

EXECUTIVE REPORT – CHIEF SHOP STEWARD/OFFICE COORDINATOR

March 2017

Greetings,

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to act as your Chief Shop Steward/Office Coordinator for the last two years. This Annual Report is based on a current “snapshot” of labour relations between the Union and the Employer to provide a comprehensive “where (most) things are at” overview for the membership. Topics covered (in this order) are:

- Bargaining Committee
- Campaigns
- Communications Committee
- Conferences & Conventions
- Co-op Students
- CUPE SD Fund
- CUPE Supervisors
- Education & Training
- Grievances
- Job Postings
- Joint Advisory Job Evaluation Committee (JAJEC)
- Joint Early Intervention Program (JEIP)
- Labour/Management Cooperation Committee (LMCC)
- Labour/Management Cooperation Committee (LMCC) – Anti-Contracting Out Committee
- Layoffs
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Office
- Realignments/Reorganizations/Restructures
- Recruitments/Replacements/Retentions
- Return to Work
- Shop Stewards
- Student Workers
- Vancouver Island District Council (VIDC)
- Victoria Labour Council (VLC)

BARGAINING COMMITTEE: our current Collective Agreement expires June 30, 2019, and soon, preparations for bargaining must begin. Yes, already. The membership will be vetted for direction, including needs, collaboration, and approved motions. Participation will be key to success! Of

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paramount importance to this Committee is longevity as it provides priceless experience, knowledge, and continuity. One of our past Chairs was on the Bargaining Committee for thirty years. Imagine the unimaginable wealth he brought to the table!

CAMPAIGNS: we have begun an informal campaign – Don't Go In Alone. Our Collective Agreement continues to be understood far less than is desirable and necessary. Many of the provisions are straightforward, but remain relatively unknown among the membership, even though the provisions impact one's daily work life. It is wise to possess knowledge about, at least, the basics. Article 12.04 provides that if you believe an upcoming discussion between yourself and your supervisor may result in discipline, you may request the attendance of a shop steward at that discussion. Also, if you find yourself unexpectedly within such a discussion, at any time, you may request that further discussion be postponed, until a shop steward can be present with you. The need for the attendance of a shop steward is based on your belief, and is at your discretion. So, when you are required to attend such a meeting, Don't Go In Alone. It is in your best interests for your rights, per our Collective Agreement, to be upheld. It serves all College employees well to remember, at all times, we are required to be respectful, cordial, and civil, in the workplace.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Newsletter – a new, free software tool is being used to create our newsletter, *The Pressure Point*. We expect to have the Winter 2017 edition available for distribution around the time of our AGM. Swag – new swag will be purchased this year for distribution at events like CamFest, the New Employee Welcome, membership meetings, etc. Please forward any suggestions for purchases to our office. Website – our website (<https://2081.cupe.ca>) continues to be utilized for various communications (in addition to *Facebook* and *Twitter*). Also, several often-used documents are on the Resources page of our website. Again, let us know if you have any suggestions for additions.

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS: CUPE membership is approximately 600,000 nation-wide, 85,000 province-wide, and approximately 600 at our Local. It is important for our Local to continue to send elected delegates to certain events, which are considered to be our parliament and provide for our way of doing business. For example, the CUPE National Convention, which is held every two years, and the CUPE BC Annual Convention, are two such events. Opportunities for networking, brainstorming, and learning, also, may arise during these gatherings of workers with common interests. Challenges to self may arise, too, for example, deportment, time management, and public speaking. Indeed, well applauded is the "First time Delegate, First Time Speaker," who braves the long walk to an open microphone to share pressing thoughts. Participation in these events is critical to the health of our Union and new delegates are needed all the time. Consider having yourself nominated, during an election at a membership meeting, for an event you think you would like to attend. It is likely at least one other delegate will be experienced and will be able to "show you the ropes," when you are elected!

CO-OP STUDENTS: Letter of Agreement #7 in our Collective Agreement provides for students of certain programs to perform work during their Cooperative Work Term. The Union reviews all such positions and either approves or denies postings. During the last year, only one position, for the United Way for Fall 2016, was sent to the Union to review, and was subsequently approved. A further posting of this position for another term (Fall 2017) is under review at this time.

CUPE SD FUND: the Guidelines have been updated and reviewed several times at the subcommittee level (one Employer representative and one Union representative), then were referred to the Labour/Management Cooperation Committee (four Employer representatives and four Union representatives).

Soon, the Guidelines will be presented to the membership for approval. Significant progress has been made to standardize application approval criteria, which has been favourable to the membership. Increased usage has impacted the balance of the Fund, which is lower than it has been in several years. The carry forward balance at the fiscal year end (March 31, 2017) will be monitored as any of the recreational, career, and total, annual amounts may need to be adjusted. The Fund is a substantial part of the Education Coordinator portfolio and someone needs to step forward into this position. Remember to submit any applications for activities occurring during April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 by March 31, 2017!

CUPE SUPERVISORS: it is recognized that a Cupe supervisor responsible for supervising CUPE workers can create unique challenges in the workplace. In addition to the skills required to effectively perform the duties within a portfolio, far more skills are required for true success when performing supervisory duties. Balancing operational and human needs with College policy and collective agreements can be less than straightforward. Competing interests, unwritten rules, private agendas, hierarchical perceptions, and the almighty dollar can unduly influence important decisions. What is a supervisor to do? Always take the high road. Be consistent. Be humble. Be a "Y" manager. CUPE National has developed a new education workshop titled "Union Supervisors in the Workplace." This one-day workshop provides tips on how unionized supervisors can carry out their duties. If you are a CUPE supervisor and would like to take this course, do let us know.

EDUCATION & TRAINING: opportunities for learning are available for members wishing to acquire or expand skills and knowledge in a comprehensive range of subject areas related to the workplace, personal development, and unions. For example, bullying and harassment, occupational health and safety (incident investigation, hazards, laws and orders, committees, equality, mental injury, ergonomics, harassment prevention, indoor air quality, violence prevention, workload and overwork [coming soon]), conflict resolution, racial justice, human rights, first peoples, literacy, parliamentary procedure, pensions, note-taking, clear language, recording secretary, duty to accommodate, women breaking barriers, women speaking up, public speaking, social media, international solidarity, labour history, privatization, collective agreements, financial officers, bargaining, and union supervisors in the workplace. Targeted education and training provides prudent usage of the Union's funds. Ideally, members would utilize and share their learning with others in the workplace (and beyond). Miscommunications abound in the workplace. It has become critical for members to step forward in many different areas. Best practice may be to have two or three experts on each of a multitude of topics for members to rely upon, in times of need. Help can be needed with documentation, processes, interpretations, interactions, and stewarding. What is stewarding? (I used to wonder the same thing myself.) Yes, stewarding can involve upset people, but there can be so much more, which doesn't involve upset people. Often, having someone kind enough to listen may be one's only need. Perhaps it's understanding a clause, or a policy, or a guideline. Sometimes simply knowing where to find relevant information can be the challenge. How can you help? Are you passionate about something? Are you willing to share your knowledge with others? The benefits of being selfless can have a lifelong impact on the one you help. And you.

GRIEVANCES: unfortunately, too often the Union must rely on this process to resolve issues between the Union and the Employer.

JOB POSTINGS: job postings are sent to the Union, immediately preceding their addition to the College's Careers webpage. Should you need a copy of a previous posting, archived job postings are available

from the Union office. Successful Applicants Lists continue to be only sporadically posted by the College, despite repeated requests by the Union at Labour Management Cooperation Committee meetings for regular, timely postings of this information, which is of utmost importance to our members.

JOINT ADVISORY JOB EVALUATION COMMITTEE (JAJEC): Since June last year, two long-time Union representatives retired and were replaced by one member, then a second member, when they stepped up to sit on this important committee. Minimal time for our retirees and the new members to work together on the Committee provided little opportunity for outgoing knowledge to be shared, which has left our new Committee representatives at a distinct disadvantage. Also, the Employer has failed to adequately inform the incoming representatives in the ways of the committee, which has severely impacted fair and equitable labour relations, and it may be necessary to refer this matter to the Labour/Management Cooperation Committee. The membership needs at least two members to train as alternate committee representatives for better continuity of process, knowledge, and expertise. If you are completing a JAJEC questionnaire and need to refer to a JAJEC manual, please contact the office.

JOINT EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (JEIP): Several meetings with the Employer were held during the past year to review the effectiveness of the Program, since the implementation of the original process and previous mutually agreeable adjustments to the Program. Stability of member representation on its Committee continues to be a challenge. Recently, a member stepped forward to join the Committee, however, at least three more members are needed. The Program was implemented throughout the Province by Employers as a cost saving measure through bargaining. While the cornerstones of the Program are embedded into the language of collective agreements, operational details are unique to each institution. It is that detailing, which has been discussed with the Employer at length. We continue to seek role distinction, ready disclosure, and a healthy attitude, from the Employer, for effective implementation of a wholesome process, which is absolutely in the best interests of the health and wellbeing of all of our members.

LABOUR/MANAGEMENT COOPERATION COMMITTEE (LMCC): the Committee meets monthly to resolve matters requiring bargaining-related discussion. For example, recent resolutions include: a modification to the Modified Work Week Guidelines, certain CUPE SD Fund reimbursements, and SharePoint training. Monthly personnel reports are reviewed, including: layoffs, leaves of absence, casual workers, student workers, resignations and retirements, and new employees. Standing items include: EI Rebate, Modified Work Week applications, CUPE SD Fund subcommittee, On-line Timesheet Pilot Project, the CUPE Benefits Handbook, and Article 28 files.

LABOUR/MANAGEMENT COOPERATION COMMITTEE (LMCC) – ANTI-CONTRACTING OUT COMMITTEE: the Union continues to regularly bring forward concerns regarding work, which may have been able to be performed by CUPE employees, but was contracted out to external vendors. The majority of the concerns are based upon purchase orders and often are easily resolved, when further information becomes known. Possible future initiatives are for the Union to present business plans to the Employer to bring parking, security, and transportation (shuttle bus) in-house (think CUPE jobs). Can you help?

LAYOFFS: during the last year, approximately five layoffs occurred, each due to a lack of work arising from low enrolments. In the last three years, other layoffs occurred, due to the termination of certain programs. While layoffs are undesirable at any time, a lack of work may be a more palatable reason for such an unfortunate change of work status, rather than purposeful, targeted program cutbacks.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY: if you have a workplace health and/or safety concern, the Union's Occupational Health and Safety representatives are available to help resolve the concern. Any concern to be resolved may affect one employee, a few employees, or many employees, and might be a simple concern, or a more complex concern. Our Collective Agreement provides that more complex concerns may be referred to the College's Joint Occupational Safety and Health (JOSH) Committee, of which our representatives are members, for resolution.

OFFICE: the Office continues to be an extremely busy place! For example, arrangements for membership meetings, education and training courses, conferences and conventions, comfort, donations, union leaves, swag, retirement gifts, contact lists, letters, supplies, equipment, are all done through the office, and are in addition to the initiation, maintenance, and completion of all labour relations matters/files.

REALIGNMENTS/REORGANIZATIONS/RESTRUCTURES: Change in the workplace is expected, reasonable, and constant. Recent files have shown communication among all stakeholders is key to facilitate a smooth transition during significant changes affecting numerous personnel. One recent file spanned at least three years and was fraught with problems, most of which arose from a purposeful lack of communication. Another file lasting about six months resulted in successful outcomes, due in large part to inclusivity, and it is a preferred method of operation for future files. Being proactive, collaborative, and transparent, can provide the opportunity to best meet everyone's needs in a respectful way.

RECRUITMENTS/REPLACEMENTS/RETENTIONS: the very real need for members to step forward on a regular basis exists in our workplace. How about you?

RETURN TO WORK: when a member returns to work (RTW) after an extended sick leave, the member must provide medical documentation to RTW either with, or without, restrictions and limitations. When obtaining such medical documentation, it is recommended the member take a copy of their job description to the appointment/s with the doctor/s to help identify the member's need for any restrictions and/or limitations in the workplace. A Manulife Financial representative (MFR) provides a written RTW Plan, which is based on discussions between the MFR and the College's Employee Health Advisor (EHA) about the information in the medical documentation. A meeting is held with the member, their Union representative, their supervisor and/or exempt manager, the EHA, and the MFR, primarily, to review the RTW Plan. (Typically, the attendance of an exempt manager and/or a MFR is only required for more complex files.) It is important to monitor a member's RTW. Adjustments may be made to the RTW Plan if the member is experiencing challenges, or if new medical information becomes known.

SHOP STEWARDS: members are needed to step forward into shop stewarding. It is becoming increasingly difficult to respond to members' concerns in a timely manner. A shop steward investigates an issue to determine if a member's Collective Agreement rights have been contravened, and if so, helps facilitate a resolution. The Union provides shop steward training and mentors are available, until a new steward is ready for sole responsibility for a file. Stewarding may generate opportunity to utilize specialized skills, enhance less developed skills, and create new ones. Helping fellow members can be a rewarding experience and many hands make light work. Consider stepping forward and contact the office today!

STUDENT WORKERS: the Employer and the Union have a [Memorandum of Agreement](#), which is separate from our Collective Agreement and sets out the process for hiring students to perform work duties on campus. While the employed students may enjoy certain aspects of this work, they do not enjoy CUPE

wages and benefits. Unfortunately, the process itself has created difficulties for the Employer, which in turn, has created difficulties for the Union. The Union continues to seek resolution of such difficulties.

VANCOUVER ISLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL (VIDC): I would like to thank the membership for supporting me as a delegate to this Council, and will accept a nomination to continue in this position.

VICTORIA LABOUR COUNCIL (VLC): I would like to thank the membership for supporting me as a delegate to this Council. It has been difficult to fit the monthly meetings into my schedule, so I will be stepping down from this position. I will continue to support our Council delegates, as will the membership.

FINAL WORDS

I will accept a nomination for the Chief Shop Steward/Office Coordinator position at our March 30, 2017 Annual General Meeting. If I am elected, when the new two-year term ends (March 2019), my intention is to retire. It is imperative that another member step forward, as soon as possible, to begin training. Early involvement will provide opportunity to develop familiarity with the duties of the portfolio. Such familiarity is critical for continuity of an established way of doing business, transfer of knowledge, and development of expertise. If another member accepts a nomination for this position, and is elected as the successful nominee, I will wholeheartedly support that member into his or her new role.

Currently, there are a handful of members doing the work for the many. It would be fair, and it makes far more sense, for everyone to step forward in some way. Look at the diversity of this portfolio. What were your thoughts as you read through each of the different items included in this Report. Curiosity? Interest? Passion? Are you a good fit for any of the needs identified in this Report? We would appreciate your help.

My three strongest recommendations to the membership are:

- Hire an office assistant (at least part-time)
- Purchase electronic scanning and storage equipment
- Restructure the Local's Executive Board positions and portfolios

Lastly, I would like to thank the membership for the opportunity to support you in the workplace.

With unity,
Dawn Svendsen

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is easy to think this "Union stuff" is for someone else to do. That everything is being done by everyone else. That no-one else and no more help is needed. Think about that hot dog stand. Volunteers. Everyone taking their turn. Everyone helping out. Everyone contributing to the common good, whether you buy the hot dogs, cook the hot dogs, or sell the hot dogs. Who cares? Everyone.