women disproportionately experience the negative effects of the pandemic, locals should seek strategies to mitigate this.
- Retraining and Education
 - Could there be provisions for laid-off members to access courses and programs of their respective institution as a means to either remain employed (being paid to undertake upgrading that is of benefit to the employer), or at the very least gain access to education without paying tuition and other institutional user fees?
- Campus Access - Public Transit
 - Post-secondary institutions are commonly high-volume public transit hubs in their respective communities and equally commonly rely on public transit to move students and staff on and off campus.
 - Cuts to public transit would have a devastating effect on access to college and university campuses and joint advocacy with other campus groups is recommended to ensure that transit frequencies are maintained.

SECTION IV – ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

This section is designed to outline the goals (asks) and means for advocating improvements to post-secondary education in B.C. over the coming 8 to 24 months. This section is of most use to those wishing to implement that advocacy among local members (public advocacy or public media campaigns, etc.), participate in/contribute to provincial advocacy (including regional work or work among college/university or research university sub-sectors), or simply remain informed on the topic. The inclusion of this information is to ensure that the different CUPE functions do not occur in silos and that advocacy occurs in a collaborative and inclusive manner.

Recommended Improvements to B.C.'s Post-Secondary System

As a means to both expanding the post-secondary system, restoring public funding, improving affordable access, and aiding in B.C.'s recovery, college and university locals could advocate for the following elements in the timelines noted.

Immediate Needs

- Bridge funding from the B.C. government to offset lost international student revenue and COVID-specific funding to aid B.C. institutions adapt services and delivery models for the 'new normal'.
- A review of the funding model with the goal of increasing per-student funding, reducing reliance on international education and other for-profit activities, and restoring majority public funding.
- Targeted funding to increase capacity in key areas for economic recovery:
 - Trades programs (red seal certified);
 - Professional programs⁴;
 - Health programs;
 - Graduate education and research.
- Increased funding for student financial assistance to facilitate:
 - Student loan forgiveness for low- and middle-income families;
 - Increased levels of grant funding, through both the B.C. student grant program and through targeted grants to align with labour market needs (both by program and by region).
- Increased funding to address deferred maintenance issues and to support renovation projects using in-house staff.

⁴ Professional programs is used here to represent the range of university and college programs that prepare students for a career in which mastery is required to enter, and this generally corresponds to those professions overseen by a professional organization or college of practice. Examples include common programs like nursing, teaching/early childhood education, engineering, and social work, but also include more specialized post-graduate programs like urban planning, occupational therapy (and other related rehabilitation sciences), medicine, psychology, and radiation sciences.

Ongoing Priorities

- Complete the review of B.C.'s international education strategy, and create an updated strategy to lower reliance on international student revenues as a funding mechanism.
- Make the necessary investments to mobilize the resources of the post-secondary system (through education, training, innovation and research) to help B.C.:
 - Contribute to the global effort to find a vaccine/treatment for COVID-19;
 - Provide assistance to health authorities in treating and resolving the opioid overdose crisis;
 - Develop options to address housing affordability and homelessness;
 - Implement the UNDRIP and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action;
 - Address the climate crisis and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Progressively reduce all tuition fees to the point of elimination and replace lost user fee revenue with increased public funding.
- Restore public funding to not less than 75% of institutional base-budgets, including:
 - restoration of the annual capital allowance;
 - increased research funding;
 - increased funding for long-underfunded campus services (student support, libraries, etc.).
- Ensure that colleges and universities are themselves operating in a progressive manner by mandating that each institution:
 - Become a fair wage employer;
 - Reducing precarious work (converting and combining auxiliary/casual and seasonal employment into regular, full-time, year-round jobs);
 - Implement the UNDRIP and the TRC calls to action in regard to their own operations and academic work;
 - Maximize the sustainability of their own operations;
 - Make investments in student, family and faculty housing;
 - Create child care facilities as part of new capital projects to meet the child care needs of students, staff and faculty⁵;
 - Contract-in services previously outsourced, in particular those provided by non-fair wage employers;
 - Ensure that movement of courses and programs online is a temporary measure and does not become a permanent tool of institutions seeking to save money by cutting face-to-face delivery.
- Funding for shovel-ready capital projects that expand capacity in the system, including examine the restoration/expansion of regional campuses and centres in the college system.

⁵ Notwithstanding CUPE's central advocacy goal on public child care being its provision within the existing school system, other progressive options for affordable public child care exist. Child care delivered in-house by universities and colleges for staff and students, and in particular those who live on campus, is a model that aims to meet the needs of a target user group whose daily activities are tied to the campus community in which they participate. Where such services exist, they should be owned and operated by the respective institution and not be contracted-out to a private provider.

- Continued focus on increasing opportunities for apprenticeships, and corresponding funding increases to appreciate training and the Industry Training Authority.

Engagement Strategies

The following are strategies to engage the post-secondary leadership and stakeholders to support the recommendations above. Locals should work collaboratively with each other, and CUPE BC on the necessary advocacy at the local and provincial levels.

Public Advocacy

- Cost share campaigns:
 - Repurposing existing cost share campaigns
 - Creating cost share campaigns
 - Creating a sector-wide cost share campaign with multiple locals (similar to K-12 Presidents Council campaign or municipal regional campaigns)
- Research
 - Research and position papers on key topics for the sector like public funding, online education, or the importance of in-house services.
 - Public opinion polling related to key issues facing the sector and the various roles performed by CUPE members on university and college campuses.
- Create common messaging and free/low cost engagement tools:
 - Social media sharables
 - Op-eds and other earned media
 - Digital engagement tools
- Coalition work:
 - Recruit support from faculty groups, student groups, and other unions representing PSE workers
 - Seek support from a range of stakeholder groups related to the various elements of the recommendations (environmental groups, indigenous organizations, etc.)

Government and Institutional Relations

- B.C. government
- First Nations Governments and authorities
- University Boards of Governors, College Boards and other institutional governing bodies
- Institutional organizations (The University Presidents Council, B.C. Colleges, Association of Universities and Institutes)

APPENDIX I – UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS

This appendix endeavors to provide a complete list of common university and college departments in which CUPE members are employed and is meant to help Reps and presidents think through function-specific challenges and adaptations for each type of service or department. Identified challenges and solutions should be communicated back to coordinators and will be added to this document to form a best practices guide.

- Campus Recreation and Varsity Athletics
 - Recreation programs, lessons, outdoor recreation, intramurals
 - Recreation facilities (pools, gyms, weight rooms, etc.)
 - Varsity athletics (promotion, coaching, etc.)
- Campus Life
 - Student leadership/mentorship
 - Orientation/retention services
 - Events
- Student Services
 - Counselling/Advising
 - Cooperative Education
 - Student employment/career services
 - Health and wellness services, including clinics
 - Access services
 - Indigenous student services and programs
 - Religious services
 - Sexual violence awareness services and programs
 - Student financial assistance
 - Graduate student services
- Facilities, Security and Maintenance
 - General maintenance/minor construction and renovation projects
 - Trades maintenance and repairs
 - Grounds and landscaping
 - Security services/safe walk
 - Parking services
 - Campus planning and development
 - Sustainability services
 - Custodial/janitorial
- Ancillary Services
 - Food services-cafeterias/food preparation
 - Food services-coffee shops/cafes/pubs
 - Campus Catering
 - Bookstore and other retail
 - Printing/print shop
 - Child care

- Residence
 - Residence life services
 - Cleaning services
 - Residence administration
 - Conference services/short-term accommodation
- Academic Services
 - Assessment and testing services
 - Student appeals/judicial processes
 - Ethical conduct/research ethics approvals
 - Teaching and learning services
 - Practical learning – trades equipment and facilities
 - Practical learning - lab equipment and maintenance
 - Practical learning – practicum coordination and placement
 - Information technology
 - Tutoring services
- Registration Services
 - Student records
 - General registration services
 - Convocation/graduation
 - Cashier's office
- Research
 - Services and funding
 - Industry relations
 - Facilities and equipment
 - Research assistants
 - Labs and fieldwork
 - Animal care
- Libraries
 - General library operations
 - Special collections and subject specialties
 - Digital services
 - Physical services – printing, computer use, carrels
- Arts and other facilities
 - Museums
 - Theatres
 - Music and dance studios
- International Education
 - International student services
 - Homestay/housing programs
 - Field schools and exchanges
 - Recruitment services
- Teaching Services
 - ESL and other language learning
 - Teaching assistants/Marking assistants

- Sessional instructors/lecturers
- Lab instructors/assistants
- Music performance instructors
- Administrative Departments and Functions
 - Clerical and administrative
 - Technical and professional services
 - Accounting and financial services
 - Front-line student support (service desks not captured above)

APPENDIX II - POSSIBLE OPERATIONAL ADAPTATIONS

This appendix is designed to help Reps and presidents conceptualize how specific types of spaces and functions may be adapted in the months to come. Please consult CUPE's general recovery document for the principles and overall policies giving rise to these examples.

This appendix contains very specific suggestions for workplace adaptations among common workplace orientations (offices, service desks, meeting spaces, etc.). Most of the examples below are not post-secondary-specific, except for one sub-section so labeled. Input from members regarding safety adaptations and methods to work cooperatively with employers should be sought to aid locals in finding mutually agreeable adaptations that meet the unique challenges of the post-secondary environment.

All employers should follow guidance provided by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), The Ministry of Health, and WorkSafeBC. on how to operate during the pandemic.⁶ All provisions in your collective agreement continue to apply, unless you have negotiated an LOU or adjustment agreement that alters the terms of your collective agreement.

General COVID-19 health and safety considerations:

- Staying informed, being prepared and following public health advice;
- Practising good hygiene – hand hygiene, avoid touching your face and respiratory etiquette;
- Implementing a policy of no exceptions to staying at home and away from others if feeling ill – whether for school, work or socializing (and this must include students);
- Maintaining physical distancing outside the household, e.g., no handshakes or hugs, and keeping personal contacts to a low number, and keeping a safe distance;
- Making necessary contacts safer with appropriate controls, e.g., using plexiglass barriers or redesigning spaces;
- Increasing cleaning of frequently touched surfaces at home and work;
- Considering the use of non-medical masks in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as on transit, while shopping, or in queues; and
- Continuing to reduce personal non-essential travel.

Examples of Adaptations for Common Workplace Orientations

Workspaces

- Where possible continue working from home, at least part-time
- Encourage physical distancing
- Reducing numbers of workers per shift or stagger work hours
- Reducing numbers of patrons/customers allowed inside a building at a single time

⁶ Please see CUPE's general recovery document and B.C. government resources for more information. Specifically, please consult the Go-Forward Strategy found here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-b.c.-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/B.C._covid-19_go-forward_management_strategy_web.pdf

- Encourage frequent handwashing and hand sanitization
- Frequent cleaning of high-touch areas and deep cleaning between and during shifts
- Plexiglass barriers
- Floor markings to encourage 6-foot distancing, one-way traffic in narrow spaces
- Separate and well-marked entrances and exits where possible/practical

Meeting Rooms

- Whenever possible meetings should continue to be scheduled virtually
- For in-person meetings, consider whether they can be held outdoors
- Limit number of participants for indoor meetings
- Ensure physical distancing between participants
- Cleaning before and after meetings
- No distribution of materials (e.g. paper copies of agendas, minutes)
- No food or drink during meetings to reduce face touching

Customer Service Counters

- Ensure physical distancing, such as increased counter depth
- Plexiglass barriers
- Ask people to pay by card, and card tap to reduce the handling of cash
- Consider unique needs of different clients
- PPE provisions such as masks and gloves
- Use a non-medical mask or face covering in situations where reasonable physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, and engineering controls are not available
- Cleaning of the counters and other high-touch surfaces between customers
- Limit number of people inside buildings and enclosed spaces
- Use of hand sanitizer between customers
- Greeter with sanitizer, controlling number of people allowed in the building
- Staff to monitor lines inside and outside the building
- Floor markings to encourage physical distancing
- Separate and clearly marked entrances and exits where possible and practical
- Separate employee entrances/exits where possible
- Specific hours of service dedicated to higher risk populations (seniors, and those with pre-existing conditions for example)
- Consider the possibility of by appointment only service
- Create systems for appointments to be made online, by phone, and in-person to ensure widest possible access
- Accessibility audits
- “Drive through” concept for customer service

Small spaces (i.e. photocopy rooms)

- Adjust maximum occupancy to comply with distancing
- Post signage at door noting max capacity

Shared Spaces

- Mark tables and arrange seating to encourage 6-foot distancing
- Frequent disinfecting of high touch areas
- Staggered times to reduce numbers in enclosed spaces

Elevators and stairwells

- Encourage able-bodied people to take stairs if possible
- For workplaces with multiple stairwells, have separate up and down stairwells
- Prop open doors to stairwells to reduce door handling between floors
- Install automatic door openers where possible
- Adjust maximum occupancy of elevators to comply with distancing
- Clear signage encouraging best practices for elevators
- Frequent cleaning
- Hand sanitizer station just outside the elevator

Washrooms

- Sufficient supplies should be provided to ensure washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap, paper towels and toilet paper and that warm running water is available
- Frequent cleaning schedule
- Signs with good handwashing instructions
- Consider providing public access to washrooms

Recreation Programming

- Recreation staff to organize and model safe sports and activities
- Frequent cleaning of equipment
- Enforcement of limits on participants
- Encourage participants to physically distance in recreation spaces
- Providing clear information to participants
- Organized and monitored outdoor sports
- Adapt recreation programming for outdoor spaces where possible (i.e. music, fitness, yoga)
- Activities and programs in smaller groups

Aquatics

- Heightened priority on maintaining adequate levels of pool water chemistry (sanitizers)
- Encourage facility users to keep their distance (1 to 2 metres) from others wherever possible, specifically those who are coughing or sneezing
- Additional information and training for staff: (e.g., disease transmission precautions when providing first aid and/or performing lifesaving measures)
- Steam and Sauna spaces are closed
- Restrict access to those who are sick or have symptoms

PSE-Specific Adaptations⁷

- Routine daily screening for all staff and students
- Routine and frequent environmental cleaning
- Clear policy for students and staff who have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, with any coughing or sneezing not to attend classes, extracurricular activities, sports or work
- Increased use of online learning balanced against the need of social interaction for learning and development
- Early arrival and self-isolation for 14 days of international students

⁷ This list is per the B.C. government's Go-Forward Checklist, found at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/go_forward_strategy_checklist_web.pdf

APPENDIX III – CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING MOVING DISTANCE/ONLINE MODELS

This appendix outlines some of the complexities, contradictions and challenges in considering the effects on moving curriculum online and related advocacy. This information may be helpful to Locals and Reps seeking to increase or decrease online delivery of courses, programs or cohorts.

In response to the spread of COVID-19, B.C.'s colleges and universities moved swiftly to convert face-to-face learning (F2F) into online delivery in the final month of the Winter (Spring) 2020 semester. Soon thereafter, institutions began considering a more permanent move to online and distance delivery as part of a 'hybrid' model for fall 2020 and beyond, with plans to continue such a model until a viable vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 is available.

Online and Distance Learning in B.C.

Since online learning became enabled through the growth in use and availability of digital technologies it has gained a steady increase in use, but to-date the F2F teaching and learning models remain supreme in delivering college and university curriculum. Though online and distance learning does exist at B.C.'s colleges and universities, it is the exception and not the rule. Most online or distance learning in B.C. is delivered by Royal Roads University, Thompson Rivers University (having absorbed the previously independent B.C. Open University), and Justice Institute. While many other institutions, like BCIT and SFU, have moved into this area of delivery, it still remains a small part of their overall offering.

Online and distance learning is a paradox in many ways. While conversion to online learning is expensive and complex, there are long-term costs savings through reductions in capital spending, larger class sizes and reduced service costs. While online and distance learning is often viewed as substandard both in academic quality and quality of experience, this model may appeal to students seeking options that better enable them to work full-time and study part-time in order to deal with increasing living and education costs. Finally, for international students seeking access to education outside their home country, online and distance learning severely limits the experience for which they are paying, but it could provide opportunities to reduce the time and money spent living abroad for the same end result. In many ways, increased online and distance learning could be much like the growth of large class sizes in first and second year arts and sciences in that it is notably substandard from a teaching and learning perspective and requires large upfront investment, but becomes an accepted part of the university experience as it creates an economy of scale that shifts resources to other functions.

The Impact of COVID-19

If the current situation lasts long enough to justify the investments into an online model, there is little to prevent the model from being retained in those areas of study where the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. This is unlikely to mean that whole programs move online only, but it could introduce, for example, attempts to move courses or groups of courses online (perhaps replacing). COVID-19 adaptations have already seen changes for some hands-on programs like nursing, where the curriculum has been re-organized to front-load theory to enable 8-months of remote learning. Though programs like trades, lab sciences, professional programs and those

requiring fieldwork all have components that cannot be replicated online, they also have theory and lecture components that could be converted to an online or distance model. Other exceptions may include English As a Second Language learning, Adult Basic Education, and Adult Special Education, along with a range of specialized programs, all of which have a large number of weekly F2F contact hours.

In normal circumstances, trading higher quality F2F learning and the benefits of campus life for the convenience and expediency of distance and online models is not necessarily a choice students would make. If online or distance models offered a better experience, access to increased hands-on experience, greater post-graduate prospects or facilitated some greater exchange like lower tuition fees, then there would likely be greater uptake than is observed in current online programming. However, the current situation has forced this model on the current generation of students, and those beginning their college and university careers in September 2020 may know no different model for the first two years of their degree. While no one can know how long a new delivery model takes to become normalized, there is a good chance that with two years of experience and with an ability to demonstrate upsides to the model, university and college administrators have a good foundation for making this change permanent for programs that suited the institution's academic, or more likely, financial goals.

[The Effects on CUPE Members](#)

For most CUPE members, online technologies at campuses have meant less jobs. A good example of this is the student registration and records systems, which moved online in the mid 1990s. The previous paper registration system was work-intensive and required much more person-power to operate than the current online systems (predominately US software Banner and Colleague, both owned by Ellucian Systems). While this information is anecdotal and not the result of a study, CUPE locals have seen first-hand how new technologies on campus enabled institutions to grow student numbers without corresponding increases in support staff. Further, cuts to institutional budgets in the B.C. Liberal era were most extracted from service and support structures as student numbers grew and what little new operational funding there was went to direct instructional costs.

It is hard to envision how the combination of fewer students on campus and a heavier reliance on online technologies results in anything but a contraction of campus operations. Moving students online, if only for part of their education, reduces demand for a range of in-person student support, ancillary and academic services, a decline that could touch a vast range of areas in which CUPE members work. However, for some locals, a growth in online and distance learning could result in increased employment of CUPE members. CUPE locals representing TAs, sessionals and others directly involved in instruction could see an increase in employment due both to the new model of learning, but also due to an increase in enrolment as colleges and universities attract new students who could not have attended classes in-person, but for whom online and distance learning is accessible. It is difficult to know whether the net effect on CUPE membership would be positive or negative, as it would depend very much on the extent to which online and distance learning attracts new students or whether it simply moves in-person students off campus.

Summary

The following are key realities of online learning expansion as a result of COVID-19

- Online and distance learning has high upfront cost with lower long-term operating and capital costs (similar to large class sizes) meaning that if an initial investment is required, it removes a key barrier to expansion of this model. That initial investment is being mandated by the current situation and thus a key barrier preventing expansion of online and distance learning is about to be removed;
- While there is a concern that whole programs move online, this is fairly minimal and the main concern is courses (or years) being permanently delivered online under a 'hybrid' model, or that programs be split between online and in-person delivery (different cohorts);
- While it is deemed by many to be a lesser experience, austerity measures regarding PSE cost and delivery have created demand (currently filled by the privates and by models like Royal Roads, Justice Institute, and TRU Online) for a style of learning that enables students to work full-time through their studies, even if their completion dates are delayed;
- Though some CUPE locals could see increased employment through the hiring of more TAs and others involved in instruction, there would likely be significant job loss among other CUPE locals who represent support, clerical, trades and other PSE workers;
- Whether distance and online learning is a net benefit or loss to CUPE members depends on the extent to which it moves existing students off campus versus attracting new students previously unable to attend under an in-person model;
- Though there may be value in some forms of online learning, any move to make online learning permanent should be based on sound teaching and learning theory that maintains or enhances quality, should include strategies to protect on-campus jobs and the value of campus life, and should not be made for financial/commercial reasons;
- This is a complex issue and most of what is known is based on simple observation and not research. A study of the topic is required to develop a better-informed position.