

CUPE and students

By LEO CHEVERIE

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is one of the largest unions in Canada. Its workers work in many workplaces directly or indirectly funded by public dollars.

They work in the areas of hospitals, health care facilities, municipalities, school system and post secondary education.

CUPE works with a variety of partners across the country in addressing the increasing erosion of public services.

One of those partners is the Canadian Federation of Students. CUPE nationally has advocated a strong working relationship between CUPE members who work at universities and students represented by the CFS.

In many universities across the country, CUPE members who are teaching assistants are actually members of CFS as well. It is evident that CUPE members in a variety of fields have witnessed the erosion of public services and the increasing costs borne by students and others with the implementa-

tion of the CHST by the Chrétien government.

As CUPE members, we are acutely aware that the reduction of a federal deficit has been on the backs of students, the unemployed and many others.

CUPE 1870 at UPEI numbers over 200 members employed in many support functions throughout the university. Technicians, secretaries, administrative support, clerks, and others. In these positions, many CUPE staff are in constant contact with students and are aware of the heavy burden of increased tuition and other costs on students. In fact, many CUPE members are part time students or individuals who have family members that are students.

CUPE 1870 have made efforts in supporting CFS by supporting student issues and actions. Along with other CUPE members, I have been privileged to participate in several marches to both Province House and the Provincial Government buildings. As well, members of the PEI CUPE division have attended the unveiling of the provincial budget. CUPE 1870 has also supported CFS financially with several

of their campaigns. CUPE 1870 has also consistently proposed resolutions supporting affordable and accessible post secondary education, which have been consistently adopted at PEI CUPE Division and PEI Federation of Labour conventions. Last spring, the resolution proposed by CUPE 1870 specifically highlighted that the PEI division of CUPE support and work in solidarity with the recently formed provincial component of the CFS in making affordable and accessible post secondary education in Canada a reality.

CFS has also been a very strong supporter on many issues of common concern to CUPE. These issues include child poverty, support of social programs, advocacy of a fair taxation system, and work on both federal and provincial alternative budgets.

I encourage all students to support CFS and their goals. Many of us who work on this campus and other campuses across Canada will work with you so that post secondary education becomes more affordable and accessible in the future.

We know that you, the student of today, are our future.

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