

EXECUTIVE REPORT – VICE PRESIDENT

March 2017

Greetings,

It has been an honour to serve as your Vice President and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute. 2016 was another eventful year and one that continues to challenge me. I continue to support Staff Development in addition to taking on the Vice President's portfolio. This has been no small feat! Managing the demands of these two extensive positions in conjunction with my 'day job' has taught me much about balance and the importance of finding it.

Staff Development and access to the fund is a continued source of pride for me. Albeit, there have been challenges. Some managers continue to steer members towards the fund as a means of training the workforce. This is not the purpose of the fund and I continue to work hard holding that line. Usage is up and we average about 70 applications a month. Many members are pursuing degrees, specialized training, conferences and conventions, and personal interest activities like languages, painting, cooking and soap making. Also, there has been a significant increase in recreation activities. I admit, it has been hard to carve out additional time to plan workshops on campus but our ability to support Leading Effective Teams, Mindfulness-Based Meditation and the ever popular Retirement Seminar has provided new learning for our members. I look forward to working with a new Education Coordinator this year and finding new opportunities for the membership.

Advocacy is a corner stone of the work your Labour Management Committee performs and as Vice President, I am an active and vocal member at this table. Your committee exists to resolve issues in between bargaining. It is the first step at trying to resolve disputes, differences of interpretation of the Collective Agreement and the opportunity to discuss challenges. There are many topics LMC covers, some confidential and some discussed at the general meetings. This year we were able to make changes to the Modified Work Week process. Now, members can participate without unanimous agreement in a work group. Before, unanimous agreement was needed, which lead to the inability of some workgroups to participate. These changes better support fairness in our workplace. Pending changes to the Staff Development Guidelines are coming too. These changes are a result of filing a grievance. Some members were denied compensation from the fund for a variety of reasons that spanned the fiscal year-end deadline. We were able to negotiate a settlement that reimbursed members who were previously denied. Moving forward, there are strict deadlines and communication has increased to better educate members on what is expected.

EXECUTIVE REPORT – VICE PRESIDENT

As well, we were able to come to an agreement with the Employer regarding Sharepoint! If you need Sharepoint training to perform your work, please contact your supervisor or manager. If there are any issues or concerns please contact the union office for assistance. There have been ongoing discussions involving various department re-organizations too. It is incredibly important to bring forward issues you or others may be facing. Job description re-writes and the re-allocation of duties are not always smooth and without incident. Members of your Labour Management Committee need to know when you are experiencing challenges so we can work towards solutions. Remember, the Collective Agreement is our employment contract. It has been negotiated over years of hard fought gains and is the terms of our employment. This is the mechanism that supports equality in the workplace and promotes fairness amongst divisions. We do not work in isolation. If you are seeking clarity on an article please bring your questions forward. If there is something you need help with, again, please let us know.

I have also taken the lead for the Anti-Contracting-Out Committee. Your team continues to push the Employer for meaningful discussion on ways to perform work in-house. I will continue to work hard to remind managers, directors and others of the incredible skills we have available and the varied services our departments can provide. We support our work and our members first and always. With ever encroaching privatization and outsourcing of services, it is important to be vigilant and speak up when we discover our work is being done by outside vendors. This is an uphill ongoing battle but we must continue to face it with strength and commitment.

Over the last year, I have represented CUPE 2081 as a member of the working group for the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy. CUPE 2081 supports the need for this legislated policy to support students on campus. However, I have been disheartened at the continued lack of process on how staff should proceed, if anyone finds themselves affected by sexual violence on campus. Continued advocacy in conjunction with our CCFA, BCGEU and Student Society brothers and sisters will continue on this important topic. As well, we are working with our colleague unions to find ways to improve the Respect in the Workplace Policy process and empower members when faced with workplace conflict. This topic is ongoing and Camosun union executives continue to meet with HR leadership to discuss ways to improve the process.

Many learning opportunities took me away from home and kept me busy outside of work. I participated in the CUPE Financial Officers Training course as mandated by our by-laws. I went to Kamloops for a week and participated in the CUPE Conflict Resolution and Mediation workshop and attended the Stewards Learning Series facilitated by Vancouver Island District Council. As well, I attended CUPE BC Convention in Victoria as a delegate and flew to Winnipeg as a delegate for the inaugural National Sector Conference as a Post -Secondary representative.

EXECUTIVE REPORT – VICE PRESIDENT

As you can see, I have been busy! There were many long days but I am always willing to step up and represent when needed. With so much happening and many important challenges facing the work we do, I remind myself to take stock of the moments when we do make profound breakthroughs and recognize the moments as they happen. It is easy to get caught on the wheel and to forget to honour the wins when we achieve them. I feel honoured to help out and I draw inspiration from the 600 000 strong CUPE members across Canada. CUPE members work hard each and every day; we work hard for the students who come here, in our communities and across the country. Advocating for equal rights for marginalized groups, for fair working conditions, safety in the workplace, and for pay equity is the foundation of the labour movement. I am proud to be one of 600 000 working for a better future for the working class, for our children and for the rights of all Canadians. I am proud to serve our local and our strong union. I look forward to continuing to serve you, the membership of local 2081.

In Solidarity,

Erynne Grant | Vice President
CUPE Local 2081

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