

April 26-29th, 2017

Convention elections happen every two years. 2017 was an election year so there was a lot of discussion at the microphones by candidates running for positions. There were 515 voting delegates by Election Day morning on Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup>. All the days prior lead up to this big moment. We piloted electronic voting for the first time! There were a few minor glitches but overall, the technology sped up voting immensely. It was also beneficial to be able to see in 'real time' the tabulation of votes as they rolled in. The software and clickers are expensive but it is likely electronic voting will continue into the future and become part of Convention budgeting, if possible.

The positions of President and Secretary Treasurer were uncontested. Paul Faoro and Trevor Davies have been re-acclaimed to their roles for another two years. They are tireless in their commitment to CUPE BC and I know we continue to be well served by their dedication and determination. Amber Leonard and Kirk Mercer were elected as our Regional Vice Presidents, endorsed by Vancouver Island District Council. They bring a depth of knowledge, experience and advocacy that continues to give our region a strong voice in the Province.

The only contest was for General Vice President. This year we had 5 incredible women vying for 4 positions. Cindy McQueen (Metro), Michelle Waite (VIDC), Tanya Paterson (Metro) and Karen Ranaletta (Metro) were all acclaimed. Unfortunately, Alison Pringle (VIDC) was not re-elected but she celebrated the election of her sisters with class and grace. I know we will continue to be represented by powerful, dedicated, strong women. Vancouver Island is represented at the executive board and I know Michelle Waite will continue to be a strong voice for the Island.

Convention covered a myriad of resolutions this year and your delegation was up speaking at the microphone on a variety of topics. A small snap shot of topics: pensions, protection of the Walbran old growth forest, eco-commitments, health care, printing and job protection, libraries-freedom of access and advocacy. Camosun College has the largest CUPE staff of all the colleges in British Columbia. We have a responsibility to support our smaller college locals in pushing forward shared issues and advocating for the rights of all support staff in our sector. Naji Yazdi was a first time delegate and first time speaker. I am very proud of his efforts and his willingness to wade right in. To be a first time speaker at the mic and a first time

delegate never goes unrewarded. Convention hall acknowledges new delegates with boisterous applause and so do we. Good work Naji!

This year was heavy on politics, as expected. John Horgan, Rob Fleming, Carole James and Lana Popham all took the time to join us at Convention. We took the time to go support them at a rally on Friday night at the Alix Goolden Hall. A few of our members were waiting in line when we arrived and I was so proud of each of them for taking the time out of their busy lives to come and listen and to support. There was standing room only in a packed hall. Voting is so important and isn't something to be taken lightly. There are still places in the world where women can't vote, where people are intimidated, threatened and even killed for voting. We must continue to exercise our democratic rights, even when we may feel there isn't fair representation of our issues on the political stage. We must keep talking, participating and working towards a better future, for all. The alternative is untenable.

I am always reminded that Convention is a marathon not a sprint. Long days, passionate discussions and powerful keynote speakers inspire strong emotions. By the end, I am always exhausted but re-inspired, re-energized and ready to roll up my sleeves to do more. I am committed to our local and strive to represent our community in the best way possible. We have a variety of issues facing our sector, our workplace and our departments. Please let me know if you have a particular issue you would like your executive to bring forward to a provincial committee. We have an opportunity to draft resolutions and present our comments and concerns to our provincial executive. They may not become resolutions for debate on convention floor, but we have a voice at the table and we will continue to exercise it. We have a strong voice in our province, a united voice in our sector and the ability to motivate those in our community.

Thank you to the membership for electing me as a delegate to Convention. I am humbled by your continued support and mentorship.

**Erynne Grant** | Vice President

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