

2020 FALL UPDATE REPORT – APRIL ATKINS, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COORDINATOR

December 7, 2020

I would like to start by saying thank you to all those who have supported me in my journey learning more about being an Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator for CUPE 2081. I appreciate the continuous opportunities to learn more and support our members within our union.

Joint Early Intervention Program (JEIP)

- I continue to attend scheduled monthly meetings reviewing details of CUPE staff on leave and finding ways of supporting where needed, whether it be recommending accommodations or making a phone call to help fill out a medical form. I connected with several members to ensure they were informed and offered support where needed. The committee is well organized and I appreciate the tone of the meetings with respect and care.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC or JOSH)

- We are always open to having new members join this committee. The new agenda format developed organized meetings. Members support various roles with each other on the committee as a whole.
- I work closely with Facilities Manager Julie Oakley on Incident Investigations, First Aid, Near Misses and concerns that need addressed. We continue to develop better ways on reporting to the committee with monthly check-ins to review cases.
- Conducted a few WorkSafeBC Incident Reports with Julie, meetings with members via ZOOM were handled with respect and care.
- I connected with WorkSafeBC, Will Roff the Occupational Hygiene Officer, to share my perspective on how safety measures appeared at the college.

Shop Steward

- Experienced my first Shop Steward support. Happy to help when needed.

Workshops

- November 9, 2020 – **Health and Safety Webinar: Dealing with COVID in BC.** An informative on-line presentation that reflects the college's safety awareness practice.

- November 3 and 17, 2020 – **Introduction to Stewarding** – Part 1 and 2. Understanding the role of a Steward, tips and information on Labour Arbitration in Canada. We also reviewed grievances and ways on writing a fact sheet.
- December 2, 2020 - **Respect in the Workplace for Leaders**. An informative, well-arranged virtual course worth taking.

BC Federation of Labour Convention – November 25, 2020

- Thank you CUPE 2081 for your support having me attend this virtual convention. It was a well-organized two-day event with a few motions and several resolutions voted on. The experience was so educational and I experienced steps to social change and community support. There were definitely moments where I could see what our college continues to support are areas where attention needs to be highlighted.

When I first came to Camosun College over 25 years ago, I felt that those on the Union Executive were a bunch of radicals, “Debbie downers” and were serious people, often upset. I became inspired to join the executive committee as our Union supported me during a time when I was struggling with health concerns; it was time to give back. What I learned during my experience on the JOSH Committee, JEIP Committee and opportunities learning at workshops was to develop the confidence to support social change. What an amazing Union Executive we have here at Camosun College, ready to step forward and support our members. My perspective has changed and I would invite any CUPE 2081 for coffee to chat about what an amazing team we have and how every member has the power to change. Thank you CUPE 2081, I am proud to be a member of Camosun College and thankful for all given to me throughout the years. My eyes have opened and I am grateful.

May we all celebrate the holidays as diverse Canadians and embrace how privileged we are to have a voice for social change.

Stay Safe and Healthy
In Solidarity,

April Atkins
Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, CUPE Local 2081