

News from NowHere

Year 31 Number 1

Editor Gail Osachoff

***CUPE*3287**
University of Saskatchewan Sessional Lecturers

Contents

President's Message	2
Summer Membership Meeting Agenda, August 5, 2020	4
Call for Nominations	5
CHIRPS	5
Report on CUPE SK Annual Convention	6

President's Message

A lot has changed in the last few months, both in the world at large and for our Union.

In particular, as I'm sure virtually all of you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused enormous disruptions at the University. With the closure of the campus in mid-March, many of us had to quickly adapt to remote delivery of our Winter term courses. Remote delivery was also mandated for courses taught in the Spring and Summer Session and, with a very few exceptions for seminars and laboratory courses, this will be continuing into the Fall, 2020 term (and possibly beyond).

Another consequence of the University's response to the COVID-19 situation was the cancellation of a number of already-scheduled courses in the Spring and Summer Session. Based on the number of job postings that had appeared prior to April, the number of courses offered on a sessional basis in the Spring and Summer of 2020 was already set to be reduced by about 40% compared to recent years. The cancellations due to the pandemic reduced these still further.

A related trend that the Union has noted in the course build for the 2020-21 Regular session is the combining of relatively low-

enrollment course sections (especially in courses with a lab component) into much higher-enrollment courses redesigned for remote delivery (typically by USFA faculty). While this may be a necessary expedient to facilitate remote instruction in some courses in the current circumstances, and while there is little that the Union can do to prevent it, we will continue to monitor this trend. If you believe that you have been deprived of teaching that you would likely otherwise have had on account of these developments, please [contact the Union](#) to provide details.

As you may recall, our current collective agreement expired in August, 2019 and, back in March, the Union was about enter into collective bargaining with the University. Bargaining dates had been set and our Negotiating Committee had developed a comprehensive package of proposals with a view to achieving a number of important improvements to our collective agreement. Then, of course, everything changed – our bargaining dates were indefinitely postponed.

In early April, the University approached the Union about extending our current agreement for an additional year (i.e, from August, 2019 to August, 2021), simply maintaining the status quo. This was immediately rejected by the Committee.

In early May, the University conveyed to the Committee a revised Offer to Settle seeking to extend our current agreement to August 31, 2021, including a 1.5% wage increase and a (vague) commitment to enter into negotiations for a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dealing with online instruction in scope of CUPE 3287. This too was rejected by the Committee.

A number of proposals and counter-proposals regarding an offer to settle were circulated between the Union and the University in June

and July. As things stand (as of July 29), the most recent Union counter-proposal includes: (a) A 2% stipend increase, effective September 1, 2020, (b) Temporary changes to the terms of reference of our Professional Development/Academic Participation Fund to provide grants for hardware, software, and services related to remote instruction, (c) Extension of the maintenance (14.06) and qualifying (14.01) periods for Right of First Refusal (ROFR) by one year, September 1 through August 31, for each year or portion of a year that the University's operations continue to be significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, (d) A commitment that student teaching evaluations will not be considered for regular review (14.09) or discipline (18, 19) except at the request of the sessional lecturer affected while remote teaching remains mandated, (e) A commitment to immediately enter into discussions geared toward negotiating an MOA on online instruction in scope of CUPE 3287, and (f) An agreement that both parties will commence collective bargaining for the next collective agreement within six months prior to the expiry of the agreement.

We have not yet received a response to this most recent counter-proposal from the University.

Item (e), above, acquired a new level of urgency when, on July 2, the Union was informed of the University's "policy decision," effective September 1, 2020, to limit for-credit teaching at the U of S to members of the USFA and CUPE 3287 only.

An immediate consequence of this is that web courses offered through the Distance

Education Unit (DEU) that have, to date, been part-time ASPA contracts, will now be in scope of CUPE 3287. Many of the people who will be negatively affected by this (perhaps most obviously in terms of a considerably reduced stipend) are also members of CUPE 3287.

Let me add: 1) This change was *not* sought by our Local in any way; it was simply thrust upon us, and 2) this change is being implemented by the University before negotiations about how these positions are to be integrated into our collective agreement have even begun. In my personal view, this is grotesquely unfair to all parties affected and, especially given the timing of the announcement, appears to be an attempt at something very like bullying on the part of the University.

Submitted by William Buschert

2020 Summer Membership Meeting

Via Zoom

(Invitation links have been distributed to the membership via email. If you have not received your invitation email, please contact cupe3287@gmail.com)

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

Time: 1:00 PM



SUMMER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

August 5, 2020, 1:00 PM

Via Zoom

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Roll Call of Officers
3. Reading of the Equality Statement (see reverse)
4. Adoption of Minutes, Special Membership Meeting, Feb. 24, 2020
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
6. Motion: Acceptance of new members
7. Secretary-Treasurer's Report
8. News and Communications Officer's Report
9. Correspondence & Communications
10. Executive Report
 - a. Grievances Update
 - b. Campus Re-Opening Update
 - c. Collective Bargaining Update – Employer Offer to Settle
 - d. Employer "Policy Decision" on For-Credit Instruction/Incorporation of DEU online instructional positions into CUPE 3287
11. Election: Members of Ad Hoc Committee for Online Instruction MOA Negotiations (up to two)
12. New Business
13. Adjournment

Call for Nominations / Volunteers

Are you a member of CUPE 3287 who has also experience teaching web and/or TV courses for the Distance Education Unit (DEU)? As described above (“President’s Message,” 3), these positions, formerly in-scope of APSA, will become in-scope of CUPE 3287 effective September 1st. There is much that needs to be negotiated in connection with this change in order to protect the interests of our members.

In order to do this effectively, it would be useful if one or two CUPE members with experience in teaching DEU web courses could assist the Executive in negotiations relating to a Memorandum of Agreement on online instruction. If you are interested in serving the Union in this capacity, please put your name forward at the Summer Membership Meeting on August 5, or, if you are unable to attend the meeting, contact the Union at cupe3287@gmail.com.

CHIRPS

Somewhat wise words for the present:

From Alexander Woollcott -- All the things I really like to do are either illegal, immoral, or fattening.

From Oscar Wilde – Philosophy teaches us to bear with equanimity the misfortunes of our neighbours.

From Rita Mae Brown – Computer dating is fine – if you’re a computer.

From Mark Twain – It was wonderful that Columbus found America, but it would have been more wonderful if he’d missed it.

From W. B. Yeats – Some people say there is a God; others say there is no God. The truth probably lies somewhere in between.

From Mae West – It’s better to be looked over than overlooked.

From Herbert V. Prochnow -- A philosopher is a man who, instead of crying over spilt milk, consoles himself with the thought that is was four-fifths water anyway.

From Fred Allen – California is a fine place to live if you happen to be an orange.

From Anatole France – The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to steal bread, or to beg in the streets.

From Guillermo – A picture is worth a thousand tweets.

From MGO – If you can’t be wise, try at least to be witty.

Submitted by Gail Osachoff

CUPE SASKATCHEWAN 55TH ANNUAL CONVENTION SASKATOON, SK, March 4–6, 2020

A total of 284 people, of which 225 were voting delegates representing 39 locals, attended the Convention. CUPE National, CUPE Manitoba, Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), Saskatoon & District Labor Council (SDLC), and Saskatchewan Federation of Labor (SFL) were represented. Guests included Charlie Clark, Mayor of Saskatoon, Elder Rose Bird, R. Meili, Leader of the Official Opposition, Saskatchewan NDP, and NDP MLAs David Forbes and Vicki Mowat. CUPE 3287 was represented by two delegates.

The Convention focused on five main issues: (a) political action and workers' rights; (b) equality; (c) health and safety; (d) privatization; and (e) union affairs. One panel discussion was held: *"Why Politics Matter!"*

Four interesting presentations were provided for the convention delegates. Amira Elghawaby (CLC) spoke on *"Islamophobia"*, stating that social media plays a huge role in perpetuating Islamophobia, but that organized labor can play an important role in opposing racism, bigotry, and far-right extremism. Sheryl Burns (CUPE 1936) presented on *"Workers with Disabilities, Their Workplace Rights and Creating an Abilities Smart Workplace"*, stressing that disabled workers represent untapped resources that can benefit the workplace and the economy. Roy Winters (CUPE National HSO) spoke on *"Enforcing the Law of Health and Safety"*, highlighting the fact that organized labor needs to use its collective power to introduce and enforce OHS measures. Simon Enoch (CCPA Saskatchewan) enlightened the Convention with a presentation on *"P3s and Pitfalls: The Untold Truths of P3s in Saskatchewan"*, stressing that confusion and uncertainty, inefficiencies, and problems with this approach contribute to P3s being a questionable way of building infrastructure and public service buildings.

What they said:

1. Mark Hancock (President, CUPE National): 2020 issues include austerity incentives, wage cutbacks, and weakening/dissolving unions.
2. Simon Enoch (Director, CCPA Saskatchewan): Public sector workers are often called upon to resolve issues that are the PS contractors' responsibility.
3. Charlie Clark (Mayor, City of Saskatoon): How do we figure out how we can get help for people who need help, and not punish them.
4. Rory Gill (CUPE Alberta): Politics matter!
5. Troy Winters (CUPE National Health and Safety Officer): We don't need better laws; we just need governments to enforce them.
6. Tom Graham (President, CUPE SK): We can make a difference by electing people who care about our society.
7. Judy Henley (Secretary-Treasurer, CUPE SK): Organize the unorganized as precarious employment rises and governments continue to cut funding and privatize public services.

A total of 47 resolutions and 5 constitutional amendments were presented for debate. The resolutions focused on political action and workers' rights (15), equality (9), health and safety (6), education sector (5), health care sector (5), privatization (3), union affairs (3), and solidarity (1). Only 40 resolutions were debated and carried.

Delegates at the 2020 CUPE Saskatchewan Convention adopted a motion that CUPE Saskatchewan reaffirm its affiliation to the Saskatchewan NDP for the period April 01, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

Elections yielded the following results: (a) President CUPE SK – Judy Henley; (b) Secretary-Treasurer – Kent Peterson; (c) Trustee – Bob Cornell (three-year); (c) National Regional Vice-President – Kent Peterson; and (e) SFL Vice-President Nominees Judy Henley and Marcia Ray, and alternates Dylan Breland and Sandra Sykes.

Submitted by William (Bill). Gulka

Union Office Remains Closed

The Union office in McLean Hall, Room 35 remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will likely remain the case for at least several more months. We continue to receive postal mail, however, and we continue to respond to email and voice mail communications as quickly as possible.

You can contact the Union at **(306) 966-7023** or via email at cupe3287@gmail.com.

Information and announcements can also be found on our website: <https://3287.cupe.ca/>

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*The Communications Committee welcomes submissions to the newsletter for publication. You can check deadlines with Gail Osachoff, Editor of the newsletter, at: [mmqo628@mail.usask.ca](mailto:mmqo628@mail.usask.ca)*