



Executive Committee Year-End Reports

Name: Jen Cypher

Position: Chair

Date of submission: 15 March 2017

Report Period: 2016/2017 term

Please find below my annual report to the membership. My second term as Chair has been about as challenging as the first, albeit in different ways.

Bargaining

Bargaining for Unit 4 was concluded during this term. This process took far too long, the employer argued over every point and dragged their feet to the point of the ridiculous. A mediator had to be brought in at the end, which increased the cost to the membership and wasted more time. The final day at the table was spent arguing about pennies in terms of pay. I think we should take this as a sign that the upcoming round of bargaining will be difficult and annoying. Mobilization that results in direct actions that will support the Bargaining Team will be helpful.

Speaking of Bargaining Teams the Unit 4 team were fantastic. I recommend they meet with the BT members for Units 1, 2, and 3 and give them some tips and training.

Internal Support

As Chair I have offered support to groups internal to CUPE 3903 on a regular basis. I have attended and participated in Unit 2 Town Halls and Joint Health and Safety Meetings, TFAC meetings (including assisting with drafting a policy on sexual violence and a response to York's Sexual Violence Policy). I regularly attended various committee meetings as a way to offer support to committee members: Labour Management Committee; Steward's Council; Grievance Committee. I've also assisted on the Ways and Means Committee when there has been a backlog of applications. I also schedule, attend, and Chair Executive Committee meetings and GMMs/SGMMs and the AGM. We lost a couple of Grievance Officers this term and I pitched in to fill that role for several months at a time.

External Support

Various groups external to 3903 have received my attention over the last year. I have participated in activities with Silence is Violence and the Cross Campus Alliance. I have offered support and assistance to other CUPE locals (4207, 3906, 3902) and locals both on and off campus (UNITE 75, YUSA, YUFA). I was involved in bi-weekly phone calls with sister locals engaged in bargaining and coming up on strike positions, several of these are in the process of ratifying or settling new CAs.



CUPE Participation

Along with other members I participated in the larger bodies of CUPE by attending CUPE Ontario in May 2016. 3903 presented resolutions, including a resolution on encouraging locals to put policies in place to deal with sexual violence. We made this resolution in conjunction with rank-and-file members of 3902 (U of T) and were assisted in passing it with a member of one of the locals that represents flight attendants. Also in cooperation with 3902 we put forward an emergency resolution about Unite HERE 75 food service workers who were having their jobs contracted out at the time.

Issues with the employer

We reached a settlement with the employer on the ITO issue on April 4, 2017. Problems with the application of the settlement became apparent almost immediately and I worked with other members to figure this out. This issue is still ongoing, and is also wrapped up with the employer's roll out of a funding model based on fellowships; an Unfair Labour Practices lawsuit is being filed on the Union's behalf. There are also issues around summer pay for Unit 1 members that we are grieving.

The application of the fellowship model kicked a lot of people off of their 3903 benefits plans. There was also a cohort of incoming students who agreed to come to York based on an understanding that they would have CUPE jobs and benefits, instead they received fellowships and few benefits. Sorting out this mess took considerable time and energy and it is still not resolved in some cases.

The decimation of Unit 3 through the application of the fellowship model and the shifting of work to internships, RAs, and volunteer work has had significant impacts on membership numbers and revenue.

For Unit 2 members the administration of the Continuing Sessional Status Program continues to be a problem, with some departments not participating even though they are mandated to. I supported the Conversions Advisor in some of their work. Levels of work for Unit 2 members are still low, and many members with medium to low levels of seniority have struggled to find enough work, or any work at all (I fall into this category).

Direct Actions

Along with other members I attended rallies for Real Food Real Jobs, and did hunger-strike support for Unite HERE 75 at the U of T.

Difficulties and recommendations

The upcoming round of bargaining will be very difficult and will require a high degree of member mobilization in order to motivate the employer to move at more than a snail's pace and agree to the needs/demands of the local.

The installation of Rhonda Lenton as President is not good for labour on this campus, and is particularly problematic for 3903. Lenton is the architect and enforcer of the fellowship model



Representing Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants,
and Part-Time Librarians and Archivists @York University, Toronto

Canadian Union of Public Employees/Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique local/section locale 3903

and will find other ways to weaken the local. Vigilance and cunning will be required to keep what we have, but the local should also consider other organizing opportunities with workers on campus as a way to grow and protect more workers.

The local still requires the participation of members to address white supremacy and sexism within the local.

Final thoughts

I would like to thank the membership for the support and assistance that you have given me over the last two years. As many of you know I took another job with another union in the late fall and have been working two jobs, one of them in the United States. I could not have done this without our amazing staff, supportive executive members, and rank and file people willing to do a little extra work. I am happy to continue to be working in the labour movement but 3903 is a unique beautiful place and I will miss y'all very much. Thanks for allowing me to serve as your Chair.



Name: Maija Duncan

Position: Communications Officer

2016-17 Term Report

I began my term in June 2016, returning to the position I'd held the previous term through a by-election to fill a vacancy. This report is separated into three sections: communications tasks, tasks in support of the executive and union as a whole, and difficulties and recommendations.

Communications Tasks

Routine Communications Tasks

Website

Updating the website on a regular and timely basis, as well as producing most of its content, is a large part of the position. Some of the tabs have been reorganized to try to make information easier to find, but ideally the long-term project is to reorganize the content fully for full accessibility. This would be a sizeable undertaking that would require full involvement of the comms committee. We have circulated a survey about how to improve the website. If you haven't filled it out yet, please do!

Newsletter

The newsletter is sent out every Monday (very early) morning. This involves compiling announcements, events, and posts, researching any information not provided, coding the results in html, pasting it to an html editor to check for errors, and finally posting it into Gmail and sending the resulting newsletter. The html step, while it may seem excessive, is essential to prevent Gmail from eating all the formatting. While I have gotten fairly efficient at this process, the local could consider switching to a mailing service or template. Something for the next comms committee to discuss.

Social Media

The good news is that I've gotten better at social media! The bad news is that it is a) still not exactly my strong suit and b) way too much work for one person who also has many other tasks on her plate. My thanks goes to Gizem Çakmak (Recording Secretary) and Jacqueline Ristola (Chief Steward Unit 3) for helping me keep up with Twitter. Ideally I would have liked to see a dedicated person (or two) on the comms committee helping with this work.

Media Relations

I did quite a bit of media relations this year, mostly with Excalibur. Additionally, I helped draft a news release and got our accounts up-to-date with Canada Newswire. This will come in handy in a bargaining year.



Communications Committee Projects

Videos

The comms committee's biggest project for the year was the production of videos. We're a bit behind our ideal schedule, but are currently in post-production. Three videos will be done soon. For this project, we interviewed six candidates and picked a videographer with a lot of experience and a unique vision, Amin Toyouri. We then met with him on several occasions in the pre-productions stages to set out our shared vision for these videos. It was a risk to move away from the talking-heads model of union videos, but I believe that this risk will pay off and we will have videos ready to release when the time is right for bargaining.

Campaigns

Early in the term the comms committee discussed some campaigns to draw attention to the fellowship model and the loss of 665 jobs (although I believe we're closer to 700 now). The committee produced a poster. I believe that efficient campaigns would require our communications to be better integrated with Stewards' Council and rank-and-file initiatives.

Advertising

Early on, the committee tried advertising on both Twitter and Facebook to see how well it works. Facebook advertising worked very well and is relatively inexpensive. I strongly recommend that we use it a lot more going forward. Twitter advertising is expensive and not as effective, and thus likely not worth it.

Executive Tasks

International Tuition Offset (AKA the Ongoing Battle of Tuition Indexation)

A Memorandum of Settlement protecting tuition indexation was signed in April of last year. And yet individual cases that are in violation of that MoS keep popping up. First it was two entire cohorts of international students from the Lassonde School of Engineering. It took several months to get Faculty Relations to acknowledge that they needed to pay up, during which time I attended meetings with the employer and prepared arguments. Despite this agreement, those members have still not seen a cent of what they are owed. Furthermore, we found two more cases in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. These were similarly "resolved" in that the employer agreed to pay, but at least one of the cases remains unpaid.

Violations of the collective agreement are like cockroaches: for every one you see, there are much more you don't. Therefore, I created a Google doc with the names, minimum funding amounts, what the funding should be with the offset and salary increases, and contact information for every international student whose information we have due to last year's arbitration disclosures. Stephanie Latella (Chief Steward Unit 1) and I have been emailing every international student from the 2014-15 and 2015-16 cohorts to check in on their funding. So far we have found two cases: one in Chemistry and one in Science and Technology Studies. We have not reached the end of the list. While I hope to be wrong, I expect to find more cases.



Please talk to international students in your department and send them my way if there are any discrepancies or questions about their funding.

Fellowship Funding Model

Through my efforts to understand the new funding model so that I could properly inform the membership, I appear to have become the resident "expert" on the subject (as much as anyone can understand such a poorly executed model). As such I have produced several versions of the FAQ on the website, prepared and presented the backgrounder portion of the Fellowship SGMM, fielded numerous questions from members (especially early in the fall semester), and prepared questions to be presented at a meeting with Faculty Relations and FGS. I produced new material to reflect the funding changes when I updated the member's manual in August. Gathering information and distilling the complete mess that was the roll-out of this model was incredibly challenging. Some mistakes were made along the way, but overall I am satisfied that my grasp on the topic is excellent, and that this expertise was of use for the executive as we filed several grievances and prepared for a larger legal challenge.

Unit 4 Bargaining

I attended as much of Unit 4 bargaining as I could to provide support and advice when relevant. However, the Unit 4 bargaining team was incredible and I acted more as an observer and moral support. Nonetheless, I am pleased that I got to witness the genesis of their first collective agreement and help even in a small way. We have four units now, and it's time the executive and the membership get used to the idea of incorporating Unit 4 not only in our practices and policies, but also the organization of our solidarity between units.

Difficulties and Recommendations

Expenses

As a small technical recommendation, our local needs a credit card. I've had to front large amounts of money on my own credit card for comms-related expenses. And while I was able to do that, it seems unreasonable to make access to credit a necessary condition of being communications officer.

Budgeting and Timelines

The comms committee did not get the chance to finalize our budget until well into the Fall semester. Part of this situation is due to the Communications Officer shuffle that saw me return to the post in June. For the next year, I plan to meet with the comms committee as early as possible in April and produce a budget and a projects and campaigns plan immediately. I believe we could have gotten a lot more done this year given more time.

Workload



The biggest issue that I encountered is workload. This monster of a report only scratches the surface of the work that I have done. While I take responsibility for the fact that I consented to take on extra work, in some cases that consent seemed coerced in a way — how could I say no knowing that it wouldn't get done? This is not to point fingers at any individual member of the executive. It's been a rough year for the executive, with vacancies, illnesses, tragedies, and extended periods out of town. It's also been a rough year outside of our local, and these things affect us as human beings, which bleeds into our everyday work. Without blaming anyone, I do want to share that on days where I was running from speaking at a solidarity rally to a meeting with a member to talk about funding (neither of which are in my portfolio), in between which I've managed to squeeze in some website updates and replying to emails, juggling progress on my PhD and my teaching duties... the weight of all this responsibility is crushing. Sometimes I feel like only anger — at our employer, at the society we live in — can sustain me. I hope that we will manage a more equitable share of duties on the next executive, so that I can focus on doing a great job of communications instead of being torn between 4-5 different priorities at all times. But this isn't just an exec issue. The more the membership is involved, the less things like solidarity work and organizing fall on the executive committee, which is as it should be.



Name: Gizem Çakmak

Position: Recording Secretary/Research Officer

2016-17 Term Report

I was elected as the Recording Secretary/Research Officer in April 2016 and have enjoyed playing a crucial role in the running of the Executive. My position is responsible for a lot of routine and bureaucratic tasks that make the smooth running of the union possible.

Routine Tasks

- Taking Minutes (GMMs/SGMMs/Executive Meetings)
- Maintaining Proper Approval of Minutes
- Preparing Agendas (GMMs/SGMMs/Executive Meetings)
- Ensuring Regular Communication with CUPE Ontario and CUPE National
- Compiling Records of Committees
- Keeping the Policy Manual Up to Date
- Keeping Our Bylaw Approval Process Up to Date
- Research regarding projects to support bargaining and other priorities of the union
- Assemble Documents from the Recent Strike
- Maintaining Membership Lists
- Receiving and recording political membership request

Executive Tasks

Signing Authority

I have served as the third signing authority for our union alongside our Chair and Treasurer. This has often meant signing hundreds of cheques in a single day, especially when major committees like PDF, Childcare and EHB were adjudicating funds at the same time. The position also requires keeping with the bylaws and the budget for proper and accountable spending of the union's money.

1281/3903 LMC Representative

Between March-July 2016, I served as a member of the CUPE 3903/1281 LMC, which is the body that represents the Executive in the management of our staff. In this capacity, I organized and attended monthly meetings with our staff, took an active role in the day-to-day management of staff and the office, made sure CUPE 1281 CA was followed in our office as a workplace.

Executive Sub-Committee on International Tuition Offset

The beginning of my second term on the Executive (after my year as Chief Steward Unit 1) coincided with us settling this arbitration. I am proud that I was a member of the Executive sub-committee working on this arbitration, and then integral in following up with international members to make sure that the employer was not disrespecting the language the membership signed on.



Fight against Fellowship Funding Model

Since York rolled out the new fellowship model, the life of the Executive, but especially certain members of it has been very chaotic. It is a mess, the Employer does not have all details of it figured out, and our members are rightfully freaked out. Fielding questions about funding and proper payment amounts, figuring out the logic of the fellowship and mapping the inner-workings of it have been a priority for the Executive, in order to navigate the membership through this tumultuous attempt at union busting while trying to organize against it.

Our lead on the fellowship fight has been our Communication Officer Maija Duncan, and her efforts and expertise have been invaluable. I have (and will continue to do so) helped her with research, communication with members and putting pressure on the employer for transparency. The fight is absolutely a political one, especially in a bargaining year; however, detailed and to the point research helps the Executive to attack the Employer. It is important for the Executive to keep the Employer on its toes from an institutional perspective, while the rank and file engages in organizing political pressure. An active membership would carry out organizing, while the Executive enables it.

Unit 4 Bargaining

I supported Unit 4 through the negotiating of their first collective agreement. I will only say support, since the bargaining team was absolutely competent and eager, and fought the Employer with great perseverance. I contributed to their discussions from an Executive perspective, shared my experience of bargaining and knowledge of the collective agreement language, in addition to moral support.

Strike Manual

I have started the work on putting together a CUPE 3903 Bargaining/Strike Manual with the intention of institutionalizing and transferring knowledge, as we are a union that has great rates of membership turnover. So far the task has not been completed, as I am the only person working on it. Many members have a lot of knowledge and institutional memory. It would be great if they took on some responsibility on this project.

CUPE Ontario Convention

I was one of the delegates to CUPE Ontario Convention in 2016, and played an active role in working towards getting Resolution 14 (a resolution that urges CUPE Ontario to provide resources and guidance for locals to create their own procedures for supporting their members who are survivors of sexual violence) passed. I was able to make good connections with other sibling locals who also made fighting sexual violence a priority, especially CUPE 3902. The solidarity that emerged there is now being turned into a long term project for two locals to work more closely in a year of bargaining.

Name: Stephanie Latella

Position: Chief Steward Unit 1



Description: As the primary liaison for Unit 1 stewards, most of my work is in figuring out how implementation and violation of the CA looks in departments and hiring units, and to organize accordingly. I also sit on the Grievance Committee. With the other Chief Stewards, I plan and organize Stewards Council meetings, and also communicate with members via email, the SC listserv, and the SC Facebook page.

Projects/Priorities/Tasks

I came into this position prioritizing accessibility, transparency, and community -- and as is the usual way with campaign promises, what I actually achieved seems paltry in comparison. Here are the main things I've worked on:

- SC organized visits to all grad programs' orientation sessions in September
- SC has been working to strengthen our network of stewards and develop better strategies for organizing, with an emphasis on having one-on-one conversations in the workplace (classrooms, grad lounges, offices).
- SC budgeted \$5000 for stewards to partner with their departmental GSAs to host lunches where members can get informally acquainted with each other, their stewards, and their CA. We haven't yet had many of these events, but the ones that have taken place have been pretty successful.
- SC hosted several events for the whole union to come together to learn about and fight the fellowship model, including a barbecue in September and a button-making party in December.
- Many stewards have stepped up as "GMM buddies" to walk less experienced members through the protocol of our meetings.

With the rollout of the fellowship funding model in 2016, the main political organizing and mobilizing I've been involved in has been around the loss of jobs, summer funding, and accommodations for many grad students. This involved:

- making sense of these changes as they emerged
- revising orientation materials to reflect these changes and inform incoming members about what they were losing
- helping members get properly paid, and getting clarification from FGS on how their pay would look
- preparing for and attending meetings with the employer to get answers for the membership, and reporting back to the membership on such meetings
- working with CUPE National to compile documents for an Unfair Labour Practice claim regarding the loss of nearly 700 Unit 3 jobs
- developing political campaigns to fight the model, which involved an SGMM in the fall, and the implementation of some of the suggested actions through SC (including the "665" button campaign)

My focus in this last month will be to tie up loose ends and transition the next CS Unit 1.

Difficulties and Recommendations



Many of the tasks listed above are part of the regular job description of an executive member and especially a chief steward. However, they were doubly complicated this year because of the new funding model. It has become clear to me that members are fuzzy on the details of the CA and graduate funding in the best of times. And this year has not been the best of times, given the new funding model and continuing problems in the application of international tuition offset.

It has been challenging to figure out how to make information more accessible, and how to deal with individual problems in ways that invites participation on the part of members, rather than positioning the union as a service organization. There are many barriers to participation endemic to our workplace. We are isolated from each other most of the time. Many of us have to take on extra paid work, have additional care work responsibilities, or live far away from campus. All of these factors combine to discourage many of us from taking up our issues in the workplace as a collective issue. Instead, a great deal of problem solving goes on in email exchanges between members, exec, staff, and the employer. It took most of my term to start to figure out how not to shift into customer service mode in these types of interactions, and especially how to enforce healthy boundaries around email.

The problem of participation is made worse by our tendency to blame one another for not doing enough or for doing it wrong. One simple thing we can do differently is to give people more opportunities to connect. Social events tend to be dismissed as frivolous, but they contribute significantly to the level of engagement in the local, and in turn to the success of our direct actions. The union is at its strongest when organizing happens in a bottom-up fashion. Members need to feel empowered to talk to each other about their working conditions.

Many exec members struggle with an excessive workload. In part, this is because of the uneven distribution of work among exec members, which is itself compounded by especially unclear job descriptions in the by-laws. To make matters worse, we were without a grievance officer on two separate occasions this year, creating more work for the rest of the exec and staff in identifying and working on grievances. On this executive committee, made up of several women and people of colour, overwork has included a great deal of emotional labour -- trying to foster a good team dynamic and a safe space when all of us are exhausted, and many of the issues we deal with can be triggering. Because of conflicting schedules and significant differences of opinion on who to work with and how to proceed, we were not able to arrange team-building and equity workshops for the executive until October, and by then some of our more toxic group dynamics were difficult to change. Such training needs to be prioritized for all bodies of the union, no matter their makeup.

Despite these difficulties, I am so grateful for the generosity of the many seasoned organizers I have encountered in this local, who have patiently shared their experiences and resources and otherwise helped me navigate a steep learning curve over the past year. I'll be paying it forward as much as I can as the executive committee changes over.



Name: Jacqueline Ristola

Position: Chief Steward Unit 3

1. Projects: In April, I got to work straight away by organizing two Unit 3 Town Halls to help inform and mobilize union members around the fellowship model. I started a “Fellowship Model Mobilization” google group to start organizing and mobilizing members to fight against the fellowship model. My activity with this list serv, however, died out after the summer.

Before the fellowship model and truly hit us, I worked with the Grievance Officer to make a google form to collect data on GA/RA work. Aside from organizing Stewards’ Councils once a month in summer, I also worked on sorting out summer pay for Unit 3 members throughout the summer. This mostly involved explaining their funding, although I did catch a few cases where students were not paid, and where York’s interpretation of the \$3000 summer assistance allotment is contentious with out own. I facilitated pay grievances for those not paid. The end of May involved attending CUPE Ontario 2016. You can read my thoughts below in section 2.

Summer was also a time when I tried to facilitate a conversation around the fellowship model between YUGSA and CUPE 3903. Due to what I would identify as YUGSA’s reluctance to directly organize against York, this work went nowhere.

In the summer, the chief stewards also worked on some initiatives regarding racism in the local. This manifested as some letters to concerned members of the community, and two anti-o workshops in the fall for exec members.

A few orientations occurred in the summer, and I represented CUPE 3903 in these sessions. I also assisted in writing and editing the new members manual, with special attention to subjects such as some office resources often forgotten (the various journal subscriptions the office receives), international student information (how to get your UHIP card), and the radical history of the local (demonstrating how we won such good contracts through membership mobilization, strikes, etc.)

Throughout the summer, I was in the CUPE office quite frequently, sometimes up to three days a week, to make sure the office was staffed and could stay open. September hit in a big way. One of the biggest projects this month was the CUPE 3903 BBQ, which was organized through Stewards’ Council, and was a resounding success. As an event both to welcome new and returning members, as well as graduate student who would have been members, it was an effective way of facilitating face to face interactions around the new fellowship model.

I helped organize with the chief stewards all the various campus orientations into an accessible spreadsheet to allow exec members to sign up for orientations. I also spoke at 7-8 dept./program orientations about the new fellowship model, and inviting non-members to organize with the union at SC. No one took up on this offer, however.

In October I flyered a FGS event for new graduate students, many of whom would have been in the union. This involved sitting down with many groups of students while avoiding Barbara Crow - a stressful time, but I think rewarding to get in face to face time with students. I also organized the various union and non-union contacts we’ve collected during September, either collecting them in my binder, or a spreadsheet online. One of my deepest regrets this year was not using these contacts more, particularly the non-union contacts. While I worked to keep



up the Fellowship model list serve over the summer, when orientations hit, this communications work was dropped.

November and December involved a slew of events from Stewards' Council. I helped coordinate a 3903 contingent at the Standing for Standing Rock march on November 5th, and we held our CUPE 3903 flags proud when we heard CUPE thanked by the organizers (though CUPE Ontario wasn't there).

Late in the term, two events, Eat Up/Act Up with Stewards Council on November 29th and SC Swag party on December 1st, were poorly attended. While it is understandable that it was near the end of the term, and involvement lessens around these crush times, it was disappointing to find a militant event (originally planning to interrupt the Board of Governors) and a creative event (making buttons for the #665 campaign) both poorly attended, or in the case of the latter, much lower attendance than planned. The militant action in particular had no participants save for executive members, despite being initially planned a month and a half in advance. What was envisioned as a militant action turned into a tabling session due to low capacity. Same for the swag making party. Due to low capacity, many tasks suggested (such as taking inventory of craft supplies in the office, acquiring t-shirts, and getting cloth spray paint to design our own shirts) were not carried out, so the event became only a button making party. Those who attended were still able to make buttons and have good discussion around union matters.

The lack of participation, while troubling on its own, is part of a larger trend of a lack of middle layer of stewards and activists within the local. I'll expand upon this more in point 3.1, mobilization.

In winter 2017, the main projects I worked on were supporting the Unite Here 75 Aramark workers through their strikes, getting departmental steward lunches going, and numerous other small projects such as making GMMS more accessible to new members. Speaking at multiple rallies for the food service workers, and marching with them on the picket lines was great learning experience for our upcoming bargaining. I helped host a department lunch, finished writing this report, helped organize the office to make minutes and other resources more accessible, and started recycling programs for writing utensils and batteries.

There are the various other responsibilities of being Chief Steward I did throughout the year - chairing SC meetings (it's required in the bylaws!), reading the bylaws and the CAs to prepare for my role (ok, I did skim Unit 2's), hosting office hours, participating in Grievance Committee, and sorting and filing a lot of paperwork (funds, health care enrolment, etc).

I also worked on our social media, making various posters and flyers throughout the year for Stewards' Council and the fellowship model. I made new logos for the SC Facebook page, and perhaps most importantly, the other chief stewards and I have worked along with my other Chief Stewards to consistently bring good food at SC meetings. I really liked that we organized some stewards out to political action such as rallies and marches this year. I hope we can continue this kind of work in the future.

While I've done a lot of work for the union, smaller accomplishments throughout the year were some of the most rewarding. Cleaning out the refrigerator on the last day before the office closed for winter break with no access to running water in Atkinson was something I was super proud of. Figuring out of the big TVs working the meeting rooms, and making a poster to



teach others how to use them is another small accomplishment that I hope lives on beyond my tenure as an exec member.

2. CUPE Ontario 2016

I attended the Canadian Union of Public Employee's annual Ontario Convention as a delegate of CUPE 3903 from York University. As a delegate, my primary mission going to the convention was to get a resolution passed support the campaign against the 15 Years of Imperialist War in Afghanistan. This goal need up completely overwhelming my comrade and I. We also helped in mobilizing for a resolution submitted by my union, CUPE 3903, to enable the union to develop a policy on sexual assault. What follows is a reflection of my experience.

Analysis is necessary to understand the contexts of this convention. In order to make change, we need information and analysis of the situation to respond properly and push forward. This write-up is an attempt at assessing the situation and proposes changes for the future.

2.1 Baptism by Fire

Within my union, there was no coordination or planning before entering the convention, at least that I was aware of. While I received a few emails on the basic logistics of when and where the convention was taking place, as well as the action plan that would be debated, my comrade and I, as first time delegates, were not adequately prepared for how the convention worked, nor the racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and other prejudices that would be actively expressed by other locals throughout the conference. Without such coordination, such vitriol was a shock to our system, and extremely psychologically traumatic. Those of us separated from our local found solace in other solid members among locals within the university sector.

Without solid coordination before hand, various comrades were separated from each other in the room. Key delegates from my union were seated by the doors across the room from the rest of the union, so as to protect sanity and step out when vitriolic language was expressed on the floor. But this also meant the union delegates were stratified, and such physical distances no doubt put a strain on the coordination.

Many delegates were not actively involved in the mobilizing to support resolutions submitted by their own local. Like many of the delegates attending across Ontario, the primary reason for going to the convention is for the per diem given and the time away from the working with the excuse that they are hard at work representing the union. For many locals, the CUPE Ontario convention is a vacation, a way get away from work with minimal responsibility and explore Toronto in the evenings. Within my union, a good number of delegates were not involved with the hard work of getting Resolution 14, a resolution beginning the process of getting sexual assault policies in place, passed.

All delegate positions were acclaimed in the election, as my union gives a small amount compared to even other local unions. Elections for delegates should actually be significant in terms of representation, but because the convention never seemed to be a priority for the union, the election of delegate was largely an afterthought to other pressing matters in GMMs. For good political mobilization, it's clear we need delegates knowledgeable and experienced with political mobilization and public speaking. Perhaps raising the per diem from \$25 a day (which seems



paltry for the amount of psychological abuse one must suffer through at the convention if you are politically mobilizing in any way) and demanding certain obligations from delegates will improve the slate for next year as we plan and mobilize to push forward. Coordinating to take over an entire back table for solid delegates to stay together, while having the option to quickly leave the room, would also be key for physical presence within the convention.

Coordination with delegates from other locals was key in getting the sexual assault resolution passed, a resolution two years in the making. However, this planning was done ad hoc throughout the convention, and much of the legwork involved was done by solid members of Local 3902 at University of Toronto, including pulling an all-nighter to design a beautiful and essential information flyer about the resolution, and distributed them the next day. These comrades were willing to flood the pro mics with speakers, asking the CUPE Ontario president to speak in favour of the resolution, and coordinating with speakers in line to counteract the regressive politics displayed by con speakers.

I felt alienated by certain members of my union, including fellow executive members. Aside from some being physically being separated from them, unable to join them where there were due to lack of chairs, I was saddened to realize I was also not privy to their activities. Certain members who were there to speak to the resolution did not come intending to coordinate with other solid delegates, who instead stepped up of their own accord to support the resolution passing. This is what I was able to ascertain. As myself and rank and file from CUPE 3902 tried to organize to have a full debrief on the events after the convention, certain delegates often seemed to walk away, unknowing or unwilling to participate in debriefing with the delegates who helped their motion get passed. Uniting with fellow delegates did not seem to be a planned priority, and I found myself, as an executive of the union, acting as an in between to try and corral people together so we could have a successful debrief, all too critical for moving forward.

I was also incredibly alienated by a fellow executive member and delegate at the convention from my union voting against Resolution 14, astonishing myself and other union members. This act contradicts this member's previous endorsement of the resolution in our union spaces, and was a contentious issue for the executive going forward after the convention. This contradictory action also highlights the split view of the role of delegates. This report endorses the position that delegates, particularly in the University centre (who tend to be the most radical), should politically mobilize to push and support progressive resolutions, **but only as it directly affects, enables, and supports the work of locals**. There are many within the union who view the role of delegate as a easy paycheque, earning through partial to minimal attendance of the convention and passively voting for resolutions. This view coincides with the position for many delegates across CUPE Ontario that the convention is a union holiday. We must push back against these regressive tendencies, and mobilize the election of delegates for true progressive, political action within our union.

This action also illustrates the importance of education in pushing resolutions forward, as well as the limitations of the union at large. Again, a union is united by employment, not politics, so pushing progressive resolutions will always receive resistance from conservative members of the union, of which there are many. Strategy is key in all areas, from how one occupies the space of the convention, to how one articulates pros or cons at the mic, etc etc.

2.2 Politics



In a fellow comrade's analysis of CUPE 3903's 2008 strike, he pointed out how a union in not united politically, but rather through the workplace. This leads to a plethora of political positions held by union members that clash within and between locals. The fact that a resolution against "unjust war" failed at CUPE Ontario illustrate the discrepancy between locals in terms of political lines. As CUPE Ontario is made up of union from across the province, many come from different occupations that influence their political lines as well. Paramedics in smaller towns will be much more supportive of the police that unions in the university sector, for instance.

This is seen when in a resolution against "unjust war" was put forward on the floor, it took only one delegate at the con mic to deflate the entire resolution by saying "...and I'm a Canadian veteran" in her introduction. Before saying anything else, she received a standing ovation, solely based on the rhetoric of identifying as a veteran. What she said next didn't matter, the overall intention was to block anything that could be remotely anti-military. The resolution itself, extremely watered down in terms of language, failed on the floor twice, to great surprise by many of the delegates. This individual responsible for mobilizing reactionaries in rhetoric of "support our troops" stood again against a resolution proposing CUPE Ontario pressure Canada to pull out of NATO, stating that NATO was founded as a peacekeeping organization. While I spoke in criticism of NATO being seen as a peacekeeping operation, this resolution failed as well.

This leads to the resolution I was primarily mobilizing around, that of endorsing the 15 Years of War campaign. Submitted as an emergency resolution, as the campaign had launched officially after the resolution submission deadline, the resolution was submitted by the International Solidarity committee. What followed through the convention was no information or communication from the convention committee or staff, leaving my comrade and I in a state of distress for days. The specifics of all the various inquiries we made aren't worth detailing, but suffice it to say we only got a concrete answer of what actually happened to the resolution and what we could do next after the convention had finally ended. It is worth noting however that when in conversation with one of the executive board members, when mentioned that the chair of the international solidarity committee had been sick the previous day (due to exhaustion and dehydration from working so hard at the conference), the executive took this as an opportunity to blame the chair as the weak link in the lack of information. We were also told by this executive that because the war has been going on for 15 years in Afghanistan, the resolution couldn't truly be considered an emergency. In short, likely due to the immediate deflation of the most milquetoast resolutions against war, CUPE Ontario executive took our anti-war resolution and buried it, preventing it from getting onto the floor, to save face in case another anti-war resolution getting vote down.

As convention delegates are majority white and male, certain propositions are much more difficult to pass, particularly as many delegates need basic training on issues such as sexual assault, imperialism, etc. This is why delegates supporting a particularly contentious issue, even as basic as "we need policies on sexual assault in our union", need to be prepared to not only put forward why to support such a resolution, but also defend it from criticisms. This also means proper mobilization on the floor itself is necessary to equip speakers in line with good talking points refuting reactionary arguments. As a speaker at the con mic argued against Resolution 14 because "we are not adequately equipped to deal with the issue," when the whole point of the resolution is to make the union better equipped to deal with sexual assault. Often it means



pointing out the most basic contradictions, while playing to the audience's basic points of political unity, such as solidarity with workers.

2.3 Convention

I did not know going in what actually took place at the convention, aside from knowing people would speak at the mic to help push resolutions forward. What occurred was carefully controlled chaos. Few resolutions got passed, with the majority of them being sent to be approved by the executive committee. Instead, precious time was wasted on speakers, including a surprise speaker from the NDP party, that was not scheduled on the agenda. CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn denied that CUPE Ontario was a slave to the NDP, but its clear he and other executive members view electoral politics as the primary means of political mobilization, hence the constant promotion of the NDP in union spaces.

Speaking of Fred, I was disturbed by the cult of personality that surrounds him at the convention. Of course, this power can be channeled for good, as it was for Resolution 14, as a delegate asked him personally to speak for the resolution. But his presence also allows CUPE Ontario to pat itself on the back for how progressive it is in having first openly gay president in CUPE's history, while progressive measures are voted down or prevented from reaching the floor. Of course, cognitive dissonance pervades the space as well, as delegates often do not hold a clear, consistent political line, but rather have opinions tethered to specific issues.

CUPE Ontario holds a position to prevent any and all criticism of the union, even when it is accurate and comes from members themselves. As CUPE members helped Unite Here Local 75 flyer about their ongoing issue with self-determination, executive members took swift action against Unite Here, ignoring the issues Unite Here presented. Fred Hahn asserted a baseless accusation that Unite Here pulled the fire alarm in the Sheraton hotel where the convention took place, when the fire alarm had gone off the day before in response to a restaurant mishap. Has Unite Here Local 75 been blamed for that as well?

The space was also very inhospitable for people with disabilities. It was a tight squeeze in between tables and chairs, making it very difficult for anyone to get in and out. The loud yelling by certain delegates when trying to motivate a resolution that would have already passed unanimously genuinely frightened my comrade and I, as a man literally argued for the criminalization of mental patients in trying to argue for protections for nurses injured on the job. Sitting in that space means being bombarded with noise, from applause to the slamming to tables by fists or open palms. While there is a 'quiet room' within the convention hall, removing yourself from the main room also means you are unable to vote or speak on a resolution.

2.4 Final thoughts on the Convention, and Organizing at Conventions as a whole

If I had known what would happen, would I have gone to the convention? The answer would have been a resigned sigh and a maybe, not because it was a fun or enjoyable experience, but because there is so much work to be done. In this case, it was coordinating with other solid delegates to begin the process on addressing sexual assault within the union. This means being prepared in the organizing and mobilizing around resolutions worth fighting for. It means knowing whom to trust, both within nearby locals, and on the executive board. It also means



knowing the schedule and understanding when and where to strike, as well as when to rest. (There was some discussion of sharing a hotel room among delegates for both rest and political planning, a delicious idea.)

While fighting for resolutions that directly impact one's local, it's questionable to what extent CUPE Ontario is worth working with outside of the union for such things as endorsements. I came from the convention exhausted, glad that a resolution of sexual assault two years in the making passed, but frustrated that our resolution to stand against imperialist war was essentially buried by the executive committee.

For the sake of progress within the union, as well as good mental and physical health, proper planning and mobilization is essential. But to what extent these efforts are worth one's time is debatable.

Labour Conventions, particularly those held by union bureaucrats, are always subject to labour aristocracy, the higher up union bureaucracy that is subject and subjugated to capitalism (so are we, but the layers are differently developed). As such, these spaces will never be progressive, as election into the higher strata to "change the system" only swallows up well meaning activists into the capitalist machine further. I can only recommend people attend conventions for the following two reasons:

1. Pushing motions or movements that will directly support, enable, or otherwise help the work of the local. These need to be strategic decisions made before entering these spaces, and even before delegates are elected.
2. Working to specifically make connections with other like-minded locals. Conventions are a way of learning more about our fellow University sector, and meeting people face to face to coordinate further solidarity actions.

Elections for delegates, and attending conventions themselves, are not seen or treated as important things, and rightfully so. CUPE convention are 85% NDP sloganeering, after all. But, if we want to strategically mine these spaces for their benefits (well resourced in terms of funding for instance), it would take a lot of work to assess what is feasible, and work from there. Otherwise, they are largely a waste of time.

3. Overwork: There is a toxicity created around the Executive that is largely created, I suspect, from the excessive amount of work burdened onto only a few shoulders, and perhaps more importantly, vastly different styles of work in how such work is negotiated, developed, or delegated (or not). Other smaller factors may include certain political disagreements, a tension between remaining bureaucratic and pushing interpretation of language, and a variety of different personality types that may get on each other's nerves from time to time. This overwork arises from a number of factors: work structured in a way so that all day to day activities of the union are placed upon the shoulders of 13 (or often less) people, and a lack of a mobilized union as a whole (I would estimate that around 50 people do all of the work of the union, out of thousands).

This incredible burden creates a situation where executive members may resign from exec due to an undue emotional burden, creating more overwork for individuals. Losing executive members was a consistent occurrence throughout this year, which also creates overwork. We lost six people on the Executive throughout the year: Communications Officer,



TFAC Co-Chair, Grievance Officer, Vice President Unit 3, Grievance Officer, Vice President Unit 3. Some left well (Grievance Officers, for instance, getting full time work), others not. Having elected positions empty means more work on the executive, who have to take on that work less projects get lost, and the election officers, who seem to have to continuously organize elections throughout the year due to a revolving cast of Exec members.

Individuals who do not drop out of the exec can become burned in another way. I have seen trust become eradicated between members, or have heard stories about how such trust has dissolved over time. Benefit of the doubt is not something that really exists in these spaces, and expectations exist that you are either 1) continuously working at all times (forgetting that executive is a service not a job) and that b) if you haven't been "up to snuff" recently, there is pressure to report back why in specific detail. Exec check in, while a well-intended item on the agenda of exec meetings, exists more a way of policing - that we must share how we feel and what is happening our lives so other Exec members are in the know. It encourages the erosion of privacy, and ultimately exists because there is no benefit of the doubt otherwise. It's a way of regulating one's behaviour by forcing others to explain or justify it. I recommend it be removed from the agenda.

Another problem is that there is little to no nourishing or restorative elements to the union work, particularly on the Executive. We often don't thank each other enough for all the various work we do. Not only is there a lot of work that we do that slips through the cracks (cleaning the office, meeting with members, organizing files, managing large swaths of email, etc.), this work and other Exec duties often do not get the praise or recognition it deserves. This can be another cause of burnout and discouragement, as members often don't feel appreciated, and when asked to take on tasks, then can feel completely overwhelmed and under-appreciated.

It's important to note that these problems are a part of a continuous toxicity to the Exec, and that this toxicity is often underlying that ebbs and flows as stress piles up on individuals. There is more that could be said about the stress and vulnerability of being an executive member, but I'd like to discuss bit about how we can eliminate some of the stresses that overloads members and creates burnout.

Part of the overwork problem is, in combination with a lack of union mobilization, is a lack of delegation in the executive. While we say we are membership driven, this year we have been rather top-down in terms of our approach, something I didn't quite realize until the end of my term. There is so much work the executive has done (issues throughout the year included York clawing back money from Lassonde international students, anti-o work within the executive, etc.) that is overwhelming, and we don't often communicate it. I think we should work to delegate to our membership as much as possible: 1) it helps get members involved, 2) puts the power in the memberships hands where it should be, and 3) it helps spread the work so we don't get Executive burnout.

One recommendation would be to form subcommittees, working groups, or research teams with honoraria/food/tokens or other forms of compensation as issues arise to enable the member ship to work on these issues directly.

3.1 Mobilization: We often complain that we are seen as a service union by certain members. While we will do everything in our power to make sure our members have access to all of the wonderful services our office and contracts provide, perhaps one way to reorient ourselves is



through department/program orientations. In these orientations, we introduce students to all our services, and while we mention we are a member driven local, we do not provide tangible stories to illustrate this. I think giving some good examples of how members can organize within the local, such as starting or joining a working group, which requires little union bureaucracy to getting started. We have a radical history within our local, and preserving that history and using it to teach others is an incredibly valuable asset.

One major issue that plagues the local is non-strike hibernation, that is, union members only get involved during bargaining or striking, and then remain completely political dormant in between. While it is definitely an asset that members “awaken” to go on strike, attentive focus on keeping union members active after a strike is needed. Obviously, this is very difficult to do, as everyone needs to rest after a strike and recuperate, and trying to organize during this time would be quite difficult. I suggest developing a timeline before bargaining to schedule and plan what stewards, executives, and other active union members will do after a strike to retain membership activity.

In talking with rank and file from 3902, one of the biggest issue we’ve identified is a lack of middle layer of activists and stewards in the local. Many departments/programs are missing stewards, and some stewards are not actively organizing their peers. I think one way to improve member participation is to make GMMs as accessible to people unfamiliar with union politics or union bureaucracy. This can be exec members going out of the way to communicate face to face with members, makings are there is someone at the door to welcome members, making the agenda package more accessible (explaining terms), posting proposed motions in advance to the website to allow members to formulate an opinion in advance, etc.

The key thing here is that while it’s wonderful that people are willing to go on strike, if we present ourselves as a strong, mobilized, and organized union beforehand, we would have more leverage in negotiations to avoid striking in the first place.

In discussions with rank and file from 3902, some observations were made. While U of T offers just enough to try and placate the union, York takes the tactic of trying to **crush the union and students** as much as possible, all the time, not just in bargaining years. My observations, and what I’ve heard from other exec members, is that the union is very much a crisis-driven local, mobilizing when the membership sees a crisis, usually bargaining. But the fact is that **the union is always facing problems from the employer**. A few months ago, students in mechanical engineering didn't get paid at all. International students in Lassonde have been continually denied their proper funding. Lots of members are suffering all the time, and the executive struggles to solve all the problems all by themselves. We need continuous mobilization to stay connected as a powerful union and make sure we are always prepared to fight York when it decides to screw with our members.

4. Other observations

On a more miscellaneous note, the office is a bit of an awkward space that doesn’t quite function like a typical office. Staff once suggested that we have a receptionist in the front. Here is some brainstorming on how that might be helpful, at least as a part time position.

A receptionist could:

- Schedule meetings with staff, and inform members when they are on campus and free to meet.



- Answer phones, including answering questions about the contract, and setting up appointments with staff and/or the executive.
- Be a point person to file paperwork, assist members with paperwork, help them find things in the office.

Right now, Exec members serve as that kind of point person, with everyone having office hours to make sure the office is staffed with at least one person. However, this is a bit haphazard, a patchwork way of addressing the need to have at least one person the office to direct members.

Without a point person, it also means that executive meetings can get interrupted by members who need support, which becomes a bit of a problem, especially if we lose quorum because an executive member must leave the room, and/or are crunched for time. In the end, I'm not sure how much I actually endorse having a receptionist position, but it would certainly help keep the office organized.

Other questions include: How can we keep these spaces clean and organized? Whose role, if any, and is that in the local or on the exec? How do we keep the office clean without putting the work on the women?

4.1 Institutional Memory

Another thing we need to work on is keeping institutional memory as an executive committee, and as a union as a whole. There are a vast amount of things from minor to major importance that are important to save and make accessible, such as our staff member's work anniversaries, how the list serves work and where to access them, or how we first bargaining funds such as the trans fund. While we have a manual for our members, we should create a manual for our exec as well. Additionally, ensuring that exec members are properly and thoroughly transitioned is a must.

Thanks for reading this report. I sincerely appreciate it.

— Jacqueline Ristola, Chief Steward Unit 3



Sara Shamdani, VP Unit 1

In addition to regular duties of an executive member, which include holding office hours, answering member's emails and questions, meetings with members and problem solving various issues facing them – such as lack of pay and specific grievances – attending executive meetings, attending and preparing for GMMs, attending orientations, helping out with events such as our annual BBQ, the followings are a more detailed account of my other duties over the past year:

A big part of the job of the VP is to oversee and assist with committee work. Over the year I have continued this work in various capacities. I regularly met with members of different committees to discuss internal issues, what needed to be raised with the executive, and processes that needed to be changed. I put members in touch with appropriate committees and facilitated member's concerns regarding committee work. I booked members' flight and hotel accommodations for conferences. I trained newly elected members – such as W&M, Childcare Committee, and PDF – on the work of the committee. I ensured that the list of committee members and vacancies were up-to-date and regularly advertised for vacancies and when it was necessary ran elections at the GMMs to fill vacant positions. I worked on the Election Officer's by-law amendment by going through the last year's reports, policy manual, and crafting a new by-law.

One of my main goals for this year was to plan for workshops for both the executive and the membership to address and help with specific issues facing our local. I researched and had phone conversations with several people on their pedagogy, their rates and availability. Among these people was Pat Wright, a social worker who conducts various workshops on communications skills, anti-racist and diversity training, and teamwork and problem-solving. I spoke with her in depth about the space of our local, previous and current issues around the racism and sexism that we deal with. I put forward my recommendations of hiring her for a few workshops to the other members of the executive. After passing the motion to hire her, I worked diligently to organize two workshops for the executive her. We had these two workshops on Oct 6, 2016 and Oct 13, 2016 on diversity in union spaces and collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution. The workshops were great, and I learned some good practices from them. After this VP U2 and myself worked on creating a regular practice within the local to have the monthly anti-racism workshops for all the members including the executive. We have already met with a representative from Centre for Human Rights and she has put forward a plan of different workshops that we hope to pass at the next executive meeting after passing our yearly budget. Our plan is to also include our committees that work on these issues, including our Equity committee and Accessibility committee for their input and the issues that they would also like to see get addressed.

I attended LMC meetings with the employer, took detailed minutes and sent them to the LMC chair for distribution. I followed up with the employer on off-set payment and stressed the importance of respecting and following the details of the M.O.S. I spoke on the issues around the U3 GA-ships, raised questions to none of which we got satisfactory answers. I spoke strongly about the fellowship model and the letters of offer sent to the incoming PhD students who were told that they only have 4 years of funding, instead of 6, wherein the employer agreed to look into those and to come up with a better procedure for the incoming students to not state anything to our members that contravenes the CA. I have helped with collecting data required for the



fellowship model and our continual work to uphold the CA. We had an SGMM on this issue, which I helped in organizing and chairing. In that meeting we collectively came up with various strategies and options on how to tackle the fellowship model. I collected names of individuals who were interested in contributing and working on various projects and put all in touch with one another to begin their work. Unfortunately, not many individuals responded to my original email.

Part of my duty as a VP is to support our labour allies both across the university sector and outside of it. After being connected to and organizing with the executive of the local 3906, I went to McMaster to speak to the members at their Strike Mandate Vote SGMM in December 2016. I spoke about the logistics of this vote, drew on our own experiences both in the 2015 strike and previous rounds of bargaining and offered support and solidarity with the members. I drafted letters of support for 3906 prior to their Strike Mandate Vote and after they ratified their new collective agreement.

The nature of this job brings about both physical and emotional fatigue. I have seen this fatigue happening in people occupying different positions within the local. I believe this stems from a place of passion for what we stand for, what we do, and ultimately who we want to be. In this process it becomes easy to be unkind to one another by lacking generosity in interpreting each others' thoughts and behaviours. I encourage us to practice kindness with each other. This doesn't mean to not speak truth to power, rather speaking that truth kindly and with compassion.

Thank you for supporting me and the local and may we continue to work together towards making our union a better place.



Name: Mohamed Banda

Position: Vice President Unit II

Date of Submission: March 14, 2017

Report Period: April 2016 – March 2017

Duties of Position:

External Liaison Work
Unions and Ally Groups
Committees

Projects, priorities, and tasks for this period:

One of the important initiatives for me this year has been my involvement in the discussions to reform and implement measures to respond to incidents of racism on the Executive and in the local. I was involved in drafting the document that was circulated on CUPE3903 list-serves.

Working in collaboration with fellow Executive members that include the Communication officer, the Chair, the treasurer and VP1, I contributed in crafting the motion to hold monthly anti-racism workshops/trainings that passed at the GMM in January 2017. Subsequently, I organized a number of meetings with VP 1 to start work on bringing various committees and working group in the local together to work on guidelines to be presented to the executive and the membership for the implementation of monthly workshops/trainings. VP1 and I are still working with a facilitator to get the first workshop started. I drafted and edited a number of documents with fellow members including fossil free York document.

As VP Unit II, I organized and chaired a number of town hall meetings throughout 2016-2017.

Also, for this period, I served as the interim posting officer; reviewed postings, corresponded with departments, and arranged meetings with Faculty Relations to clarify issues relating to postings, in my capacity as the posting officer.

I took on logistics mainly to ensure CUPE3903 flags were available at “Fairness for Contract Faculty” rally at Queens Park in August 2016; participated in logistics and organization for CUPE welcome BBQ in fall 2016. I also assisted in logistics to get supplies for the button campaign event organized by SC.

I attended LMC, Cross Campus Alliance meetings, and working with CCA on behalf of the local, I participated in the Aramark labour Action that just ended. I also participated in Joint Health & Safety Committee and CUPE 3903 Exec meeting re: York University Sexual Assault Policy Working Group. I was part of the delegation to CUPE Ontario Convention (May 24 – 28, 2016). I participated in unit II CUPE 3903 Conversions workshop and acted as the liaison between CUPE Conversions Advisory Committee and CUPE Unit II Members, participated in workshops that aim to build trust and strengthen working relationship among fellow executive members, and attended numerous workshops organized by Centre for Human Rights and “Toward an Anti-Racist University: Racial (In) Equity Intersectionality and Social Injustice of Sameness”, organized by YUFA Race and Equity Caucus.



For 2016-2017, I assisted in booking room locations, ordered audio/video setups; arranged for food, and did sign in of members at many meetings. I sent regular updates to the unit II list-serve and responded to emails. I was involved in organizing and running of committee elections for this period, organized candidates list, prepared ballot boxes and helped in counting ballots. I also organized orientations for incoming committee members. I responded to multiple emails, maintained regular office hours, and met individually with members to discuss and or clarify concerns. I attended GMMs and regular executive meetings and maintained office hours.

Difficulties and recommendations:

By far, getting members to attend meetings has been the biggest issue; therefore, to increase participation, the local needs to work on how to get members out to SC, (S)GMMs and town hall meetings.

One of the left-over items on the agenda from last year is a commitment on bringing specifically Unit II people together to look into the viability of e-voting in the local. The last meeting held on this was on February 26, 2016, where the Chair and I (and some unit II members) started working on this hoping to resolve (maybe a bylaw change) through a referendum by the membership. Unfortunately, e-voting (or the discussion) has stalled. I wanted to see this initiative concluded one way or another (Yes/No, Up/down) this year but it did not happen. Also, work on the Task Force on Anti-Racism has slowed down quite a bit; it is time to revive it.

Plans for Next month

I am looking forward to working with the new executive and the local to complete unfinished business. My commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression of all forms will continue as we find ways to ensure equitable practices in the local and in the University and beyond. Therefore, I will continue to organize and mobilize around these issues going forward in my capacity as a rank and file. I thank you for your support and looking forward to working with you to advance these important issues.



Name: Nicole Leach

Position: TFAC Co-Chair 1

Date of submission: March 14, 2017

Report Period: March 2017

Duties of the position:

(a) The Chairs of the Trans Feminist Action Caucus are responsible for the coordination of that caucus' activities. (b) The Chair(s) organise(s) regular caucus meetings during the academic year, represent(s) the Caucus at CUPE National and CUPE Ontario Division Women's Committee sponsored events and liaise with other feminist organisations in an effort to improve the position of all women, trans, gender queer and gender variant people at York University and within the labour movement. In the event that two TFAC caucus co-chairs are elected, both shall have a vote and both shall receive full honoraria. (c) The Chairs shall, upon termination of office, surrender all books, seals and other properties of the Local Union to their successor, upon termination of their terms of office, provide a copy of all documents pertaining to their work to the CUPE 3903 Archive.

Projects, priorities and tasks for this period:

This month TFAC has been focused on the work of the TFAC subcommittee devoted to creating a CUPE 3903 internal survivor centric sexual assault policy. Research and initial interview stages of this policy development has been initiated by the subcommittee and TFAC Co-chairs. As well, this month has seen the further development of the campaign to pressure the university to support the development and deployment of courses aimed at addressing rape culture on campus, such as a currently designed course on Active Bystander Training that York has refused to properly support.

Difficulties and recommendations:

Increasing attendance and member engagement.

Plans for next month:

Our upcoming plans include continuing to organize around York's problematic sexual assault policy, continued work on a local specific sexual assault policy, developing a TFAC speaker series, and TFAC Co-chair elections.

Meeting and Event Attendance:

Exec meetings: 2

(S)GMMs: 1

Other: TFAC Meetings 3, TFAC Co-chair Meeting 0