CUPE2081
ON THE FRONT LINE

Campus Steward – Jesse Scott

2021 Summary

The past year saw a return to campus for many members and a return to some pre-pandemic normalcy in their work lives. At the same time it left many others wondering why some of the positive changes in work/life balance, such as being able to work remotely, weren't being embraced. Members differing levels of concern or fatigue with the pandemic continually reminded me of the fact that we are more than our work-selves, and in order for us to maintain the strength and vitality of our Union, we must treat each other with kindness, empathy, respect and compassion – regardless of our different experiences.

In 2021 I continued to serve the membership as an Executive Steward. I am lucky to work along side such a strong and passionate Executive who graciously offer me support and guidance as I continue to develop in this role. Working as a steward is challenging and rewarding. I feel very passionate about advocating for workers rights and being able to support members in understanding the Collective Agreement and ensuring they are treated fairly by the Employer.

With encouragement from other Executive members I have been able to expand my involvement in the union by continuing to participate as an alternative CUPE representative on the JEIP (Joint Early Intervention Program) committee alongside Vice President Shane Johnson and OHS Coordinator April Atkins. I attend monthly meetings where the status of members on medical leave are reviewed. I have been able provide support to members by assisting with Manulife forms, and as stated above by being present at GRTW meetings welcoming members back after extended leaves of absence.

At the beginning of 2022 I also began to shadow Job Evaluation Coordinator Milo Anstey in order to assist with her work on the Joint Advisory Job Evaluation Committee (JAJEC). Though I have only been able to attend two meetings thus far, I look forward to future involvement, and being able to support the membership in this area by deepening my understanding of the committee itself and of the many varied and vital jobs CUPE members perform at the college.

Finally it is sweet and sour to announce that I will not seek re-election as Campus Steward for 2022 as I will be beginning my maternity leave in April. I would be remiss not to mention that the maternity leave I am being afforded was won in 1981 by striking members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, whose victory increased Maternity leave to 17 weeks – which lead the idea of a longer maternity leave to the mainstream and was legislated because of their solidarity. In 1979, Quebec's Common Front had fought to give education and health workers a negotiated 20 weeks of fully paid maternity, 10 weeks leave when parents adopted a child, and five days of paternity leave. Adoption leave, paternity leave, and parental leave – available to either parent – were routinely negotiated with employers and won by strong union advocates. My deep thanks and appreciation goes to my sisters and brothers who fought hard to gain those rights for our members today.

Yours in Solidarity,

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