

The Instructor

Bargaining

Contracts are up



Vice Presidents Steve Cloutier (left) and Rory Leitch discuss bargaining points at the November general meeting

The collective agreements for part time faculty at SMU, MSVU and DAL as well as TAs at DAL expired in August. The members of the respective Bargaining Teams are working hard with our National Representative, Sister Marianne Welsh, to prepare our bargaining proposals. Not only have there been attacks on collective bargaining in the private sector but the public sector is no longer immune to this. It is clear that the neo-liberal Harper agenda is no friend to unions. More than ever we need to come together in solidarity to fight back



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New to the executive!

Byron Peacock - VP Dalhousie TA's at Sexton
Jason Doucette - Secretary-Treasurer
Nickolas Murray - VP Mount St Vincent

Stay connected!



For regular updates about your local, or to keep informed on relevant events and offers, keep track of our new social media accounts:

Like our Facebook page: CUPE Local 3912
Follow us on Twitter: @CUPE3912

For updates pertaining specifically to bargaining:
Bargaining Blog:
bargainingcupe3912.wordpress.com

For information about your collective agreement, grievance procedures and job postings, visit our local **website** at: **www.3912.cupe.ca**

against these attacks of cuts, concessions and austerity measures. As 3912 moves into bargaining we need to show our employers that the issues that we raise in bargaining are important to all of our members and that we will stand together. As part time faculty and TAs we are vital to the delivery of courses at the universities. We are not transient workers, as has been suggested to us. We may be contingent workers and precarious workers but we are not transient. We hope to start bargaining by the end of this year or into the New Year. It is not too late for members to bring their bargaining concerns to your Bargaining Teams. I encourage you to contact your respective VP or to send me an email to jdimoff@members.cupe.ca

- Jennifer Dimoff, President

To keep up to date on the latest developments, visit CUPE 3912's **Bargaining Blog** at: bargainingcupe3912.wordpress.com



Communications Officer, Sébastien Labelle (2nd from left), picketing in solidarity with striking MBS broadcasters.

University Administrator Compensations Rise Disproportionately Amidst Slashes To Funding

The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT) has released a report¹ in which a trend can be observed where costs of compensation for senior administrators have risen disproportionately over a seven year period lasting through the current slashing to university funding.

Compiling information obtained through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the report examines data from eight universities – including Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent universities. Although the report does not examine figures from Dalhousie, an earlier article from the Chronicle Herald² reported that, while the exact salary is unknown, Dalhousie president, Tom Traves, is the highest

paid university president in Nova Scotia. These findings suggest that, while ever larger concessions are demanded at bargaining tables and student tuition fees are skyrocketing, belts are not being tightened all around. In its recommendations, the report suggests however that simply reining in those excesses would not suffice to solve the problems caused by current government cutbacks. Rather, the report states that universities must be treated as public institutions that require an adequate investment that can ensure the continued delivery of the public services they are intended to provide. Moreover, this funding must be directed through publicly accountable mechanisms that guarantee that priority is given to the universities' core functions of teaching and research.

1. A Culture of Entitlement: A Report on Rising Administrative Compensation at Nova Scotia Universities – available at www.ansut.ca
2. Dal's Traves highest earner, August 2, 2012

- Sébastien Labelle, Communications Officer

Report From the CUPE National Post-Secondary Taskforce

The National PSE Taskforce provides advice on how CUPE can advocate for publically funded and delivered post-secondary education through an integrated system of public community colleges and universities. It will advise on lobbying approaches for increased funding for post-secondary education. The taskforce will make recommendations on strategies to resist privatization of post-secondary education, as well as strategies to engage CUPE members, locals and employers in coordinated bargaining at the regional, provincial and national level.

The PSE taskforce was created after the last CUPE National Convention in Vancouver of 2011 after various resolutions were passed requesting a taskforce from various locals. I was appointed to sit on this committee as the Nova Scotia representative for this taskforce. The taskforce is made up of one member representative from each province working in the post-secondary sector as well as National staff representatives.

Our committee meets in Ottawa twice a year. Our first meeting was in April and our last meeting was held at the CUPE National Office in October. During this last meeting the representatives from each province provided a report on the state of PSE in their respective provinces. We also had the privilege to hear various guest speakers who provided different perspectives for the PSE taskforce to consider.

Erika Shaker from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) spoke to us about "Eduflation and the High Cost of Learning." Erika is the Director of the Education Project for the CCPA working in the National Office in Ottawa. Erika's document was published in September of 2012 and can be located on the CCPA website¹. This document discusses the continual rising costs of tuition that has reached beyond students' capabilities and how tuitions have changed from 1990 to today. The public knows this is a problem

but what is needed is to confront the current neo-liberal agenda in Canada. Surveys need to be created about privatization and other approaches for post-secondary education. The CCPA, Polaris and CUPE have already collaborated on a survey to identify corporatization on campuses.

Diana Zawadski, President of Local 3906 McMaster, addressed the funding and privatization project she is working on in Ontario through the Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC). The structure of public funding was discussed through the three levels of money: Federal, Provincial, Individual Post-secondary institutions.

Daria Ivanochko (CUPE National, Organizing and Regional Services) met with us to discuss the completion of a mapping of the PSE sector with CUPE involvement nationally. This mapping project stems from the passing of resolutions 189 and 190 at the last National Convention. The goal for our taskforce is to review the mapping document presented to us and to work within our own regions to identify organizing targets and to work with the CUPE provincial priorities and planning process. I am currently working to identify contacts for all CUPE PSE locals in Nova Scotia so that we may be able to easily communicate with the entire PSE sector in our province.



While 3912 is the only local of academic workers, there are at least 6 other locals in the PSE sector in this province.

We were fortunate to have met with Kevin Skerrett, a Pensions Researcher at CUPE National. Kevin discussed the incredibly tough times in Canada for pensions. Not only are private sector plans under attack (ex: Air Canada, Detroit 3) but the public sector is no longer immune (ex: City of Saint John, NB – deep cuts and 2-tier outcomes; Ontario Teachers and OMERS – caps on employers side).

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CUPE has provided 10 strategies for dealing with these attacks on the public sector:

1. Membership education
2. Strong collective bargaining response (ex: UGuelph 2011, Queen's 2011)
3. Coalition building (ex: Queen's)
4. Political Action strategies
5. Support for CCP (this is critical of workers like 3912 with no pension plans!), opposing PRPPs
6. Protect character of Defined Benefit model
7. Avoid 2-tiered provisions (esp. with those that convert to Defined Contribution model ex: for new hires)
8. Make unwanted changes temporary
9. Defending/improving pensions for women/equality seeking groups (PT, precarious, sub-contracted)
10. Prioritize contribution increases over benefit changes

Currently the PSE task force is working on creating national surveys to address various issues in the PSE sector such as privatization on campuses and international students. We are also working to identify organizing targets in our regions. A

booklet is being created to raise our profile and develop a vision for the task force. We will also be preparing for the next National Convention in the Fall of 2013 where we hope to organize a national sector day for post-secondary and create priority resolutions. A review of Bill C-265 (Post-Secondary Education Act) will also be reviewed with recommendations made to support this bill. Eventually we will be developing links with other unions in PSE and other allies (ex: CLC, CFS, CAUT, NDP). Each member of the taskforce will be working regionally to work with our Provincial Divisions and Regional Directors concerning the activities of the taskforce as well as creating coalition allies in our province and developing contacts.

As your provincial representative for this taskforce, I welcome any suggestions and/or concerns that you would like presented to the taskforce. Our next face-to-face meeting will be in June 2013. Contact me at jdimoff@members.cupe.ca

1. <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/eduflation-and-high-cost-learning>

- *Jennifer Dimoff, President*

Ph.D. Preferred?

As Vice-President at St. Mary's, I have noticed that issues around job postings are on the increase. There have been attempts to remove postings, to bypass precedents, and to limit those who could apply to any given posting. A particular issue that is becoming more and more prevalent is the use of the phrase "Ph.D. Preferred." Members should look out for this phrasing, as it does not mean what the university wants us to think it means.

There is increasing suspicion that the phrase has been and continues to be used in an attempt to try to get members with Ph.D.s into certain courses at the expense of others who do not. It is difficult to confirm this with any certainty since the union does not have access to information about who applies for each course. As someone holding a Ph.D., I have probably benefited from this myself.

The concern the union has is that those members without a Ph.D. may look at the posting and think they do not fulfil the qualifications for the course, and thus be discouraged from even applying though they may in fact qualify.

The university administration is quite within its right to establish the qualifications for a course. This has been determined in past arbitrations. Further, departments are quite within their rights to add the "Ph.D. preferred" phrase to postings. This does not mean, however, that the phrase signifies exclusion or limits who can apply for the course. It does not mean that a Ph.D is required to obtain the posted position. Moreover, the Collective Agreement does not include language that distinguishes between Ph.D.s and M.A.s. The Union would fight any attempt to impose such a two-tier system as this would allow members with less precedence to take a course ahead of those

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with more precedence. This would go against the spirit of the precedence list for which the union has fought so hard.

A CUPE 3912 member with a Ph.D. recently came forward with a grievance for not being awarded a course that was advertised with the “Ph.D. preferred” phrase; instead, it was given to someone with an M.A. The Grievance Committee, with the help of the CUPE Regional Office, considered the situation and decided that there was no grievance warranted as the member with the M.A. who was awarded the course had more precedence points. The “threshold, “ or minimum qualifications required for the course, were met. In this case, the threshold was an M.A. and precedence points. Regardless of the “Ph.D. preferred” phrase, the member with the

M.A. still met the threshold, and due to superior precedence points obtained the position. The university itself recognizes that the phrase is essentially meaningless and its own actions prove that the threshold for such positions is an M.A. and precedence.

The important thing to note here is that members with M.A.s can still apply for any job posting, and should not be discouraged from doing so whether it has the “Ph.D. preferred” phrase attached to it or not. The reverse is also true. Those members who have Ph.D.s should not expect that the “Ph.D. preferred” tag means that they have a stronger claim on any job posting.

- *Stephen Cloutier, VP Saint Mary’s University*

Troublemaking

The Halifax-Dartmouth & District Labour Council (HDDLC) aimed to “raise a little hell” by hosting its first annual Troublemaker’s Conference this fall. In response to increasing attacks against workers across industries and sectors, a broken arbitration process, persistent discrimination at the workplace and an ongoing economic crisis, the HDDLC has committed to offer tools and training to fight back through this annual event.

Inspired by the work of Labor Notes, a US based organization seeking to put the “movement” back into the labour movement, the HDDLC

offered workshops on how to develop activity within a union local, how to use arts and social media to make workplace struggles engaging, and how to develop activist tactics for the shop floor. Aimed primarily at union stewards, the skills and knowledge shared could, however, easily prove useful for any union executive or member seeking to get more active in the fight for fair working conditions.

If standing up for ourselves and our co-workers, or if speaking out against discrimination means that we are to be called troublemakers by management, then it is time to own the label.

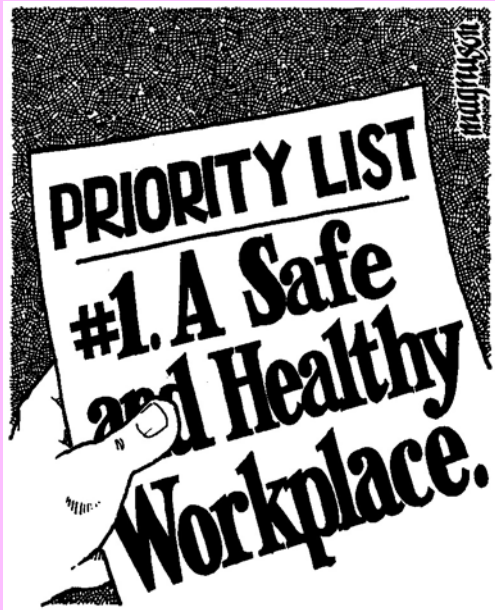
- *Sébastien Labelle, Communications Officer*



Delegates at the Halifax-Dartmouth & District Labour Council’s first annual Troublemaker’s Conference.

Defending Our Workplace, Our Environment, Our Health

The 11th National Health and Safety Conference was held at the Ottawa Convention Centre this past October 12-14, 2012, and I was proud to represent CUPE 3912 as a delegate. The Conference was opened first by Aboriginal Elder, Thomas Louttit who gave greetings from First Nations followed by opening remarks by CUPE President, Paul Moist. Paul emphasized the importance for all Canadian workers to have safe and healthy work environments and he lamented the large number of Canadian public sector workers who die each year in workplace accidents.



The keynote speaker was Dr. Linda Rae Murray, who has been an activist for health and safety and social justice for decades. Dr. Murray talked about how necessary activism is to maintain and advance good work laws and rights in the workplace and she gave examples from her native Chicago where teachers, in particular, have been active in winning strike votes to improve safety conditions in their schools. Dr. Murray also reminded the Conference that it is workers who create the wealth of our nations and we should always keep that foremost in our minds to improve our activism. She stated that racism and sexism are also health and safety

issues which are used to divide workers. She also emphasized that our first priority must always be people – even when that is a threat to profit making – and that the income gap is growing at a faster rate in Canada than in the United States currently. Dr. Murray stated that we cannot afford to be complacent in today's world about our health and safety but also about our environment and if we don't stand up, the whole nation will fall into a "backward movement" and slip back to the bad old history which generations of progressive movements have fought to change. She ended her address by urging delegates to organize our neighbours, friends, families and fellow workers to unite in collective change for social justice for all workers.

On Saturday morning there was a panel entitled "Celebrating Our Successes" where we heard historical updates from Ed Thomas of Hamilton, Jackie Griffiths from the University of Saskatchewan, CUPE Staff Carolyn Unsworth from British Columbia (who is on the CUPE National Environmental Committee) and Anthon Pazzino, also CUPE Staff. Ed Thomas spoke about his books on workplace safety, "The Crest of the Mountain" and "Dead But Not Forgotten" and how these books have brought about the memorials we now observe on April 28 every year. Ed's work has been discussed at the International Labour Organization and the United Nations in regards to workers' health and safety. Jackie Griffiths gave a historical overview of the development of the first health and safety standards passed in Parliament and in various provinces since the 1960's and the campaigns that CUPE and sister unions have waged to improve workers safety. Carolyn Unsworth talked about her role as the Co-Chair of the Environment Committee since 2008; in 2009 she represented CUPE at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference where the Fossil of the Day award was awarded to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and she described the embarrassment that Canadian delegates felt as Canada's dismal efforts on the global environment have given Canada a 'black eye' from other nations. Anthony Pazzino talked specifically about the problem of

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asbestos and how millions of workers have been killed by their exposure to this material, which was once used in many building materials. According to the ILO, over 100,000 workers per year die due to exposure to asbestos. Asbestos must be banned in Canada as it is in the EU, the USA and Australia.

Later on Saturday morning a "Town Hall" session was held with Judy Rebeck as Moderator. The panel participants included Tony Clarke, Founder and Director of the Polaris Institute; Bob DeMatteo, a health and safety researcher; Dr. Karen Messing, a professor of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Biology, Health, Society and Environment at the Université du Québec à Montréal; and Dr. Linda Rae Murray, Chief Medical Officer, Cook County Department of Public Health, Illinois. These panellists discussed facing new challenges and seizing opportunities, work organization, psychosocial health, environmental health challenges, workplace and communities.

Workshops were held on Friday and Saturday afternoons on various topics. On Friday I attended a workshop on Women and Work Hazards and on Saturday, I attended the Environmental Health Workplace Action Workshop where delegates could work together on these issues to find common ways to work together in solidarity. On Sunday morning delegates worked with their provincial Sisters and Brothers on strategies for working together in our communities; many Nova Scotia issues were identified for CUPE NS to target for plans of actions. Through these discussions, CUPE 3912 was requested to initiate a resolution for the CUPE NS 2013 Convention on the need for a Thermal and Humidex Based Heat Response Plan in the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act, as many sectors of CUPE continue to have problems with heat temperatures in the workplace. If passed at the CUPE NS Convention, the resolution will also be presented to the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour for its endorsement so that the Provincial Government can be lobbied on this issue by labour unions in order to have a Humidex Based Heat Response Plan included in the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act. This is of particular urgency since the Act

will be involved in a review in the near future for further additions. The resolution will be vetted in the CUPE 3912 Executive meeting in December and if approved, will be submitted to CUPE NS to be discussed at the next provincial convention.

- Barb Moore, Recording Secretary



National Environment Committee

CUPE National invited all members of the National Environment Committee to facilitate some workshops at its National Conference on Occupational Health and Safety. This conference had been in the works for some time, the NEC was working toward this kind of consolidation of interests. In each of the Environmental Health/Workplace Action workshops, we introduced the environmental issues with which we are concerned. Groups worked on their own case studies, and we all discussed the impacts and effects of environmental issues in a variety of workplaces, such as nursing homes, cafeterias, libraries, universities and hospitals. Our workshops were delivered to over 400 CUPE members from across the country.

The National Environment Committee is meeting in December and again in January, hammering out a policy for CUPE that will be put into action. I look forward to reporting back about this policy when we've finished.

- Carmel Forde, VP Dalhousie and member of the National Environment Committee

Report from Labour College

Each year the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) holds a Labour College that is open to members of CLC affiliated unions. This is an intensive 4 week program that is split into 2x2 week sessions with a research project in between the 2 sessions. This year the Labour College was held at the picturesque CAW Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario on the sandy shores of Lake Huron. This year 41 trade union activists from various unions were selected to attend. Some of the unions represented at this year's school were CUPE, CUPW, CAW, USW, COPE, PSAC, CMG, and NSGEU.

I was fortunate to have been selected to attend this year along with 5 other CUPE brothers and sisters. I received the Barbara Kowalski scholarship of \$10,000 to cover the cost of tuition, room and board. During the 4 week period we had 6 hours of classes a day plus group work, readings and papers to write in the evenings. The courses covered this year include: History of Work in Canada, Canadian Political Economy, Theory and Practice of Unionism, Labour Research, Canadian Society: Changing Lives and Work, Workers in a Global World, and Leadership in the Union Movement.

As a result of my time spent in Nunavut in June as a representative of the Governor General's Leadership Conference, I chose to write my

research report on "Neo-Liberalism in Nunavut." At the end of August we graduated from Labour College. The graduation was attended by various leaders from our respective unions. CUPE President Paul Moist and CUPE's Managing Director of Union Development Susan Ruffo attended our graduation.

This is an amazing opportunity for trade unionists to build leaders in the union through education and solidarity. It creates leaders who are better equipped to continue the struggle for economic and social justice. I encourage all those active in the union movement to apply in the years ahead.

- Jennifer Dimoff, President



CUPE local 3912 President Jennifer Dimoff with CUPE National President Paul Moist at the 2012 Labour College graduation.

- RESOLUTION: SOLIDARITY WITH MSVU FACULTY - *Adopted during our General Meeting on November 16, 2012*

In case of a strike, CUPE 3912 will support the MSVU Faculty Association in union solidarity. CUPE 3912 members at MSVU are strongly advised to not cross any picket lines at MSVU nor teach classes on or off campus until the MSVU Faculty Association is able to negotiate a new collective agreement with MSVU Management.

Why Union?

Are unions to blame for a tanked economy? Robert Kelly, former Bank of New York Mellon CEO and current chancellor of Saint Mary's University, certainly thinks so. At a recent luncheon hosted by the Greater Halifax Partnership, Kelly put at least partial blame on unions for Nova Scotia's shaky economy, giving praise to "back-to-work" laws and suggesting that unions are an obstacle to sustaining a competitive advantage in a market where "you're competing with kids in India or China or Brazil."¹

As authors Haiven and Haiven remind us in a recent Chronicle Herald article², Kelly's remarks seem to ignore the 2007 Supreme Court of Canada ruling which enshrined collective bargaining as a constitutional right and affirmed that "one of the fundamental achievements of collective bargaining is to palliate the historical inequality between employers and employees." Moreover, studies released by the Canadian Centre For Policy Alternatives³ reveal that, first, prosperity in Nova Scotia has been concentrating in the pockets of capital owners over the last two decades, even through the current recession, leaving workers increasingly shut out of that wealth, and second, that Nova Scotia labour standards and weekly earnings are among the lowest in the country.

If the Nova Scotian economy is in a downturn, unions are hardly to blame. In fact, evidence shows that if not for trade unions, earning figures would be even worse than they are. The Canadian Labour Congress compiled census information⁴ indicating that unionized workers in Canada earned \$5.11/hour more than non-union employees, and that unionized workers in Nova Scotia earned \$6.70/hour more than non-union employees. Unions play an important role in ensuring that adequate levels of income within a community can support local businesses and keep an economy healthy.

However, unions are important for more than just decent wages. It is through unions that we question who benefits from our labour, who has a

say in decisions about our workplace and whether we have power over our own lives. Unions are also part of a broader labour movement that extend beyond our own workplace. Through regional and national networks, unions are at the forefront of defending social services we depend on such as public health care, pensions and employment insurance. Finally, unions also serve to celebrate ideals for social justice and commemorate gains made over long struggles through events organized at workplaces and in the broader community.

1. Rock star banker touts development, October 18, 2012
2. Attacking unions won't help the economy, October 27, 2012
3. Nova Scotians shut out of prosperity, November 14, 2008; Labour Standard Reform in Nova Scotia, March 1, 2012 – available at www.policyalternatives.ca
4. The Union Advantage, 2012 – available at www.canadianlabour.ca

- Sébastien Labelle, Communications Officer



CUPE NS Mobilizing

CUPE Nova Scotia is currently undergoing a restructuring of its regional network in the hopes of fostering an increased mobilization within the CUPE rank and file.

Following a lengthy strategic planning process, CUPE NS has decided to implement a network of nine Regional Mobilization Teams throughout the province. The model, inspired by a similar one successfully adopted in New Brunswick, will have each team headed by a CUPE NS area Vice President and staff representative. The network has been divided into nine teams over nine regions to ensure that members of any local can attend a regional meeting without having to travel more than 45 minutes. These teams will function very informally, will not have bylaws or formal

funding and will be used on an “as needed” basis. Each team will be responsible for call outs to locals within their region and for developing strategies to increase union activity and mobilization in the rank and file of that region. All locals within each region are asked for their support in this effort.

By facilitating participation and encouraging a grassroots approach to cross-provincial coordination and solidarity efforts among locals, CUPE NS hopes to curb a trend of declining participation from the rank and file at rallies and other public actions. The strength of a union lies within its general membership and it is imperative that CUPE members project their union’s true strength and clout through participation at public events in support of all CUPE members and their communities.

- Sébastien Labelle, Communications Officer



CUPE members rally in Truro, NS to oppose changes to Employment Insurance.

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shift
10

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**\$2 billion a year or
\$60 billion over 30 years.**

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