

CUPE 2950 Report Template:

Member Name: Chloe Martin-Cabanne Date October 22, 2023 Event Day # 1 Event: Sectoral Conference
Session: Post Secondary Education Sector all day / morning / afternoon / evening

Topic or Issue: Updates from CUPE National Post-Secondary Sector Unions

Facilitator(s): N/A

Facilitator contact info (if provided): N/A

Q1. What are the main points and concerns for the topic or issue?

The post-secondary sector conference is an opportunity for union leaders representing workers in Universities and Colleges across Canada to discuss common issues and provide updates to one another. Some of the main topics covered were:

- Housing Activism
- 2021 Laurentian University Insolvency Update
- Workplace Mental Health
- Climate Action
- Pension literacy
- Financial Transparency for University Administration
- Scholars Strike - <https://www.scholarstrikecanada.ca/>

Q2. Why is this topic or issue important for my local union, CUPE 2950 and/or workplace at UBC?

- One of the top reasons for workers unionizing across the country is stress around the rising cost of living. We talked about how the reasons for this affordability crisis stem from capitalism, corporate greed and the patriarchy. Housing supply isn't the issue – it's the fact that housing has turned into a commodity, and corporations (equity firms) rather than individuals are investing and profiting from housing. The government gives subsidies to corporations, but none exist for ordinary people. There is a lack of affordable housing. CUPE's policy is that we need to ensure that social housing is built and detached from profit with tenant protections. When the government reduces funding to post-secondary institutions, universities turn to for-profit housing to fill in the gaps. We are seeing the commodification of housing here at UBC. Activists at CUPE 2950 have long advocated for the University to build social housing here on campus, and there is more work to do, as the [Rent Geared to Income Pilot Program](#) is not making a difference in the affordability crisis we're facing here in Vancouver. CUPE needs to push for universities to receive funding when they build affordable housing for students and for workers.
- The financial crisis at Laurentian University is important because the University cut services and reduce pensions for workers when they claimed financial exigency in 2021. This triggered a federal consultation on the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) which enabled the CLC and CUPE to petition the government to amend the act to exclude public institutions.
- Pension education and literacy are fundamental to workers because we need support from our employers in retirement. We discussed the importance of divestment from fossil fuel and

the difficulties advocating for changing investments because of pension legislation. Our sector agreed that we need more training on pensions to advocate for improvements.

- Unions representing workers at the University of Regina demanded more transparency around finances and administrative decisions following service cuts. Other universities and colleges across the country are facing funding cuts and are eliminating services to students.

Q3. How can I apply these learned applications, resources, tools or knowledge at CUPE 2950 and/or my workplace?

CUPE 2950 members need to do more work around housing activism, electing governments who commit to building social housing and demanding not-for-profit housing at UBC. We also need to learn more about our pensions and find an activist to get elected to the board and advocate for divestment. We also need to think about UBC's financial statements and examine "Sunshine Lists" to bring to light excessive administrative compensation when workers at UBC are struggling with the rising cost of living.

Q4A. Are these learned resources, tools or applications and knowledge helpful to your workplace at UBC and CUPE 2950? Yes / No

Q4B. If yes, how does it hypothetically change if implemented in your workplace at UBC and CUPE 2950?

If groups of CUPE 2950 members got together to research and brainstorm improvements to social housing, pensions, financial transparency and other common issues, we would be in a much better position to advocate for improvements with UBC.

If no, why is it not applicable?

Q5. Knowledge paving it forward: What tips and other helpful knowledge can you provide to your fellow CUPE 2950 members?

We need more people to get involved with our local and to elect progressive governments so that we can get the support we need. It's important that we work together to advocate for ways to solve these issues. Workers are in the best possible position to advocate for improvements.