

CUPE NATIONAL CONVENTION
Toronto, Ontario
Oct 1-6, 2017
CUPE Local 2081 Delegates' Report

Sunday, October 1st

I am pleased to provide this Report on behalf of Sister Petty Wong, Sister Erynne Grant, Brother Keith Todd, and myself, Dawn Svendsen. Registration for Convention began at 11:30am, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in Toronto, Ontario. We registered promptly, and received our Convention packages, translation devices, and our all-important Credentials. No Credential means no Convention! Fortunately, should a Credential that has been issued be subsequently misplaced by a delegate, the Credential may be replaced with approval of the Convention delegation.

During the afternoon, we attended the optional Post-Secondary sectoral meeting. Of note was that we were the only delegates in attendance from a college, the rest being from universities. While our respective institutional structures may vary, issues are common throughout post-secondary institutions. Similar sectoral meetings were held for Social Services, Libraries, Education, Energy, Municipalities, Emergency and Security Services, Child Care, Transportation, Communications, and Health Care.

Monday, October 2nd

Resolutions adopted on Monday were:

- Indigenous Rights 204: national holiday on June 21 (National Aboriginal Day)
- Communications 21: ethical purchasing (unionized worksites, factories, hospitality services)
- Health and Safety 146: shift work
- Political Action 249: government retailing of marijuana
- Health and Safety 134: working alone

Also, the following reports were adopted:

- Mark Hancock, National President (see <https://cupe.ca/no-turning-back-workers-rights>)
- Charles Fleury, National Secretary-Treasurer (see <https://cupe.ca/sharing-our-resources-all-members-benefit>)
- National Trustees

At midday, CUPE BC held a caucus for its provincial delegates, including CUPE Local 2081. We were pleased to support the various election endorsements recommended by CUPE BC. (Even more pleasing, the candidates we collectively endorsed were subsequently successful in their respective elections!)

Delegates were honoured with yet another passionate Stephen Lewis speech, this one pertaining to the tuberculosis crisis in Nunavut. Read about the speech, or better yet, watch the speech online at <https://cupe.ca/stephen-lewis-raises-alarm-tb-crisis-canadas-north>.

Long-time activist, Brother Gervais Pelletier of Local 1500, received the Health and Safety Award. A short article can be viewed at <https://cupe.ca/gervais-pelletier-honoured-health-and-safety-award>.

Befittingly, Pelletier ended his acceptance speech with his hope that after work, “everyone goes home at night in one piece”.

Tuesday, October 3rd

Various constitutional amendments were adopted on Tuesday, and one was referred back to the National Constitution Committee. Resolutions adopted during the day were:

- Health Care 158: national public drug plan
- Equality 112: racial profiling (*unanimous*)
- Protecting Our Work, Privatization, Contracting Out 299: fully public infrastructure/services (*unanimous*)
- Literacy and Training 219: literacy
- Health Care 154: tiered health care (Cambie Clinic case) (*unanimous*)
- Political Action 253: domestic violence leave (*unanimous*)
- Protecting Our Work, Privatization, Contracting Out 300: political action against privatization
- Literacy and Training 220: federal funding on literacy and essential skills
- Political Action 278: repeal Bill C-51
- Post-Secondary 287: publicly funded post-secondary system
- Equality 103: safer and inclusive union spaces
- Protecting Our Work, Privatization, Contracting Out 308: impact upon indigenous peoples
- Health and Safety 143: sexual violence
- LGBTTTQI Rights 208: education about the challenges for older persons and seniors in Canada
- Health Care 149: ban payment for blood and blood products
- Political Action 252: stabilization of fuel costs
- Health Care 166: National long term care strategy

In addition to the paper copies of reports distributed in the Convention kit, the following National Committees presented videos and report highlights on Tuesday; all reports were carried:

- the National Health Care Issues Committee
- the National Women's Committee
- the National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee
- the National Literacy Working Group
- the National Global Justice Committee
- the National Post-Secondary Task Force
- the National Pink Triangle Committee

The National Executive Board of CUPE presented “*The way forward: Strategic Directions 2017-2019*” to Convention. Delegates voted to refer the document back to the Board for revision and subsequent further presentation to Convention later in the week. This important document creates a “road map” for CUPE as it sets broad priorities which, along with adopted resolutions, establishes a strategic plan for our Union for the next two years.

Guest Speaker Nesrine Malik, a *Guardian* columnist, gave a hard hitting speech about silence breeding racism. See her speech at <https://cupe.ca/silence-breeds-racism>.

Sister Joanne Foote of CUPE Local 6095 (the Hospital Employees' Union, BC) was presented with the Grace Hartman Award, an award recognizing a CUPE activist who embodies the qualities and legacy of

CUPE's first woman President. Also, Sister Yolanda McClean of CUPE Local 4400 received the Ed Blackman Award for work in the pursuit of racial justice and a strong diverse labour movement.

Wednesday, October 4th

Elections were held early Wednesday morning. Brother Mark Hancock (incumbent) was re-elected for a second two-year term as National President and Brother Charles Fleury was acclaimed to a fourth second-year term as National Secretary-Treasurer.

The Convention delegation referred three Emergency Resolutions (801-803) back to the Resolutions Committee. Resolution 89 (CUPE Trials Procedures) was referred back to the Resolutions Committee. Other resolutions presented, debated, and subsequently adopted were:

- CUPE National Committees, Working Groups 61: establish a National Transportation Committee
- Health Care 156: opiate overdose crisis
- Libraries 216: violence against library workers
- Political Action 265: electoral reform, proportional representation
- CUPE Members Education 58: leadership education for young workers
- Pensions and Old Age Security 233: pension benefits
- Libraries 217: need for public services (*unanimous*)
- Political Action 272: New Democratic Party
- Precarious Workers and Living Wage 293: precarious workers

Committee reports carried on the day were:

- National Library Workers' Committee
- National Political Action Committee
- National Young Workers' Committee
- National Advisory Committee on Pensions

Wednesday's speaker was Economist, Armine Yalnizyan. Armine's address was about the current precarious work economy and a call for optimism. See her presentation at <https://cupe.ca/back-future>.

The National Disability Rights Activism Award was presented to long-time activist, Sister Sheryl Burns of CUPE Local 1936. Another passionate speaker, Sheryl expressed her heartfelt thanks for the Award to the Convention delegates and other important people in her life. She used the rest of her allotted five minutes to talk about her past experiences, hard-won progressions, and her continued hopes for the future.

Thursday, October 5th

On Thursday, a fine example of democracy at work shone as delegates debated Constitutional Amendment C8. The amendment was based on the provision of four additional Diversity Vice-President seats on the National Executive Board of CUPE. Debate alternated between speakers at the Pro and Con microphones and many interesting thoughts, opinions, and beliefs were shared. Ultimately, over 1,500 votes were cast, and the amendment was defeated by a narrow margin.

Other resolutions adopted on the day were:

- Indigenous Rights 183: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (*unanimously*)
- Strike Pay 318: strike pay
- CUPE National Conferences and Meetings 63: provision of respite rooms
- Child Care 2: publicly funded and publicly delivered child care services
- Environment 100: workplace food-growing initiatives
- Organizing 229: unrepresented workers
- Health and Safety 126: reporting of incidents, accidents, and near misses

Today's adoptions of Committee reports included:

- National Aboriginal Council
- National Persons with Disabilities Committee
- National Child Care Working Group
- National Environment Committee
- National Rainbow Committee
- National Health and Safety Committee

Elections were held in the afternoon and the successful candidates were:

- General Vice-Presidents:
 - o Brother Denis Bolduc
 - o Brother Fresh Hahn
 - o Sister Judy Henley
 - o Brother Daniel Legere
 - o Sister Marle Roberts
- Regional Vice-Presidents:
 - o Nova Scotia: Sister Nan McFadgen
 - o Newfoundland and Labrador: Sister Sherry Hillier
 - o New Brunswick: Brother Brien Watson
 - o Prince Edward Island: Brother Leonard Crawford
 - o Quebec: Brother Benoit Bouchard and Brother Patrick Gloutney
 - o Ontario: Sister Candace Rennick and Brother Michael Hurley
 - o Northern Ontario: Sister Amanda Farrow-Giroux
 - o Manitoba: Brother Gord Delbridge
 - o Saskatchewan: Brother Tom Graham
 - o Alberta: Brother Rory Gill
 - o British Columbia: Brother Paul Faoro and Sister Donisa Burnardo
- Diversity Vice-Presidents:
 - o Sister Gloria Lepine
 - o Sister Yolanda McClean
- Alternate Diversity Vice-Presidents:
 - o Brother Larry Giffin
 - o Brother Alistair Maduray

- National Trustee:
 - o Brother Luc Cyr

Guest speaker Dalila Awada took to the stage to speak about combatting Islamophobic racism in Canada. Her thought-provoking comments can be viewed at <https://cupe.ca/society-must-fight-islamophobia-says-awada>.

Sister Maria Moriarty of CUPE Local 1582 received the National Literacy Award.

Friday, October 6th

Resolutions passed before quorum was lost around midday were:

- CUPE Governance 36: union structure
- CUPE Trial Procedures 89: review of trial procedures

The CUPE National Youth Council, comprised of youths of parents attending Convention, presented a video, which highlighted their activities during the week. It was heartening to see their enthusiasm, good humour, and freshness, after a long Convention week.

One of Friday's highlights was when newly-elected federal NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh, addressed Convention. Jagmeet easily connected with the Convention delegates, presenting himself as a personable, engaging, and charismatic speaker, leader, and visionary. View his speech online at <https://cupe.ca/ndp-leader-brings-love-and-courage-cupe-delegates>.

The CUPE National Communications Awards were presented as follows:

- Best Local Campaign: CUPE Local 416 (ON): *"Kicked to the curb"*
- Best Story: CUPE Local 957 (QC): *"50 ans d'histoire"*
- Best Overall Content: CUPE BC (BC): *"The Public Employee"*
- Best Photo: CUPE Local 1253 (NB): *"I love public services"*
- Best Use of Social Media: CUPE Local 728 (BC)

In summary, please do contact the office, if you are interested in reviewing any of the Convention documentation. For example, detailed Constitutional Amendments, detailed Resolutions, Committee Reports, etc. Several links to specific Convention highlights have been provided in this Report. Other items of interest may be found at <https://cupe.ca/>.

On behalf of all four of your 2017 CUPE National Convention delegates, please accept our thanks for the honour to represent you at this year's Convention.

Thank you and with respect,

Sister Dawn Svendsen, Chief Shop Steward/Office Coordinator
Brother Keith Todd, President
Sister Petty Wong, Secretary-Treasurer
Sister Erynne Grant, Vice-President