

Your president and executive recommend affiliation with CUPE

The President and Executive Members of Canadian University Employees recommends to the membership that CUE affiliate with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

As you know, our two-year Service Contract with CUPE ends at the end of February. Sometime during the next few weeks we must decide whether or not we will formally affiliate with CUPE.

Your executive considers this a very important matter and has called a General Membership Meeting for Thursday, February 26 to discuss the issue in full. Following that information meeting, a ballot will be sent to each member of CUE giving you the final say on affiliation.

This issue was discussed at length by your executive and in this short report we share with you the major reasons why we consider it in our best interest to formally affiliate with CUPE - Canada's largest union.

Our Autonomy Will be Respected. CUPE is unique among unions for the autonomy it allows its local affiliates. As a local union of CUPE we will still be referred to as Canadian University Employees. In addition, however, we will be assigned a CUPE local union number.

As members of CUPE, we will continue to make our own decisions, set our own priorities and chart our own destiny.

However, we will have the additional clout of a large national union assisting us whenever we need help and guidance.

Our By-Laws Will Be Altered, Minimally. As a CUPE local affiliate, we will be required to alter our by-laws a bit. But these changes will not lessen our autonomy. The major change will be an increase in the number of our Table Officers. We will change our by-laws to accommodate a second vice-president (instead of the single vice-president we presently have) - with each of the two having specific responsibilities.

We will also be required to have Trustees who will be non-voting members of the Executive. The Trustees' role is to 'police' the Executive and report directly to you, the members.

How we take care of our affairs, what our bargaining priorities are, and other major policy decisions are not altered by being members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Financially, We'll Be Better Off. The union dues paid by each member of CUE will not change whether we affiliate with CUPE, or not. However, for the same amount of money, we will have the resources of a large national union to draw from.

We will enjoy the benefit of having all CUPE's National Departments at our disposal. For example, we'll have experts to assist us with Step-3 Grievances if we so desire--at no cost. We'll have the benefit of CUPE's Education Department to teach our members how to be successful shop stewards, how to handle grievances, how to improve our newsletter, and access to many other necessary courses.

CUPE's Research Department is now computerized and is able to give us up-to-the-minute contract comparisons across the country and cost-of-living data. All at no additional cost to our members, and these are services we enjoyed in negotiating our last contract.

As a small union on our own, we could not afford these services, nor could we afford to retain the experts CUPE has in the areas of Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Public Relations, Job Evaluation and Computer Technology.

CUPE also has a massive Defence Fund which provides every affiliated member with strike pay if he or she is forced onto a picket line by an employer. And CUPE's Defence Fund is also used to assist any local union which is under attack. (We recently tapped into CUPE's Defence Fund to pay for research on Ritchie and Associates - the so-called "efficiency experts" on campus.)

Our union presently has a strike fund of \$125,000 which will remain with us even after we vote to affiliate.

Your executive has received budget projections for 1987 to indicate where we will be if we affiliate with CUPE and if we don't. These projections were prepared by Helen Glavina, with the assistance of a CUPE accountant, for the previous executive.

Here's the bottom line: If we affiliate with CUPE, we'll end the year with a budget surplus of \$1943. If we don't affiliate, it is projected that we'll end the year with a budget deficit or \$15,497. (See blue budget projections.)

That's a strong financial argument in favour of affiliation.

In addition, CUPE National President, Jeff Rose, has assured us that we will receive special financial assistance until the end of 1987, to help us overcome the backlog of extraordinary expenses we have incurred over the past year.

We'll Get The Help We Need - Without Interference. Your executive has examined the pros and cons of affiliation and we feel comfortable in recommending that we join CUPE because we're sure our members will receive all the help we need - without someone from the outside telling us what's best for us.

Your new executive is also committed to cutting our unnecessary expenses such as excessive booking-off, overtime payments, and other expenses we consider superfluous.

After we get our own financial house in order (which we expect to do this year!), our union should operate quite smoothly.

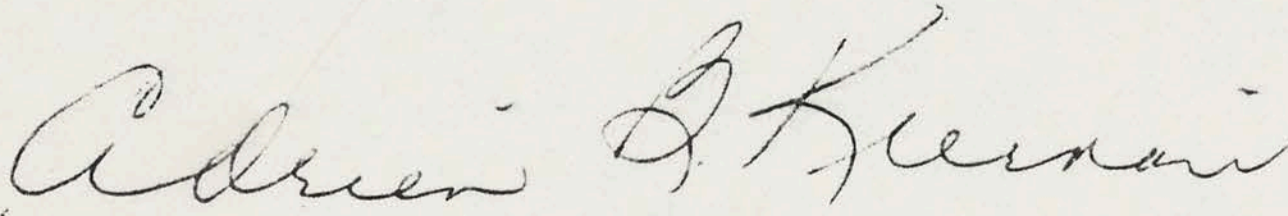
We have requested that CUPE give priority consideration to placing a National Representative full-time on the UBC campus to look after the affairs of all the local unions here. This matter is being seriously considered by CUPE's National Officers. Although we have received no guarantees, it has been suggested that an on-campus representative three days per week is another possibility.

Your executive has looked at every aspect of this question. It is our considered opinion that affiliation with CUPE is our best choice.

However, this short report cannot cover every detail of this affiliation. That's why we urge you to be at the General Membership Meeting on Thursday, February 26. At that time, we will be able to answer any additional questions.

Submitted respectfully,

On Behalf of the Executive
Canadian University Employees



ADRIEN B. KIERNAN
PRESIDENT

February 10, 1987

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“Now, I’ve made up my mind...”

A personal report from CUE's new Vice-President, Alannah Anderson, on why she decided that CUPE is the best choice for Canadian University Employees.

When Adrien asked me, five weeks ago, whether or not I supported affiliating with CUPE, I replied that I did not have the information to make an informed decision.

Assuming that many of you are in the same boat I was, I will share with you the results of my research.

I began by re-reading the debate as printed in the 1983 CUE Newsletters. I then compared the 1983 financial statements with the ones for 1986. I was looking for the impact on costs that the CUPE service contract may have had on such variables as lawyers, professional fees, arbitration costs, etc.

After that I spent a few hours analyzing the CUPE constitution and comparing it with CUE's.

I asked questions. I talked with the president of Local 116, Ken Andrews. I spoke with Cam Masse from CUPE's National Office and Joe Denofreo.

Adding the responses of all these people to the information I gleaned from my independent research, I believe that we cannot afford to stay out of CUPE.

CUPE is a union of unions. Each local is an autonomous body that is in partnership with the large union, pooling resources and therefore reducing expenses.

We, as a CUPE local, will have access to the Legal Department, research facilities, Occupational Health and Safety data and what is called the CUPE Defense Fund. This fund is not only used as a strike fund, but is also available for other, less drastic measures, like lobbying, public relations campaigns and other means of promoting the cause of the workers.

It is important to note that we, the Canadian University Employees, will not change our name. We remain the same union but we get a number which designates membership in CUPE.

Although we will remain autonomous, we must adopt the CUPE constitution which is enclosed in this package. At first glance, it is much larger than the CUE constitution - seventy-seven pages to our four - but the organization is larger.

For those of you who do not have the time to study the CUPE constitution in depth, I'd like to highlight a few articles that interest me.

The objectives of both unions are similar: To work to improve working conditions, wages and living standards of the work force, to defend civil rights in the community.

Here are three samples from the CUPE constitution:

Article 2.1.d The improvement of the wages, working conditions, hours of work, job security and other conditions affecting public employees, including retirees pension benefits.

Article 2.1.e The promotion of efficiency in public services generally.

Article 2.1.f The promotion of peace and freedom in the world, and the cooperation with free and democratic labour movements throughout the world.

The objectives are to be accomplished by:

Article 2.2.a Establishing cooperative relations between employer and employee.

Article 2.2.b Promoting desirable legislation.

The next question that arises is: Will we have to change the structure of our executive?

Appendix B.2.2 A CUPE Executive Board consists of:

President
Vice-President(s)
Secretary-Treasurer
Recording Secretary
and other officers that we decide we need, except
Three Trustees who are elected, but are not on the executive board.

The Trustees attend meetings, but are not entitled to vote. The function of a local union's trustees is to act as watch-dogs on the operation of the executive and report to the general membership on the condition of funds and assets, number of members initiated, withdrawn, admitted, etc. The trustees ensure that the local union's books are audited bi-annually.

Another question which I needed an answer to was: Are we required to HIRE a business agent (or 'union representative' as we have traditionally termed them)? And, if so, who does the hiring?

The answer is simple. We do not need to hire a union representative. However, if we choose to do so, we may hire or elect whom we choose. We do the hiring or electing.

Here's what CUPE's constitution has to say about Business Agents:

Appendix B.3.14 Whenever a Business Agent is employed or elected by a local union, it shall be at a regular meeting of the local union ... such duties and conditions of employment shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this constitution or the by-laws of the local union ... Business agents, other than from the bargaining unit(s), may have voice but no vote at meetings of the local union...

In the past, we have elected members to represent us in negotiations for new contract provisions, settling grievances and to run for office, not on who has the expertise we need. Although there is nothing wrong with learning on the job, having no pre-requisite skills is very costly to the union membership.

I like the idea that paid staff have a voice but no vote at executive meetings because the membership is the employer and the staff member should be answerable to the membership.

However, this decision on hiring or electing a union representative (or business agent) is a separate issue and not dependent on, nor related to, our decision to join CUPE.

Will our contract be valid if we join CUPE?
Will our by-laws remain intact?

Our contract is a document outlining the employees' relationship with the employer and therefore is not affected by our vote to join CUPE. And we have the right to our own by-laws as long as they don't contradict the CUPE constitution.

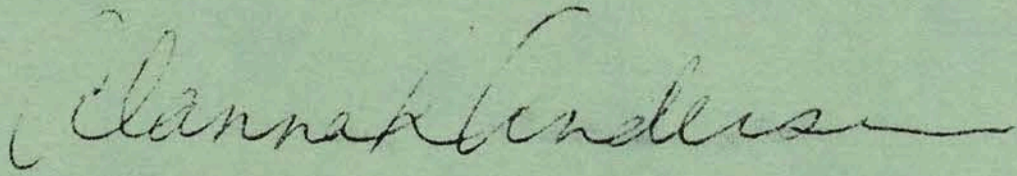
In conclusion, I feel we must join CUPE because:

- We need the added strength of being a part of a large organization;
- We will not lose any of the autonomy or individuality we have;
- We will be buying a valuable asset because there is a wealth of expertise, research and professional skills we will receive from CUPE as members;
- We will be part of a larger democracy (the National Union); and,
- We will have recourse by petition or a majority vote of our membership to receive assistance if there is a suspicion that the executive is not adhering to our by-laws or not serving the membership in an upright and honest manner.

Those are the major reasons why I am now able to say, after researching the matter, that CUPE is our best choice.

I hope you will join me in voting in support of affiliating with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alannah Anderson".

Alannah Anderson
Vice-President
Canadian University Employees