



INDEPENDENT WORKING GROUP
ON CUPW STRUCTURE
INTERIM REPORT

WHAT WE HEARD:

ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR MAKING CUPW
STRONGER AND MORE EFFICIENT



INDEPENDENT WORKING GROUP ON CUPW STRUCTURE

August 27, 2009

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Members of the National Executive Board
Local Executive Committees
Members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Brothers and Sisters:

On behalf of the Independent Working Group on CUPW structure, we are pleased to submit to you **“WHAT WE HEARD: ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR MAKING THE CUPW STRONGER AND MORE EFFICIENT”**.

This document is the result of hundreds of consultations with CUPW members and officers at all levels in all regions of the country undertaken by the Independent Working Group between January and June 2009.

This interim report does 3 things:

1. It identifies 27 key challenges facing CUPW based on what CUPW members across the country have shared with us;
2. It describes some of the key issues involved in each challenge;
3. It outlines a range of options for each challenge, pointing out some of the main advantages and disadvantages for each.

Please note that **THIS INTERIM REPORT DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT WORKING GROUP.**

It summarizes what we have learned from you, and presents some options to consider.

In many areas there is a widely shared view of the challenges facing the union. In a few areas, there is also widespread agreement about what to do.

In most areas, however, there are lots of different ideas about what the challenges are, and how to address them.

The Independent Working Group encourages all CUPW members to use our interim report as a way to begin a serious and open debate about how to help the union grow stronger and more effective in defending the interests of its members.

We will be conducting a further round of consultations over the next few months, and will be interested in your comments and observations in light of this, our interim report. Those comments will help guide us in drafting our final report, including our recommendations, which will be submitted to the NEB in January 2010.

We hope CUPW brothers and sisters find this document of use in your search for a better union.

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INTERIM REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT WORKING GROUP ON CUPW STRUCTURE

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Introduction

A history of struggle, success and change

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is one of Canada's best known trade unions. It represents workers employed at Canada Post as well as private sector workers outside Canada Post.

But it is a very different organization than it was back in 1965 when it was formed out of the old Canadian Postal Employees Association. It has more members, in more sectors. Their jobs have been transformed by technology. A decision by the Canadian Labour Relations Board forced members from a number of unions to join into one union which became the new CUPW.

Today, the union has approximately 56,000 members. It represents different types of workers within Canada Post as well as workers outside Canada Post such as cleaners, couriers, drivers, warehouse workers, paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, printers and other workers in separate bargaining units.

Over its 45 year history, the union has carried out many successful struggles – for the right to free collective bargaining, for job security, better working conditions, for women's equality among others. The union is also noted for supporting a wide range of social causes. It has been active on issues such as child care, solidarity for Cuba, Freedom of Choice for women, anti-racism, and campaigns for women's equality and human rights.

However, during that time, CUPW has had to continuously adapt and change. The constitution has been reviewed and revised many times. New positions created, new staff hired, new committees created, new members admitted.

In fact, it is this ability to adapt to changing circumstances that has been one of the factors which has allowed CUPW to develop into one of Canada's most admired unions.

Today, pressures are building again for change within CUPW.

Outside the Union, the political and economic climate is changing. Canada Post's monopoly on mail delivery is under threat as never before. Technological change threatens CUPW's membership base. This represents a significant threat to the long term financial stability of the organisation.

Inside the union too, there are constituencies that feel that CUPW needs to change again.

The 2008 National Convention, called on the National Executive Board to appoint a small Independent Working Group to conduct a review of the union's structure, finances, meetings, procedures and services.

The Independent Working Group, none of whom has ever been a member of CUPW, works under the leadership of Nycole Turmel, a former National President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. It has conducted extensive meetings with CUPW members and officers across the country. This report represents our synthesis of "what we heard" along with some options for change.

We will conduct further consultations in all regions of the country before preparing our final report, which will include our recommendations, in January 2010

A very "political" organisation

Every day care centre, every corporation, and even every family has its own political dynamic. Politics is the process through which different members of any organisation express their opinions on how the organisation should expend its time and resources and to what ends.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers is no exception to this rule. Its 56,000 members have different ideas about what the union should concentrate on, how it should be structured and how it should organize itself.

However, it would be fair to describe the CUPW as "highly" politicized. To the point where many union members, from the work floor to the National Executive Board, feel that the "politics" in the union is excessive, and is actually causing damage to the organisation and to its ability to defend its members.

There are several factors which actively encourage this politicization. One is CUPW's tremendous history of militant success. The many victories it has won in the past are no doubt linked to its high level of political awareness.

Another factor is less positive. In the current political and economic situations, unions across Canada and across the western world are facing increasing attacks from employers. They are having great difficulties in even keeping some of the gains they had won in earlier years. This has led to an intensification of the political debates within unions everywhere.

In CUPW's case, one of the factors contributing to the "extremely" political nature of the union seems to be the fact that so many of its Officers are elected. In addition to its 7 National Executive Committee Officers and 8 National Directors, CUPW also elects another 52 National and Regional Officers and Union Representatives every three years. CUPW is very unusual in the union movement in this regard. In most other unions, most of these positions would be staffed by hired, full-time union staff, reporting directly to the elected officers.

This forces many of the union's officers to be focused on politics, including actively making alliances to be able to get re-elected three years later.

CUPW politics does not appear to be organized around political parties. (In fact, CUPW members support a variety of political parties.) It is not even organized around traditional "left-right" issues, although that can be a factor from time to time. From what we have been told, it tends to be organized around factions in the organisation (who's "in" and who's "out") in each local, each region and at the national office.

Of course it's natural to make alliances with like-minded people, and to prefer to work with friends. But in every region of the country, at the National Office, in meetings with local union executives and with individual shops stewards, the Third Party Group was repeatedly told that the CUPW is "too" politicized, and that this politicization hurts the union in many ways.

It would be unrealistic, and probably not even a very good idea to try to "eliminate" politics from CUPW. However, it seems to be the will of a large majority of members to "cool" the political rivalries in order to focus on the needs of the membership as a whole.

The mandate of the Independent Working Group (IWG) is to look at the structure of the CUPW. In our view, the "over politicisation" of the CUPW is partly – but only partly – linked to structural issues. For example, union members often told us that they feel that members are far too hard on each other and that debates often turn vicious and even personal. The cure for this surely has much more to do with the "culture" of the organisation than with structure.

Nonetheless, we believe there are some structural changes which are linked to the political tensions in the organisation and we have tried to suggest some options for dealing with it.

Structure of this report

This report outlines 27 areas in which, in the eyes of members, the CUPW is facing significant challenges. For simplicity of analysis, these 27 areas are divided into 7 broad headings.

For each area, we outline the issue or challenge as it has been described to us, and consider a range of options to address the issue.

It is of note that many issues intersect with each other. Some issues which we have put under “role of staff” for example, could just as easily be presented under “regional structure”.

An even better example might be to refer to the specific interests and concerns of CUPW’s Quebec members. Our discussions with members in Quebec raised a range of issues, including the National Structure, Regional Structure, the Structure of Locals, Financial Administration, the role of the NEB, Education, and the administration of grievances, to name only these.

In the end, we only have one special point on Quebec’s national needs in the context of a pan-Canadian union. Most of the other specific issues raised in Quebec were similar to those identified by members in other regions. As a result, many of the issues raised in Quebec appear throughout the text under the appropriate heading. We hope that your Quebec members will agree that their views have been adequately represented.

In each area, we have outlined the basic contours of the issue as we understand it, and identified some options facing the union. At this point, the members of the Independent Working Group are not making any recommendations – we are simply trying to clearly set out what we think are the key issues, and identifying various ways of dealing with them.

The Independent Working Group would like to express thanks to the hundreds of CUPW members and activists across the country who shared their thoughts and concerns with us. Many took the time to write careful letters, others travelled long distances or gave up precious family time to meet with us. You were enthusiastic and generous with your time and ideas. Your concern for the future success of your union was impressive.

We know that some members will not agree with some of our observations. They might think that we have overlooked, or understated some issues, and overstated others. Some may not find everything they told us, or it may not be presented exactly as you said it. We have tried to report as faithfully as possible what we heard and what we understand to be true.

What next?

We encourage every local president, every elected officer, every activist and every member to read this report, and think about both the issues and the options presented.

In October and November of 2009, the Independent Working Group plans to again visit every region of the country to hear your reactions to this interim report. We hope to meet with elected officers at regional and local levels. The exact consultation schedule will be communicated to all locals within the next few weeks.

We will use the input from those consultations to prepare our final report which we have promised to submit to the National Executive Board in January 2010. After that, our job is finished, and it's up to the members of the CUPW to decide how to act on our recommendations.

A. Member Services

1. Grievances

Background

Since its beginning in 1965, CUPW has been a powerful force defending the rights of its members with a structure based on a strong relationship between the national leadership and the membership base. The national union assisted locals in a wide range of duties.

In 1971, the position of National Chief Steward was created to be in charge of grievances, adjudications and the monitoring of collective agreement matters. This reflected a growing feeling that NEGOTIATING a collective agreement was only half the battle – the other half was seeing that the agreement was respected.

In 1974, the National Director of Education and Organization was replaced by a new position, the National Grievance Officer, underlining the growing importance of the grievance process for the union in its struggle with the employer. At the same time, the Convention established Regional Union Education and Grievance Committees (RUE&GC). These committees reviewed grievance and arbitration decisions, established uniform interpretations of collective agreement language, examined arbitration decisions from other unions and made recommendations for appeal of arbitration decisions and for lodging complaints before the PSSRB.

Although many more changes have been made since 1974, grievances remain a key tool of the union and one of its most important services to members.

At the National level, four National Union Representatives work in the grievance-arbitration section in conjunction with the National Grievance Officer. Their responsibilities are clearly defined in article 10 of the Constitution.

In addition there are Regional Grievance Officers in each of the 8 CUPW regions. This brings to 13, the number of full-time CUPW officers who work full-time on the grievance/arbitration process.¹

¹ There are also other full-time Officers/staff in the regional offices, and in a half dozen of the largest locals, many of whom spend a lot of their time working on the grievance process.

While reliable statistics have proven difficult to come by, it seems reasonable to estimate that somewhere between 30 and 40% of CUPW's entire budget is spent on the grievance process, when one includes staff salaries, legal fees, transportation, etc. This expenditure, if correct, is a much higher percentage than in other national unions.

What we heard:

The union's handling of grievances was undoubtedly the area in which the Independent Working Group heard the most frustrations expressed. This is not surprising given the intransigence of the employer and the perhaps unrealistic expectations of some members.

It is also an area in which we were repeatedly told that "politics play too large a part".²

However, it is worthwhile to review the main "grievances" regarding the "grievance" process itself.

- *Wasted energy. Overlap and duplications between local, region and national offices;*
- *Members don't know where their grievance is in the system;*
- *Huge delays in resolution of grievances. There is a huge backlog in some regions – some outstanding grievances are many years old;*
- *Grievance process is paper heavy;*
- *Serious lack of communication between members, locals, regions and national office;*
- *"When I finally do win a grievance, I could get a small adjustment on my pay cheque without even knowing what it's for.";*

² At first, we had difficulty in understanding what members meant when they told us that the grievance process was too "politicized". In most of the other unions we know, grievances are basically seen as a "technical" matter – i.e. either there is or is not a violation of the collective agreement. However, the involvement of all 3 layers of the union (local, region and national office) in CUPW appears to lead to a lot of tension, confusion and wasted effort. Here is an example. A local president wants a specific grievance to go to arbitration even though he knows there is no violation of the collective agreement, because he doesn't want to face the political "heat" from an angry member. So he refers it to the regional office. The regional office recognizes also that there is no grounds for grievance, but refers it up to national office, fully expecting the national office to reject it. That way the region can keep the local president "on side", and the local president can blame "National" for the decision. The National Office has two choices – take the "baseless" grievance to arbitration which will be lost, or reject the grievance, thus annoying the region, the local and the member. This dynamic leads to both a waste of union time and money and increases tension between regions and National.

- *The grievance is no deterrent to the employer. The employer says “file a grievance” but laughs at us because he knows we are wasting our time. Our time/energy would be better spent on education or mass education;*
- *Many locals ignore grievances from RSMCs – either because they don’t understand or it takes too much work;*
- *The decision on whether to fight/arbitrate a grievance is too political;*
- *Some locals/regions are afraid to tell members that their grievance is not well founded;*
- *Grievances are handled differently in different regions but regions do not learn from each other;*
- *There does not seem to be any “strategy” with respect to grievances. We just react to whatever comes our way.*

Various options to consider

1. **Move responsibility for handling most grievances to the regional and local level.**
Have national office responsible only for grievance policy and grievance strategy.

PRO Members and locals will take ownership of the problem and the solution;
Clearer responsibilities;
Build a stronger local;
Grievors will feel part of the process – more informed;
Less duplication – more time for union representatives to work with locals;
Increase the quality of grievances;
National office can focus more on “system” and grievance strategy.

CON More work for already overloaded regions/locals;
Need for locals to explain more to members;
Can locals “take heat” if grievances not well founded?

2. **Put greater priority on member education and less on grievances.**

PRO Will increase the quality of grievances;
More effective at the local level;
Grievances and education are (inversely) related. More member education means fewer grievances;
Management sometimes actually encourages grievances.

CON Members expect us to defend them through grievances.

3. **Encourage regions to computerize/digitize the grievance tracking system.** (The Metro-Montreal region has done this quite successfully.)

PRO Eliminates need to photocopy documents several times;
Huge reduction in filing storage needs;
Instant availability at local/region/national office;
Members can check on status of their own grievance;
Easier to generate statistics.

CON Need for specialized computer equipment/training;
Exposes region/local to criticism by members who are now better informed
Initial cost.

4. **Make broader use of “expedited arbitration” with less emphasis on legalisms and more on “quick settlement” and “rough justice”.** Some regions make more/better use of this than others. Some prefer to fight every fight to the bitter (legal) end.

PRO Quicker resolution;
Reduced lawyers fees;
Relaxed rules of evidence;
Members feel case dealt with expeditiously;
Reduced backlog;

CON Members expect us to defend them to the end.

5. **Give locals special financial support and training to deal with RSMC grievances.**
The support should be based on the number of RSMCs in the local. The RSMC contract is different and requires special knowledge. Servicing RSMCs, because of their geographical dispersion, also puts an extra burden on the locals.

PRO The locals need to understand the issues;
RSMCs will develop confidence in their locals.

CON Extra costs for union;
Extra time for harassed local executives.

6. **Make the “National Grievance Officer” position a permanent specialist position reporting to one of the Vice-Presidents.** In most other unions, there is a “grievance department” headed by a specialist expert reporting to an officer of the union.

PRO Open competition to bring in most competent person;
Will bring stability and professionalism to the grievance process;
More corporate memory at the national level;
Will tend to reduce the “political” nature of the grievance process;
Works under the direction of a Vice-President (and the NEB).

CON Concern that permanent specialist could “take over” the process;
Fear that hiring will be done on “political” rather than “competency” basis;
Wages and working conditions could be more expensive.

2. Demand setting and negotiations

For most of its history, the CUPW has been focused on protecting the interests of its members who work in the Urban Operations of Canada Post. As a result, the core of its operation was the negotiation and enforcement of a single large collective agreement from one end of the country to the other. Handling the Urban Operations agreement has been the core activity of CUPW.

In the last decade however, CUPW has incorporated into its membership two other important categories of members: Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) and Private Sector Bargaining Units (PSBU).

The result is that today, CUPW manages 15 contracts and is in more or less continual negotiations – rather than once every three years. In addition, it has different bargaining processes for each of the three different categories of members. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. Each process will be dealt with separately.

(a) URBAN OPERATIONS

For the approximately 48,000 CUPW members who are in ‘urban operations’ demand setting is a long and demanding process that can be briefly summarized in 11 steps”.

1. National office prepares a “discussion paper” outlining what it thinks are key issues in upcoming negotiations.
2. Issue paper presented at area councils (several in each region); All locals represented. Discussed.
3. Locals prepare resolutions (hopefully informed by national office background paper). Each local has resolution committee.
4. Local resolutions get considered in a 3 day “regional conference” and consolidated.
5. Output from all 8 regional conferences sent to national office.
6. A committee of National Directors prepares a list of demands which are approved by the NEB.
7. NEB chooses bargaining committee of 6 (includes chief negotiator, National grievance officer plus 4 others).
8. Ultimate decisions on demands made by NEB.
9. Negotiations with employer.
10. Negotiating team makes a recommendation to the NEB. Recommending or rejecting the final offer of the employer – The NEB decides by “simple majority” if they recommend to members to accept or reject the final position of the team with information why they recommend it or not.
11. Tentative agreement presented to members for ratification.

What we heard:

The Independent Working Group heard many comments and suggestions about the demand setting and bargaining process for Urban Operations. Here are some of the main observations:

- *The demand setting process for Urban Operations is both long and expensive. For example, the national office pays for per diem and travel for the area council meetings and the regional conferences which come up with the resolutions. It is estimated that the full costs for negotiation of a 3-year contract is \$2.5 million.*
- *The process “appears” very democratic. But in reality, the locals often send in many demands which are not very realistic. As a result, the national directors may get 300 – 400 demands which they pare down to 50 – 60 to send to the negotiation committee which still has to throw out more than half of them. This is a waste of time.*
- *Only locals can submit resolutions. This appears democratic. But it means that those who are working on specific issues (e.g. the dental plan) don’t have a vehicle for putting this in, and no local will think of it.*
- *The value of Area Council is questioned. Some feel they are important for small locals as a way to become informed about the larger issues. Others feel it is not worth the effort. In the special cases of Montreal and Toronto, the local, “area councils” and “regional conferences” amount to the same thing. As a result, there is a duplication of effort and a waste of time and money.*
- *There are some subgroups within the Urban Operation contract that do not feel their voices are being heard in the demand setting and negotiation process. This is particularly true for the 750 or so members of Groups 3 and 4. It is also true for temporary workers.*
- *There was a division of opinion amongst National Union Representatives on their ability to make direct input into the bargaining process. Some felt that they had all the access required, others felt that there was no “formal” avenue for National Union Representatives to make input and that having input depended too much on “informal” influence and having connections.*

Various options to consider

1. **Eliminate area councils. Send national office analysis paper directly to local unions for consideration.**

PRO The area council step is costly and does not add much value. It is of little use to larger locals and of no use to Montreal/Toronto. Eliminating this step would mean a saving of over \$300,000.

CON The area council is particularly useful for small locals who feel cut off from the life of the rest of the union. It is their opportunity to get up to speed on some of the major strategic issues facing the union in the upcoming negotiations.

2. **Create a vehicle through which National Union Representatives can inject demands into the process.**

PRO National Union Representatives have an overall view of the relations between CPC and the Union in such areas as Health and Safety, grievances, new technology, etc. Their insights need to be included in the demand setting process.

CON National Union Representatives have plenty of opportunity to insert their views in the discussion paper prepared by the National Office. Furthermore, National Union Representatives all come from locals, and they have the right to attempt to persuade their own local to introduce resolutions pertaining to the issues they feel are important. To give them special input would deform the democratic process.

3. **Create a vehicle through which important sub-groups of members, including Groups 3 and 4 as well as temporary employees can make sure their specific demands are taken into consideration.** This could be an advisory committee.

PRO Demand setting is a democratic process done mostly at the local level. Some sub-sets of members are PERMANENT MINORITIES and their demands almost always fall off the table. The creation of a special process would ensure that their demands make it to the bargaining committee.

CON There is no end of sub-groups. Even within Groups 3 and 4 there are more subgroups. It is not possible to ensure a “special” route for every subgroup with a specific need. It is up to those members to participate actively in their locals to ensure that their demands are appropriately reflected.

4. **Simplify the Urban Operations’ demand setting process along the lines of the process currently used by the RSMC (see “b” below).**

PRO This would put the Urban Operation and the RSMC on an equal footing. It would also considerably speed up the Urban Operations process and reduce costs. In the end, the basket of demands would not be very different using either process.

CON There is no need to equate the processes of the two groups. The Urban Operations contract, which covers 9 times as many people in a much wider range of jobs, needs to be different in order to do its job.

5. **Eliminate the regional conference. Send demands directly from locals to the National Office**

PRO This would allow locals direct and “unfiltered” input into the process.

CON This would swamp the national office with demands. Someone would need to “filter” and “consolidate”. Is this better done at the National Level?

6. **The NEB should maintain an overall political role but not be directly involved in negotiations. This should be delegated to a bargaining committee with clear mandate.**

PRO It made sense for the NEB to “run” the negotiation process when there was just one contract. But now, the NEB has an overall union to run. The bargaining committee should have a mandate and bargain from it.

CON As long as the Urban Operations contract is the dominant one (=85% of members) there is no way the NEB can “hand this off”. Too much of their future rides on it. One way or another, the NEB is going to be held accountable for the negotiations.

(b) RURAL AND SUBURBAN MAIL CARRIERS (RSMC)

For the approximately 6,500 CUPW members who are under the RSMC agreement there is a much simplified process.

1. A discussion paper is prepared by the national office and sent directly to all the locals who have RSMCs in their membership.
2. Information sessions are organized in more than 150 locals where RSMCs are members.
3. The locals make recommendations and send them to the National Directors and the NEB.
4. Creation of a negotiating committee.
5. Adoption of demands by NEB.
6. The final document is sent back to the locals for referendum.³
7. Negotiations with employer.
8. Tentative agreement presented to RSMC members for ratification

What we heard:

The RSMC contract was signed in 2003 and is an 8 year contract, which is in itself quite unusual. It will expire in December 2011. RSMCs expressed a number of concerns both about demand setting and the negotiation process.

³ Some RSMCs are uncomfortable with the fact that their demands are discussed and voted on at local meetings where non RSMCs also have a vote. Our understanding, however, is that at the referendum stage, ONLY the RSMCs have the right to vote.

- *The timing of the next negotiation is a concern. The RSMC contract ends in December 2011, while the Urban Operations contract expires in January 2011. The RSMCs are concerned that the union may not be as active in supporting them as they would like.*
- *Instead of a 3 day regional conference for prioritizing demands, some RSMCs told us that they are accorded only a 1 day process. This makes it very difficult to bring RSMCs together to consider issues. Many think this is clearly discriminatory.*
- *Many feel that there is also an imbalance between the two groups: RSMCs feel that Urban Operations tends to speak for them. For example, RSMC demands are voted on by locals, which are mostly composed of Urban Operations members. In addition, RSMC demands are approved by the NEB, which has no RSMC representation at all. RSMCs do not have the reciprocal right to speak and vote on the Urban Operations demands.*
- *RSMCs, (by the nature of their work widely dispersed across large geographical areas) argue that they need special help in preparing their demands.*

Various options to consider

We heard everywhere that the RSMCs should be “brought in” to the Urban Operations contract as soon as possible. This is the desire of the RSMCs and the stated intention of the union. When this happens, there will no longer be a need for a special “RSMC” process. Until that occurs, however, here are some options to improve the current RSMC demand setting and bargaining process.

1. **Create parallel structures so that only RSMCs prepare their demands and vote on them. (For example, call a special local meeting of only RSMCs to discuss and approve demands, with automatic approval by local.)**

PRO This is elementary democracy.

CON Separate structures are both complicated and costly. It would mean creating “RSMC only” meetings at the local and regional level. It also means that the union’s highest body (the National Executive Board) no longer has control of the union and its finances.

2. **Use the same process as Urban Operations for preparing demands and voting on them.**

PRO This is elementary fairness. Why should the 6500 RSMCs “make do” with an expedited process while the Urban Operations has a much more exhaustive one?

CON The “Urban Operations” process is already too heavy. It would only make things worse to follow this model for the RSMC.

(c) PRIVATE SECTOR BARGAINING UNITS (PSBU)

As early as the 1980’s, CUPW began to make organizing a priority and to expand its operations to cover the entire postal services sector of the economy. In accordance with this it has now organized a total of 15 private sector bargaining units with a total membership of approximately 485.

Organizing is currently under way in several regions of the country with the potential of bringing in significantly more members. Unlike the Urban Operations and the RSMC bargaining units, which are country wide, the PSBU tend to be located in one city or one region. PSBUs also tend to be small. As a result, the effort of organizing, bargaining and servicing PSBUs tend to fall on the shoulders of the region in which it is located.

Typically, demand preparation for a PSBU takes place in the region under the direction of the National Director for the region. However, the demands, the negotiations and strike authorization require the approval of the National Executive Board.

What we heard:

CUPW is currently working with a structure that was developed to deal with the 85% of members who are in urban operations. That decision-making structure is less well-equipped to deal with PSBUs.

- *“I have a PSBU with a half dozen members. I have to get their demands approved by the NEB. The NEB is busy with bigger issues. It’s hard to get on the NEB agenda, and then they don’t really pay much attention to it”.*
- *We can’t deal with the issues of small units at NEB.*

Various options to consider

1. Status quo

PRO NEB has to have control over the union. Otherwise we could find ourselves in a costly strike we didn't anticipate.

CON Takes too long, and does not give good decisions. We need more flexibility.

2. Give authority to specific member of NEC to supervise PSBU negotiations.

PRO Would speed up process. We need to take many small decisions off the plate of the NEB.

CON NEB has to have financial control over the union. Otherwise we could find ourselves in a costly strike we didn't anticipate.

3. Education

"One of the best things about the union" – member

Background

Who controls education?

Union education is organized centrally and largely delivered regionally. The national develops most of the courses, trains the facilitators, and implements the four-week Union Education program at Port Elgin. The regions choose 2 of the 3 courses to run at 3-day schools which are offered twice a year. The 5-day courses are decided upon nationally. Large locals may develop their own programs but usually choose modules from nationally-developed courses. Regions choose facilitators for regional programs, adapt courses as needed and organize all logistics.

Funding

The majority of the education program is covered by the Union Education Fund paid for by Canada Post under Appendix “U” of the Urban Collective Agreement – calculated at 3 cents per hour per member. The fund has averaged between \$2.5 and \$2.7 million a year over the last five years, declining by about 2% each year. In addition, the union allocates \$300,000 from the general fund for education. Initially the General Fund paid the cost of spring and fall regional education seminars. Now the Fund covers the cost of regional education, except for participants’ wages – but pays wage costs for five days and all other courses. Convention voted 1% back to locals for education but only some of those funds have been used to date.

What’s offered

- The only national education program is the four week Union Education Program (UEP) developed and run by the national education department and delivered at Port Elgin for 40 participants at a cost of approximately \$20,000 per participant. To reduce costs, the program will be run twice within the next three year mandate, rather than once per year. In addition the opening weekend will be combined with week one to further reduce travel costs.
- Regional educationals include two 3-day programs at a cost of \$80,000 where the locals pay for lost wages and one 5-day program at a cost of over \$40,000, paid by the region.
- Locals offer educationals for their members on an ad-hoc basis, and large locals may invite smaller locals to attend.

Course development

The courses are developed and updated by the national education department, based on a 'popular education'⁴ model. The courses are on a par with some of the best from other national unions. In this mandate, a major goal is to develop a complete series of 'laddered' modules for shop stewards. Course priorities are suggested by the Regional Education and Organization Officers (REOOs) and reviewed with the national education department to identify common themes.

Instructor Training

A national program develops member facilitators to deliver the courses. However, National and Regional Union Representatives, National Directors, CUPE staff are also asked to deliver training although some have not received any training in facilitation.

Selection criteria

The national Union Education Program at Port Elgin is advertised in a communique sent out to all local presidents with a letter and a lengthy application form asking them to distribute copies of the application to all interested members. The application must be signed by the local officer, and is sent to the 2nd National Vice-President. Final decisions are made in the region by the National Director, sometimes ignoring suggested criteria of gender balance and union experience in making their selections.

There are major differences in how participants are selected to regional educationals: some locals vote, others put forward names on the basis of need (e.g. new stewards), or to encourage new members, or to reward political friends. Regions select from candidates put forward by the Local using regionally developed criteria. These may or may not be made public. There are no national guidelines governing the selection of participants.

⁴ Popular Education is the basis for curriculum development which originated in Latin America and has been adapted by social movement organizations throughout the world. It respects and draws on the experience and knowledge of participants; builds community and organization; leads to action; and uses the principles of effective adult education such as participation and creativity.

Role of the Education Officers

Education is the responsibility of the 2nd National Vice-President. The Department is composed of two elected National Union Representatives – one English and one French – and a CUPE technical support staff person. Each region has an elected Regional Education and Organization Officer who is charged with organizing, promoting and delivering education in the region in accordance with national priorities. The work of the REOOs has varied among regions, but in general, has been focused on logistical work related to the regional education programs.

What we heard:

Strengths

- *Overall the education program is considered a union strength by most members and activists. “Education is great for networking and building solidarity”.*
- *Course content is good; Facilitation is excellent.*
- *Program is not just about tools; but also provides orientation to broader union and social issues. Port Elgin has been of tremendous value in broadening the perspectives of participants.*

Challenges

- *Many members not aware of union education program.*
- *There isn't enough; too few members get to participate. Perhaps get more education at the local level or at the worksite, or on-line.*
- *Not clear how participants are chosen – feeling that large locals get too many seats, not based on need but rather on politics, the same people get to go etc.; need to track who takes courses; Need to include courses for newer bargaining units and for RSMCs.*
- *Member facilitators trained but sometimes not used for political reasons; gender and equity considerations not taken into account in all regions.*
- *Courses require adapting at the regional level – especially by Quebec. Locals are not consulted about what their education needs are.*
- *Courses do not build on each other – so that there is no opportunity to continue to build skills. Course should have pre-requisites.*

- *“We need to make it contagious!” Lack of follow-up – no expectation that participants will use the courses they take and share them with fellow workers.*
- *Orientation of new members – where a ‘new member kit’ exists it is not always being distributed*

Various options to consider

1. **Give more emphasis to educating members on their rights and how to defend them.**

PRO More emphasis on member and steward education would mean fewer grievances and reduced workload at the regional level.

CON Would require reallocation of time and resources from other important union services, such as grievances.

2. **Cooperate across locals and regions:** Example: Some large locals organize courses and then make them available to small locals in same geographical area. Pacific and Prairie regions team up to offer 5-day programs – so can offer two courses rather than one.

PRO Cost-effective and assists small locals.

CON Requires additional time of Education staff and will not reach all locals.

3. **Experiment with e-learning to offer more education to members:** For example: develop a library of DVDs on line; offer basics such as how to write a grievance, steps in the grievance procedure etc.

PRO Can reach members unable to access courses, and may attract younger members.

CON Would take initial time to set up and assistance by IT team.

4. **Further reduce the National Union Education program (Port Elgin).** Make it two weeks rather than four.

PRO Port Elgin is an expensive program for relatively few people.

CON Port Elgin is the only CUPW national education program and has proven effective in helping to build a broader orientation for the union.
It is also one of the key “links” between Quebec and English Canada

5. **Develop and publish a national, standardized set of considerations (criteria) for choosing participants in education programs.** National criteria should include gender, equity, needs as defined by the local, inability to take the same course twice etc. Criteria would be applied by a ‘consultative mechanism’ (see below)

PRO Everyone would understand how and why people are chosen, and the selection process would be standardized.

CON Locals would lose the option of electing members to educationals.

6. **Create a “consultative mechanism” at the regional level to discuss and review the selection of facilitators and participants in education courses.** This mechanism would ensure that local unions and regional staff discuss and debate the selections, and that choices are made on a transparent basis.

PRO Both regions and locals have good reasons for making nominations. Locals know who needs courses and who is likely to put them to good use. The regions have an overview of both need, and broader issues like gender equity, union development, etc. Both perspectives are important.

CON The locals already submit their nominations, and the regions review them. The complaints would still be there even if there was an additional mechanism. So it would just add to the work load.

7. **Target regional education to those who have taken/are about to take on specific roles within the union and ladder the program so that there is a pre-requisite for each course.** With regions focusing on activists/leadership education, Locals would be responsible for providing mass member education on the union and their rights.

PRO This would develop more effective activists for servicing the membership but would continue to provide training at the local level for members on their rights.

CON Members, especially in small locals, would not have much access to education if they did not wish to play a role in the union.

8. **Do a yearly ‘Needs Assessment’.** Ask Locals for input on the educational needs of their members in order to identify key issues for course development.

PRO Course topics would be more relevant to the needs of the Locals.

CON A time-consuming task which might miss overarching strategic needs and issues.

9. **Decentralize some course development, longer courses would still be developed at the national level.** However, training in curriculum design skills would be offered to education officers at the regional level to enable the adaptation of courses to regional priorities.

PRO Courses could be adapted to regional needs.

CON There would be less consistency in the overall education program.

10. **Decentralize the education budget for Quebec (and other regions who wish to manage their own education).** Each region opting in to this program would be required to present a plan for education and would be responsible for reporting on how the money was spent. There would need to be a requirement that the education budget could only be spent on education according to the approved plan.

PRO This is consistent with the CUPW policy toward “self-determination for Quebec”, (Policy C-1).
Would free up Quebec to use QFL developed modules as appropriate.
Might also be appropriate for other regions.

CON There might be differences in the quality of education delivered across the union, with possible lack of consistency in message (For these reasons, British Columbia Nurses Union reverted from a regionalized to a more centralized program).

11. Change the role of the national education officers to be specialists in course development and/or facilitator training. They would be responsible for developing and updating national courses that could be adapted in the regions, retain responsibility for the Union Education Program at Port Elgin, and offer training and support to regional education officers and member facilitators.

PRO The national education officers/staff would become a training and development resource for the regions and help ensure consistency in union messages and methods.

CON Ensuring the skills necessary to fulfill this role would require setting skill requirements for the elected position or hiring, rather than electing.

4. Communications

The structure of union communications function

There is a Communications and Research department with a Director of Research and five specialists responsible for communications with the public and with the membership. One of the specialists is responsible for web work as well as publications. According to the organizational chart, the department reports to both the 1st and 3rd Vice-presidents. However, the Media specialist works directly with the president on public communications on behalf of the union.

In addition, the union has an information technology department which includes 7 IT positions divided into what are in effect, two departments – information technology and ORACLE, the data base system. Both departments are headed by Directors on 3-year contracts and report to the National Secretary-Treasurer. Each part of the department has 3 technical specialists.

Regular National Publications

The CUPW constitution says a national journal should be published 6 times per year and a regional journal 4 times per year. In fact, the national journal, *Perspective*, was published 4 times in 2008.

There is a national website as well as campaign, specific sites on issues such as Health and Safety.

The National Office communication plan calls for these regular publications:

- Stewards Action Bulletin (6 per year);
- Our Health, Our Safety (4 per year);
- The Rose (2 per year);
- Member-to-Member (2 per year);
- Perspective (3 to 5 per year);
- In addition booklets on specific issues are produced as needed. (For example: on specific health plans - Disability insurance, dental care etc.).⁵

Bulletins

The most frequent means of communication from the National Office to Locals is via bulletin. These may also be made available by fax or mail. In 2008, the CUPW website listed 138 bulletins (an average of nearly 3 each week).

Bulletins may be written by the National President, National Vice-Presidents, National Union Representatives, specific departments or national committees and sent out with or without the knowledge of the Communications Department. There does not seem to be good coordination at national office.

The CUPW website indicates that the vast majority of bulletins relate to specific Canada Post related issues (such as Modern Post, Strategic Review) or current issues affecting the members (health and safety, collective bargaining and the work of national committees). In 2008, 3 bulletins related to International Solidarity and 2 to the environment.

⁵ There is also a plan for an International Solidarity Newsletter.

Local union publications and websites

In addition to the national publications, some regions and some locals publish their own bulletins or newsletters.

Newsletters produced by some locals get high praise. For example Edmonton Local newsletter “Inside Out” shared with other locals and unions.

Seven large locals have websites with a variety of information about the union and local events.

Two-way communications

In addition to the flow of information out from the national office to locals and members, another important aspect of communications is “two way” communications between members and their leaders. These include: telephone and, increasingly, e-mail by members to leadership.

The national and regional leadership also make a point of doing work floor visits to the extent possible.

What we heard:

→ **About CUPW communications generally**

- *There are multiple ‘bosses’ for communications. This is difficult for staff, and can be confusing for members.*
- *“We rarely get to hear how other locals are doing things”.*
- *We need to communicate with the public about what is going on with Canada Post.*
- *Departmental silos at national office – communications doesn’t meet regularly with education, for example.*
- *There are specific IT challenges. In particular, Oracle needs upgrading.*
- *There is overlap – in effect there are two departments dealing with internet technology.*
- *Documents are often boring and not in clear language.*
- *The website isn’t informative or easy to use.*

→ **About bulletins sent from national office to the field**

- *There are too many bulletins, they stack up on the bulletin boards and nobody reads them.*
- *Not timely “We don’t hear about new rules from the union – we hear it from management.” Relevancy – need to know about what’s happening and how it affects us.*
- *Information not getting to members; Lack of communication with new hires.*
- *There are too many bulletins about “international” issues, and not enough about “meat and potato” issues⁶.*
- *It sometimes happens that we get bulletins from national office that contradict each other (i.e. from different people at national office).*
- *Or we get the exact same bulletin in different formats (i.e. by mail, by fax, by email, etc.) Overload – too much.*

→ **About local union publications and websites**

- *Some of these are quite innovative and interesting. Edmonton was cited as an example.*

→ **About 2 way communications between leaders and members**

- *Lack of two-way communication – “Union Reps don’t call back” Frustration that leadership won’t answer calls.*
- *Elected officers don’t spend enough time on the work floor.*

Various options to consider

(a) With respect to National Communications

1. **Put final responsibility for National Communications with the President (not the NEB).** The current process puts these powers in the hands of the NEC, but if there is not unanimity, refers to the NEB for a final decision. This means that documents are often delayed significantly. The President can delegate to staff or other officers as appropriate, but should have overall responsibility for the messages that go out to members through the Journal, the bulletins, and other publications.

⁶ We heard this repeatedly, even though statistics provided on the CUPW website indicate that less than 2% of bulletins sent out in 2008 pertained to international solidarity.

PRO This would eliminate the duplication of messages, avoid contradictory messages, and establish clear lines of responsibility for national communications.

CON Reduces the possibilities for all national leadership to communicate with members through Bulletins.

2. **Make better use of the CUPW website, email, teleconferencing, webinars and other forms of advanced technology.** An improved website would make national information easier to access and use. Teleconferencing tools could increase communications among locals and regions and lower costs for regional and national meetings. To get more information to the members more quickly, the union might buy laptop computers and printers for each local and provide training; then communicate by e-mail bulletins which the local runs off and distributes

PRO Quicker distribution of information;
Reduced publication costs.

CON Some members do not have access to/or training in new technology. Aging leadership not as adept at using modern technology as youth. Resistance to electronic communications (“don’t put ourselves out of a job – we move mail!).

3. **Improve coordination between IT departments, between IT and Communications, and other national departments to reduce duplication and develop a communications strategy and data base to better service the needs of the members.**

PRO This would reduce duplication of effort across departments dealing with communications and establish mechanisms to reduce silos between Communications, IT and other departments.

CON Would require initial effort to set up systems to share information efficiently.

4. **Establish a clear language committee for written material.**
Younger workers especially won’t read the dense prose – put in bullet form, on coloured paper perhaps, more use of graphics.

PRO More people would read the information.

CON Requires expertise in popular communications and can take more time to produce.

5. **Set up a process to help locals share experiences with local websites.** Several Locals have experiences they can share with others about how to begin to set up a website for use by members. Across the country, there are a number of younger members in some locals who would be interested in setting up a website for their local – especially in locals which are quite spread out. Running a local website is more complicated than it looks. However, a small investment from National Office would be enough to encourage the sharing of information.

PRO Electronic communication is growing – CUPW needs to “get with the program”.
Only large locals currently have the potential to undertake this, they could share their knowledge and make it easier for smaller locals.

CON It does require some skill.
Won’t work if it is not maintained. This takes energy.

6. **Undertake a strategic review of national publications, to find out who reads them, what impact they have, how well they serve the membership.**

PRO It is good practice to undertake this from time to time to test the relevance and impact of publications.
It might lead the union to make changes to some publications, drop others and even create new ones.

CON The review might reveal that some publications are not very well read or appreciated by members.

(b) With respect to two-way communication with members

1. **Leadership needs to get out to the work floor more often - more face-to-face communication.** Need to make the union more visible on the floor – short work floor information sessions, more walkabouts by elected leadership from all levels, chance for members to ask the union questions.

PRO The members become more familiar with the union resulting in more possibilities of engagement.

CON Time consuming when workloads are already very high.

2. **Improve telephone communications by establishing clearer responsibilities and a cascading “telephone protocol”.** Members often told us they don’t hear back from officers at the local, regional and national office. But officers told us that the same frustrated member might call several people at the local, the region and the national office. As a result several officers can be working on the same issue.

Regions should require that members first contact their local elected executives before moving to the regional level. At the region it should be clear who deals with what kind of issues. To move to the national level, they would first have talked with the region.

PRO This would help reduce workload and avoid political considerations in who gets to talk with whom.

CON Political considerations might make it difficult for a member to get access to a local executive member and thus be blocked from further communications.

B. National Structure

5. The National President's office

The National President is the senior officer of the union, responsible for upholding the Constitution and for directing the implementation of union policies and decisions, as determined by the Convention.

The workload and responsibilities of the National President are enormous. It is a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week job.

He/She presides over the meetings of the National Convention, the National Executive Committee and the National Executive Board. He/She also may chair other national committees unless decided otherwise by the NEB.

The president is the public face of the union, responsible for representing the union to the outside world as well as for keeping the membership informed of major developments within the union.

As National President and Leader of CUPW, he/she has to assume leadership at all levels of the Unions, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. He/She also has to participate in many activities in the broader labour movement in Canada, for example, on the board of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Paradoxically however, the CUPW National President has very little power – and very little administrative support.

The ability of the president to make decisions is very limited. The constitution vests a great deal of power in the National Executive Board (NEB) a body of 15 people that meets 8 – 10 times per year.

In fact, the National President has to get unanimous consent of the 7-member National Executive Committee (NEC) on any decision he/she wants to make, otherwise it defaults to the National Executive Board (NEB). The NEB can even prevent the president from travelling, if it wishes to do so. In addition, all the national officers and the National Union Representatives are elected by Convention to do specific tasks. The National President who is in theory responsible to the members for carrying out the decisions of the convention has no power over either the NEC members or the National Union Representatives. He cannot even reassign them to different tasks.

The administrative support to the National President is also very limited. The current president shares a secretary with the 1st National Vice-President. In addition there is one National Union Representative who is “the assistant to the NEC under the direction of the National President through the 1st Vice-President.”⁷

In comparison with other unions, the CUPW National President has very little assistance. (The heads of most other major national unions not only have a personal administrative assistant, but often have political assistants to help the president give direction to the union.)⁸

What we heard:

Many senior officers of the union told us that the huge time demands on the president, combined with the limited administrative support and the very limited authority for decision-making means that it is very difficult for the President to provide effective strategic leadership to the union.

In the last 6 months of 2008 and beginning of 2009, for example, the President spent 40% of his time travelling. During that period he visited 47 locals, 7 regions, and participated in 3 international trips as well as 6 other labour activities in Canada lobbying against the Modern Post, and deregulation of postal workers.

When in Ottawa, he can easily spend 70% of his time in meetings. He/She also has to respond the e-mails received every day as well as regular phone calls.

“It would take a superman to do the President’s job properly,” one person told us. “We want to be a national union, but we run it as if it were a local.” Another said “We are ambiguous about what we want the president to do - we want the leadership to play a more active role but at the same time we want the constitution to severely limit what the President can do.”

⁷ The phrasing of this job description points to a confusing relationship of accountabilities. Practically, it should be noted that this NUR also has many other responsibilities, including managing the internal disciplinary procedure, coordinating international solidarity and organizing certain membership campaigns. This severely limits the time available to assist the president in his/her duties.

⁸ By way of reference, the President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada has a full-time political assistant dedicated to the Presidents office. Only the President can assign work to him or her. This is in addition to the secretarial/administrative assistance in the President’s office.

Various options to consider

1. The National President should have a dedicated administrative assistant.

PRO The president needs assistance in answering telephone calls and emails, making travel arrangements.
Greater administrative assistance will allow the president to concentrate on larger issues, including providing strategic direction to the union.

CON Giving an assistant to the National President will add costs to the overhead of the union.
It will give the president more power with respect to the other members of the National Executive Committee.

2. The National President should have an executive assistant (in addition to an administrative assistant). This executive assistant should be chosen by the president from among the CUPW membership and will hold office only for the duration of the president's term.

PRO Will have more time to represent and do his political work.
Will be better prepared for meetings – visits to the region.
Will have more time for strategic issue.
Could have time to prepare for strategic session or lead thinking on the orientation of the union.

CON It goes against the culture of the union.
The “Rasputin Effect” – i.e. that the unelected executive assistant will become the “power behind the throne” and undermine democracy in the union.

3. Change the constitution to make it clear that while individual NEC members have specific responsibilities, they are to work “under the overall guidance” of the President, who can assign tasks and responsibilities as he/she sees fit.

- PRO** Allow the National President to provide effective leadership.
Allow the President to better use the strength of the NEC officers.
Allow the President to coordinate and avoid duplication of work amongst NEC officers consistent with section 4.28.
More flexibility.
- CON** Fear of President having too much power
The culture of the union- past practice

6. The role and function of the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the National Executive Board (NEB)

At the very top of the union's decision-making structure are 2 key committees: the National Executive Committee and the National Executive Board.

The work of the 2 groups is very closely linked and the membership is largely overlapping, so both will be discussed together.

The **National Executive Committee (NEC)** is a small group composed of 7 national officers of the union, all of whom reside in Ottawa. Each of the members of the NEC is elected by convention, and has specific responsibilities under the constitution.⁹

They are:

1. The National President
2. 1st National Vice-President
3. National Secretary-Treasurer
4. National Grievance Officer
5. 2nd National Vice-President
6. 3rd National Vice-President
7. 4th National Vice-President

⁹ NOTE: the description of the officers' function is just a summary of their responsibilities. For an outline of exact duties and responsibilities see Article 4 of the Constitution.

By the Constitution, the seven national officers who constitute the National Executive Committee must meet once a week.¹⁰ Their powers of decision are limited by the constitution to “administrative matters”, and their latitude for decision-making is rather restricted.

The **National Executive Board (NEB)** is a larger body composed of the 7 NEC members plus one National Director from each of the union’s 8 regions, for a total of 15 members.¹¹

This structure of the NEB was struck in 1996, and gave an 8 – 7 “majority” to regional representations. (However we were told that few NEB decisions are split along the “National vs. the regions” basis.)

The NEB is responsible for the leadership and administration of the Union in accordance with the orientation given by the members under the constitution and the policies and general resolutions adopted by the Convention. It has wide powers, including to approve expenditures, to suspend locals and to appoint members to national committees or national or international delegations.

The NEB is required to meet at least every two months and in fact it often meets more frequently. In 2008, for example, the NEB had 13 meetings for a total of 52 days. In addition the NEB can take urgent decisions while not in session by facsimile.

NEB meetings are held “in camera”. Except under unusual circumstances, no staff are allowed to attend NEB meetings.

What we heard:

There are many frustrations with the current structure of the NEC/NEB. Here are a few of the major concerns.

¹⁰ (In fact, in 2008 the NEC had 26 meetings, or about once per 2 weeks on average.)

¹¹ The 8 regions currently are: Atlantic, Quebec, Metro-Montreal, Central, Metro-Toronto, Ontario, Prairie, Pacific. The National Directors are also elected at convention – by their respective regional caucuses.

- *Taken together, the NEC/NEB amount to a huge time commitment for the senior officers of the union. Specifically, the 7 resident officers spent 52 days in NEB meetings plus 26 days in NEC meetings, for a total of 78 days, in 2008. Given that the “normal” year has approximately 200 working days, this means that the 7 resident officers spend approximately 1/3 of their time in meetings at the national level.*
- *The same thing is true for National Directors (ND), who have to be in Ottawa for NEB meetings for 52 days per year. When you add in travel time, this means that the ND’s are out of their regions far too often.*
- *The requirement for the NEC to be unanimous to make any decision is unduly limiting. What it means is that many purely administrative decisions are “turned over” to the NEB, where they become highly political.*
- *The 8 “National Directors (i.e. from the regions) tend to see the NEB meetings as a way to protect their “turf” rather than to have a strategic discussion about the collective future of the whole union.*
- *The NEB spends far too much time discussing “day-to-day” operations and haggling over relatively small items which should be dealt with by the NEC. As a result, the NEB meetings are long, exhausting, and don’t leave much time for strategic discussion. There is little time – or appetite – for strategic planning sessions.*
- *The NEB spends far too much time “interpreting” the collective agreement. This task should be given to the National Grievance Officer (NGO) or a committee.*
- *Many administrative decisions are delayed, sometimes for weeks or months as they wait to get on the crowded NEB agenda.*
- *The minutes of NEB meetings are not very informative. According to the constitution, they have to be circulated, but they are so brief they are not sufficiently informative.*
- *The need for “quorum” at both the NEC and the NEB sometimes hampers the decision-making of both groups.*
- *Few officers have any real idea of what it means to be a top manager in a very large organisation prior to being elected.*
- *Sometimes NEB decisions are taken with too little information, as appropriate staff or experts are not invited.*
- *NEB meetings are secretive – only people on the “inside” know what is really going on.*

Options

1. **The NEC should be empowered to act effectively as the “executive committee” of the union, responsible for the daily management of the organization.** Key steps will be to reduce the quorum and to eliminate the need for “unanimity” for the NEC to make decisions. This does not eliminate the value of attempting to achieve “consensus”, but it means that it is not necessary to make a decision within parameters set out by the NEB (and the constitution.)

PRO Will allow the NEC to take control of the management of the union
Will allow decisions to be made in a timely manner
Will reduce the time demands on the NEB members

CON Fear that too much power will be concentrated in hands of NEC
Fear that some sub-group of the NEC will “run away” with the union

2. **REDUCE the size of the NEC, and define the responsibilities of each member more clearly.**

PRO Will increase the day-to-day effectiveness of the union
Will reduce the tensions in areas where responsibilities are currently unclear or overlapping
A smaller number increases the possibility of real discussion/debate over strategic issues
NEB becomes more of a “control” organisation rather than one involved in daily administration

CON Work overload on NEC officers (if not supported properly)
NEB might fear losing power
Appears less democratic – not the culture of the union

3. **Create a NEB sub committee on the Collective Agreement chaired by the National Grievance Officer. The subcommittee to be responsible for the interpretation of collective agreements, except on issues deemed to be of highest interest, which can be referred back to NEB.**

PRO Significant reduction in time spent by NEB debating interpretation of collective agreement
CUPW now manages many collective agreements. The NEB cannot spend time micromanaging each one.
NEB free to spend more time on overall direction of the union

CON Individual NEB members lose power to intervene
Collective agreement is too important to leave to a committee

4. **REDUCE the number of NEB meetings to 4 or 6 meetings per year.** The main role of the NEB would become to hear the reports of the NEC, and to debate the overall direction of the union.

PRO Significant reduction in costs (travel, accommodation and translation)
Significant saving in time for both NEC members and National Directors from regions.
NEB becomes less involved in management and more focused on overall strategy and direction
Will allow National Directors to be more present in their regions

CON Fear of losing power
Might not be able to let go some of the responsibilities
Might negatively impact “national teambuilding” if people met less frequently

5. **More staff resources should be applied to the NEB meetings.** Specifically, a National Union Representative should be dedicated to preparing the NEB meetings and preparing summaries of discussions (or minutes) for circulation in the organisation. (Specific portions of meetings could still be held “in camera” as needed.) Staff should be brought into NEB meetings as necessary to provide information and insight.

- PRO** Better minutes (or summary of discussion) would be a significant step toward greater democracy
 This would relieve the National Secretary-Treasurer of a significant burden
 Better informed decision-making
 Would bring CUPW into line with current practice in other unions
 Will allow more flexibility for the secretary-treasurer to participate fully in the meetings.
 The staff could have a better appreciation of the subjects, decisions and follow-up work to do.
 Could eliminate the perception of “NEB clique”
- CON** Fear that the employer would “know too much” if better minutes are circulated.
 Fear of members “knowing too much”.
 Fear that staff will “know too much”
 Increased staff time – increased costs.
 NEB members might be less “frank”

6. **Use video conferencing for some of the NEB meetings.**

- PRO** Significant time savings
 Significant cost savings
 More environmentally friendly
- CON** Difficult to do in a 2 language environment (simultaneous interpretation)
 Loss of “face time” – often lots of “side deals” are worked out
 Less access to the national office and to other regions
 Meeting in persons help to develop a team – to share problems
 In person => better discussion – helps resolve tensions
 Perception of control – manipulation by the National
 Security concerns

7. **New National Officers to get training in governance and management of a not-for-profit organisation.**

PRO Many new NEC members have never managed a large organisation before
Good management is important.
CUPW needs to pay more attention to financial administration, human resource management, managing resources, information technology etc.

CON New members may feel that they “don’t need” it
Some time and cost implications

8. **Increase the size of the NEB to 20 or 25 by the inclusion of a number of constituencies not currently represented.** For example, the NEB could include: representatives of the 4 or 5 largest locals, Private sector bargaining units, RSMCs, Groups 3 & 4, Temporary workers, and various equity seeking groups. In this model, the NEB becomes a kind of “general assembly” which hears reports from the NEC members, and provides overall guidance to the NEC.¹²

PRO Greatly increased transparency
Creates a “national team” composed of many different groups
Moves NEB from an “administrative” body to being a “political” one
Greater clarity of different roles of NEC and NEB
Reduced emphasis on “regional’ issues

CON increased costs (offset by fewer meetings per year)
Reduced direct “control” of NEC

¹² Many other national unions have created a large representative body which meets from time to time to hear from the national leadership and debate strategic direction. CAW has a large “council” which serves this function. At the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), the “national executive board” is a rather large body of 33 people which meets 3 or 4 times per year. Among other things it includes direct representation from some equity groups and some “rank and file” members.

7. The role and shape of the National Constitution

Background

CUPW's constitution is the basic legal document of the organisation. It defines the roles and responsibilities of all the officers, boards and committees of the union. For example it:

- Defines local, regional and national structures with specific responsibilities,
- Defines duties for each member of the NEC and National Directors,
- Establishes Area Councils and Regional Conferences,
- Lays out a structure for negotiations,
- Lays out procedures for the National Convention
- Establishes roles and responsibilities for local unions
- Creates an internal disciplinary system.

It also describes a number of key union policies in such areas as the role of CUPW in the labour movement, the attitude of the union toward the employer, and CUPW's position on a number of key Canadian social issues.

It can only be amended by a National or Special Convention, or by a referendum of members. Amendments have been made to the constitution (often to resolve specific issues) at many conventions since the founding of the union.

As a result, it has grown considerably over time. In 1971, the Constitution governing CUPW had 47 pages, 48 in the French version. The 2008 version of the constitution has a total of 226 pages, 237 in the French version.¹³

Over the years, Convention decisions added to the Constitution more responsibilities, duties, functions, activities, committees without a real review or clean up of the existing document. The Constitution has been written for one big bargaining unit and there are few references at all to any of the new bargaining units.

¹³ The CUPW constitution is one of the longest and most detailed of any Canadian union. As a point of reference, the constitution of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) has 82 pages, that of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has 43 pages and that of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) has 50 pages. Each of these unions has more than 3 times as many members as CUPW (and many more collective agreements).

What We Heard:

CUPW's constitution is often referred to, informally, as its "bible". In fact, during our interviews we often heard people refer to specific articles of the constitution, sometimes even quoting it by heart.

However, many people say the constitution has now become too long and too complex for most people to use. In addition, as a result of many amendments over time, the constitution now seems to include some internal contradictions. Finally, we were told that there are many items in the constitution which don't really reflect current practice in the union.

CUPW members have different ideas about how the constitution should be viewed. Some believe that anything which is not in the constitution is not permitted. Others believe, on the contrary, that lots of situations arise which are not foreseen in the constitution. In these cases, they argue, the constitution should be seen as a "general guide", not as a definitive list of what is "permissible".

We heard a number of specific concerns about the CUPW constitution. Among these are:

- *The Constitution is written for Urban Operations. Nothing in it for RSMCs.*
- *The Constitution does not reflect the new demographics and wide spread collective agreements we have.*
- *Efforts to change the Constitution have been repeatedly met with interference from the leadership, and by regional interests. As a result, it is very difficult for the union to evolve.*
- *The National Constitution is unnecessarily proscriptive. For example it limits the local's ability to spend locally assessed dues, sets out mileage rates for travel allowances and describes the content of specific educational programs. This makes it very difficult to adapt to changing circumstances.*
- *There are ambiguities and duplication in the Constitution, for example in job descriptions for regional officers, and even for members of the NEC.*
- *The constitution is printed in 56,000 bilingual copies. Most of the copies stay forever in boxes as few members want to have one.*
- *Some of the language is difficult to understand.*

Various options to consider

- 1. Undertake a full review of the constitution to reduce or eliminate excessive detail and contradiction, clarify ambiguities, and eliminate items that by common agreement, no longer apply to the current situation.**

PRO Will have fewer pages,
Easier to find the appropriate articles
Not so much confusion or duplication
Easier for the National President to interpret.

CON Will be a lot of work
Difficult to do changes at Convention.
Leaders who are “expert” in the constitution might resist changes

- 2. Separate the constitution into 3 separate documents:**

- (a) Basic constitution, (to be approved/amended by convention);**
- (b) National policies, (which can be adopted by NEB or convention);**
- (c) Administrative regulations (which can be decided by NEB).**

This would not, of course, eliminate the power of the NEB to override decisions of the NEC, or for convention to do the same to the NEB. But it would mean that many decisions would not “normally” come to convention.

PRO Constitution will have fewer pages,
Easier to find the appropriate articles
Easier for the National President to interpret.
Increased flexibility for NEC to make administrative decisions

CON Culture is “If it is not in the Constitution, you cannot do it”
Will be a lot of work –
Difficult to do changes at Convention.
Specific constituencies might prefer to keep it as it is
Fear that NEB will make inappropriate or self-serving changes

- 3. Rewrite the constitution in “clear language”.** The CLC has done a clear language constitution so there is a model to learn from.

PRO User friendly
Easier to understand
Already doing it for the Urban Operations collective agreement
Members might be more interested in the document.

CON Will be a lot of work –
Difficult to do changes at Convention.

4. **Put constitution (and policies) on the internet, and reduce dramatically the number printed.** (Print and mail only the number of copies requested by locals).

PRO Significant cost saving
Environmentally more friendly
Actually easier to access for many people

CON Not every one has access to internet
Constitution available to employer

8. Financial administration (including the role of the National Board of Trustees)

Background

The 56,000 CUPW members pay dues to the National Union to fund its programs and provide services to its members. The amount of dues is established at convention.¹⁴

Under the constitution, the National Secretary-Treasurer has the responsibility for union finances. He is assisted by 6 full-time staff, including a Director of Finance and Administration.

¹⁴ Unlike most other unions, the CUPW does not have a dues system based on members' income. The dues for members in Urban Operations are established by the constitution at 300% of the maximum hourly rate of the lowest classification. The rates for Private Sector Bargaining Units and RSMCs are determined by the NEB.

The National Secretary Treasurer prepares a budget which is subject to approval by the National Executive Board. He/She also sends complete financial statements to all locals twice a year through “Perspective”, and submits a report to the National Convention. The NEB is exclusively authorized to make any adjustment in the budget estimates during any fiscal year.

There is a National Board of Trustees who review expenses to ensure that the constitution is respected and can make recommendations to the NEB. (*see following separate section on the NBOT*) While minor anomalies have been noted from time to time, there is a widespread feeling that union officials are generally very careful in spending the union’s money.

The union’s annual revenues are divided into 3 different funds:

- General Fund: 64% of the dues go to this fund to cover ongoing expenses;
- Defence fund: 10% of the dues are put aside for a “rainy day”;
- Local Fund: 26%¹⁵ are reverted to local unions.

According to information given to us, the union currently has annual revenues of approximately \$28 million.

In addition, the union has total assets (including real estate and investments) of approximately \$30.7 million.

However, the financial outlook is complicated and there are some storm clouds on the horizon. For the current mandate (2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11) the union expects a net loss (expenses greater than revenues) of \$1million.¹⁶ Furthermore, the last convention voted a contribution of up to \$1M per year to the Defence Fund. In total, the potential shortfall could reach as much as \$4M for the mandate.

This clearly cannot continue for long. The union faces two options: finding other sources of revenues (including the possibility of raising dues) or reducing expenses significantly.

¹⁵ In addition to the 26%, the national office provides local unions with supplementary funds on a sliding scale. Locals with 250 members or less receive \$250.00 per month, 251 to 1000 members receive \$1.00 per member per month, 1001 + receive \$1,000. per month. This is particularly helpful for the smaller locals.

¹⁶ That could be conservative. If membership decreases more rapidly than expected, the shortfall will become much more acute.

What We Heard:

Financial administration is the nerve centre of any large organisation. Through the allocation of funds, the organization indicates its real priorities. Because there is never enough money to do all the things we would like to do, the careful administration of limited financial resources is a crucial function which is always subject to careful scrutiny and political pressure.

We heard a number of comments regarding CUPW's financial administration – some from those “inside” the National Office and some from those “outside”. Here are some of the main themes:

- *While money is not abused for personal purposes, there is a concern that money is not managed efficiently and that some monies are not spent effectively.*
- *There does not seem to be an effective cost-control process. While improvements have been made, overall financial control is still weaker than it should be.*
- *Financial control is too centralized. National Directors (in regions) have very little ability to make financial decisions. Everything has to be brought to the National Secretary-Treasurer and to the NEB. This is very awkward.*
- *The current system does not encourage National Directors to be effective managers. Instead, they are incited to repeatedly go back to “National” for more funds. Funds are allocated for political reasons.*
- *The financial reporting system does not allow an analysis of the union's priorities.*
- *The National President and National Secretary-Treasurer are too limited in their spending authority. All expenses exceeding \$1,000.00 have to go to the NEB.*
- *The dues structure is extremely unfair. For example, temporary workers pay full monthly dues, irrespective of hours worked.*
- *We are dipping into the defence fund to balance the budget. We need to put more in the defence fund.*
- *Many decisions are made on an “ad hoc” basis. (e.g. education budgets for regions are on “first come, first served” basis).*
- *There is an overall lack of transparency about financial matters.*
- *The union has invested heavily in real estate. Many members do not agree with this policy.*

Various options to consider:

1. **Change the dues system: move to a global system in which member dues are paid according to wages earned.**

PRO Fairness
Will accommodate CUPW as it moves outside of traditional “urban operations” area
Removes arbitrariness of setting dues by NEB for different units.
Better for temporary workers – many of whom will become full-time members in the future

CON Resistance from those members who earn highest salary
Actually more complicated than it looks – what to do about overtime, etc.
Has already been turned down by convention
Dues should be linked to “service provided” not to wages

2. **Make changes in the current dues system to specifically accommodate “part-time workers”.** As it currently stands part time workers pay the same monthly dues as other members – even if they work very few hours.

PRO The current system is unjust for part-time workers
Most temporaries come in as part-time. The current system gives them a bad attitude toward the union

CON Some reduction in CUPW revenues
Calculating will require some investment in IT and coordination with employer.

3. **Separate the “Director of Finance and Administration” position in two. Have one person) responsible for office management, and another “a financial controller” responsible for financial administration, working under the National Secretary-Treasurer.** The current director of Finance and Administration is too stretched. As a result, the office management is weak, and financial controls are not as rigorous as they should be.

PRO Better control on expenses
More strategic approach to priorities.
Better human resource management

CON Extra expense

4. **Expand the mandate of the audit to include recommendations on improving overall financial management.** The current constitution limits the role of the auditors to “scrutinizing books”.

PRO Better control on expenses
Bring CUPW into line with modern not-for-profit management
More strategic approach to priorities.

CON Extra expense

The role of the National Board of Trustees

Background

In order to monitor the expenses of the organisation, each convention elects an 8 person “National Board of Trustees”, one from each region. The National Board of Trustees is responsible for the inspection of the finances and the assets of the union.

It meets twice a year for about 2 weeks. The committee prepares a written report on its findings, which is also published in the national journal. A report with recommendations is also submitted to the National Convention.

In 2008-2009 the committee cost \$83,570.00. The CUPW NBOT is much bigger and more expensive than comparable committees in other unions.¹⁷

¹⁷ Most other major national unions make greater use of a professional auditing firm with oversight by a smaller “trustee” or “audit” committee. For example:

- CAW – 3 trustees from the NEB review audited report and sign off.
- CEP- No audit committee – External audit only and they report to their NEB
- CUPE- 3 trustees elected at convention. Review financial accountability of the National Union’s policies and practices and ensure financial control and protection of CUPE properties.
- PSAC- National Board of Directors elects 3 non-executive members to be part of the finance committee. It reviews budget, rules procedures, expenses made by the executive officers. Audit report once a year from an outside firm.

What we heard:

We heard a range of comments about the National Board of Trustees – some positive, some less so. Here are the main points:

- *The National Board of Trustees is very political. Expenses which are criticized in some areas are overlooked in others.*
- *The committee is rather expensive.*
- *It is important to have this committee. It gives the members a reassurance that their dues are being spent carefully.*
- *It is important to have a committee which reviews expenses and that officers know that their expenses will be carefully scrutinized.*

Various options to consider:

1. **Have a smaller National Board of Trustees perhaps 3 people elected at convention.**

PRO Fewer members elected at convention.
Less expensive
Could still fulfill their mandate

CON Not having all the regions represented could upset the regions not represented.

2. **Change mandate of the National Board of Trustees to be principally responsible for reviewing the work of external auditors.** Instead of going over every bill submitted to the union, the NBOT would review the recommendations of the auditors about ways to improve financial systems and improve oversight. It would retain the right to do spot check on expenses as it sees fit.

PRO Less expensive
Look more at practices – regulations – (bigger picture)
Could make recommendations to the NEB on policy for finance ex: car rental
Not as much detail work
Could still recommend for insurance firm and audit firm.
More in line with conventional practice in other unions

CON Members of current committee feel they are doing important work
Perception there will be abuse and nobody to control or check.

9. The role of National Office staff (including National Union Representatives and specialists)

There are approximately 100 people who work full-time¹⁸ at the CUPW national office at 377 Bank Street in Ottawa. The national office occupies the whole building, which is on 4 levels.

National Office staff can be roughly divided into 6 categories:

1. There are **7 elected National Executive** officers, including the National President. They are elected to serve a 3-year term.
2. **11 National Union Representatives.** These are CUPW members who are elected at convention to carry out a number of different functions at head office “in conjunction with” the National Executive Officers. They are elected for a 3-year term from convention to convention.
3. **21 technical specialists** provide support to the national officers. They are permanent staff members, hired by the union for their technical expertise. The range of services is wide – from the Director of Research to translation. The technical specialists have their own union (CUPE 1979) and work under a collective agreement with CUPW.
4. **35 administrative and support staff.** These include secretaries, receptionists and other personnel essential to the functioning of any office. It also includes the print shop. They also have their own union (COPE) with their own collective agreement. The same local also includes support staff who work in the 8 CUPW regional offices.
5. **Three “contract personnel”,** including the Director of Finance and Administration, and 2 Directors of the IT departments.

¹⁸ This does not include people who come in to work full-time but for short terms at head office. The National Board of Trustee, for example, comes into the National Office for 2 weeks every 6 months.

6. Finally, there are **approximately 10 “others”, including alternate Union Representatives and other appointed staff** who work on a variety of special projects on a “temporary, but full-time basis” at National office (an example is the 3 who work on the Transition committee or those who work on the AA committee). Although their status is “temporary” some have been working many years in Ottawa at the National Office.

What we heard:

The third party group heard a number of comments about the organisation and staffing of the national office.

Among the comments were:

- **Tensions and workload at the national office are very high.** *It is not surprising that with the conflicting demands on all, added to the high degree of politicization, the atmosphere in the national office is very tense.*
- **Poor human resource management.** *Postal workers do not manage others – in fact there is a kind of inherent bias against management. Nonetheless, in any large organisation (and CUPW must be considered a “large” organisation) good management – including the management of resources and people - is essential. Managing others is a learned skill, it is not innate. Managers who avoid their management responsibilities add to the tension and lack of direction in the office.*
- **Unclear reporting relationships and inadequate supervision of staff.** *The administrative staff technically report to a Director of Finance and Administration. However, it is not possible for one person to provide effective supervision over 30 employees spread out over all 4 floors of the building, who, on a day-to-day basis, support the work of the National Executive Committee, the National Union Representatives and the technical specialists, who are NOT managers. As a result, it is difficult to provide proper supervision over such issues as attendance, leave for medical or other family needs, holidays etc.*
- **Silo mentality** – *the different departments/areas do not communicate with each other adequately. At the national office there are many departments whose work impacts on other departments. Decisions in organizing impact information management. Education and communications overlap. Etc. However, we were often told that information was “hoarded” by departments. There are few staff meetings, and few efforts to create an “all staff” atmosphere.*

- *Some people are elected but do not know how to do their jobs. The uniquely CUPW approach to staffing many key national office positions through elections at conventions, has the advantage of ensuring that the Union's staff come from the work floor. However, it also happens frequently that those who are elected do not have the skills or knowledge to do the work. The ability to make a good speech at a convention does not necessarily equip one to carry out a job requiring reading a lot of technical material, or writing briefs. We also have heard that it is not a universal practice that the outgoing National Union Representatives help the new ones get oriented.*
- *Salary levels of the officers are very low. This is most remarkable with respect to the President and other executive members, but also true with respect to the National Union Representatives. People doing comparable work for other unions are paid considerably more. In some cases, the union representatives earn less than they would have made back on the work floor.*
- *Appointments are too frequently done on a "political" basis, rather than based on competency.*

Various options to consider

1. **All national executive officers should take some management training.** This training should include both a "human resource management" component, and a "governance and financial management" component. This is a common complaint in unions and other not for profit organizations. However, courses have been developed especially for those who manage these types of organizations.

PRO CUPW elected officers need to get over their natural inclination to "avoid" being managers. All major businesses, government agencies and large NGO's invest in basic management training.

CON The cost and the time are significant. Even a 3-day course for new officers represents a significant investment by the union. There is no guarantee that the training will help. If officers feel that they don't need it and don't take it seriously, neither they (nor the organisation) will benefit.

2. **Clarify reporting relationships for support staff at the national office.** Support staff often indicate that they get conflicting messages from different officers. This is frustrating, and leads to tensions and uncertainty. It also leads to support staff worrying about whether their own “collective agreement” is sufficient to protect them.

PRO Staff need to know who to take direction from, and who takes responsibility. They also want to know that the rules are equitably applied across the organisation.

CON The organisation does not need more bureaucratic rules. Priorities change and issues come up unexpectedly. People have to be allowed to make their own decisions based on the circumstances.

3. **Plan and budget for a 2-week overlap period after convention so that newly elected National Union Representatives can learn from the outgoing ones.**

PRO Most jobs include a short “hand off” period during which the outgoing officers show the new ones the key elements of the job.

CON There may be a significant degree of tension between the outgoing National Union Representative and the incoming one – particularly if one has defeated the other.

4. **Identify required “skill sets” for each National Union Representative’s position and ensure automatic training for new National Union Representatives within the first 3 months of election.** The National Union Representatives elected at convention do not always have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfill their new duties right away. In the first 3 months after election, the union should invest in helping the new National Union Representatives to get up to speed.

PRO Identified skill sets may help members at convention in choosing which National Union Representative to elect.
If training is not “automatic” it will not happen. If it is not “automatic” newly elected National Union Representatives will be pressured to diminish or conceal any skill shortages they have.

CON There is a cost involved – both in dollars and in time. The National Union Representatives are needed from “day one”.

5. **Clarify reporting relationships for National Union Representatives. The constitution should be amended to make it clear that National Union Representatives should carry out their work “under the direction of” the appropriate National Officer.**

PRO This will take some of the “politics” out of the office.
It will also make it possible to hold the National Officer accountable for his/her performance, something that is not really possible today.

CON If National Union Representatives must “report to” a National Officer, they lose their ability to stand up to them.

6. **Recruit candidates for various temporary positions with clear job descriptions and a non partisan hiring process.**

PRO Members often complain about the lack of transparency in making appointments, many of which are seen to be made on “political” grounds. The creation of a transparent process, based on clear criteria, and widely publicized results, will reduce improve this situation.

CON The process will be time consuming and will be criticized by unsuccessful candidates in any event.
An open process will only raise expectations amongst members, most of whom will not be successful.

7. **Plan for “departmental” staff meetings, as well as “all staff” activities on a regular basis.** Silos exist in every organisation. They are the natural result of people working in organizational subunits. They are also impediments to successful and effective performance and can reduce staff morale. Each executive officer should plan a regular staff meeting at least once a month (and more if appropriate) to review plans and issues. The National President should also organize an “all staff” meeting at National Office from time to time.

PRO There is a need for greater overall coherence and sense of belonging to the organisation.

CON These things take time and energy

8. **Plan for an “all staff” retreat at least once a year. This event can be partly “information out”, partly “information up” and partly “just social fun”.**

PRO There is a need for greater overall coherence and sense of belonging to the organisation.

CON These things take time and energy.

10. The role and functioning of the Union’s national committees¹⁹

Background

In order to pursue several of its objectives, CUPW has created a number of National Committees. Two of these - the National Women’s Committee, and the National Human Rights Committee are essentially political committees which work toward political objectives within the union.²⁰

¹⁹ This section deals only with the union’s own internal committees. It excludes a number of committees set up with the employer (e.g. Transition Committee).

²⁰ The National Women’s Committee and the National Human Rights Committee are dealt with in the chapter E. Inclusion and Equity.

Three are more technical and deal with specific issues facing the union. These are the National Work Measurement Committee, the National Health and Safety Committee and the National Board of Trustees.

The objectives, membership and meeting frequency for each committee are all outlined in the Constitution.

Membership is generally based on equal representation by region (one to 4 persons per region, depending on the committee) plus, some other representatives or officers as specified in the constitution.

Each committee meets in Ottawa usually for two or 3 days at least twice a year. The costs of lost wages, travel and accommodation for committee members as well as simultaneous translation, and preparation of documents is paid by the National Office.

What we heard:

The Third Party Group heard strong views about the role and structure of its national committees. Each committee has its strong defenders who can point to specific issues which the committee has helped the union focus on. However, each also has its critics. In general, these criticisms were not directed at the members of the committee themselves, but at the overall effectiveness of the committees as a way to attain the objectives desired.

The main arguments brought forward are:

- *The committees are costly and it's not clear what they accomplish. Representation on the committee is often seen as political ("whose side you're on") rather than substantial ("what knowledge or skill you can bring to the committee").*
- *Some of the committees seem "disconnected" from the base of the union. The committee members have no one to gather information from and no constituency to report back to. As a result, the committees seem to work in a kind of vacuum.*
- *The original objectives of the committees have been met to a significant degree. The union should spend less of its resources on these issues.*
- *The work of some of the committees would be better done at the regional level.*

Various options to consider

1. **Ask each committee to carry out a review of its own work and effectiveness, and to come up with alternative approaches to accomplishing the objectives of the union in this area.** Committees could be asked to address these 4 questions:

- i. What is the union's objective in this area?
- ii. What is the role of the committee in attaining this objective?
- iii. How can you measure the effectiveness of the committee?
- iv. Is there a better (i.e. more effective and efficient) way of achieving the union's objectives.

PRO The committees are composed of people who are both keen advocates of the issue at hand, AND who know best how well/poorly the committees are accomplishing their stated objectives. They are in the best position to make recommendations.

CON The committee members have a personal stake in the continued existence of national committees and in having a role in it. This may make it difficult for committee members to consider objectively both their own effectiveness, and the value of other approaches to the same goal.

2. **Reduce meeting frequency to once a year in person and another time using internet technology.** It would be possible to do a conference call or video conferencing.

PRO Huge reduction in costs
Reduction in wasted travel time
Reduced environmental impact

CON The technology is not yet really perfected.
Nothing replaces face to face meetings
English French translation is an issue. It is possible – but tricky - to do a conference call with simultaneous translation.
The meetings also have side benefits (e.g. coming to Ottawa) which would be lost

11. Organizing new units in the postal sector

Background

In June 2007 the NEB adopted an organizing plan called “Organizing for the next decade” with the goal of uniting all workers in the postal sector.

There is a National Union Representative in charge of organizing responsible to the 3rd National Vice-President.

There is also a budget for organizing of approximately \$800,000. The NEB votes on all organizing targets and determines the dues charged to new locals. Regional Educational and Organization Officers are responsible for organizing work in each region. Worker organizers are also taken from the work floor with their wages and expenses paid by the national organizing budget.

Organizing is always a long-term process. Our information is that CUPW has now organized a total of 15 private sector bargaining units with a total membership of approximately 485.

What we heard:

- Once new units are organized, the locals don't know what to do with them, how to integrate or service them.
- The NEB is involved at all steps and slows the process – sometimes up to two years or more to get the first agreement.
- Many activists are not aware of any overall plan: e.g. estimating the cost to recruit and service new members as well as revenues it will bring in or a plan for how to integrate the new units into the union.
- There have been insufficient links with other departments (such as IT) to help keep information on locals up-to-date.
- The decision to organize the unorganized is well-intentioned, but not good for our union. We are spending too many resources in this area.

Various options to consider

1. **Hire, rather than elect, the National Union Representative responsible for organizing**

PRO Organizing requires a set of skills and experience which might be easier to find by hiring from within the membership. It could also help ensure some continuity as skills are developed.

CON This breaks the organizational pattern of electing all union reps.

2. **Delegate some of the decision-making from the NEB to the organizing department in consultation with the regions.** This assumes that the NEB has approved an overall organizing strategy, plan and budget.

PRO This would both speed up the process and reduce the NEB agenda.

CON Loss of some control by the NEB.

C. Regional Structure

12. Number and structure of Regions

Background

CUPW is currently structured into 8 regions across the country. The regions differ from each other in many ways including: geographical area, membership, language, number of provinces covered, and composition of members.

Name	No. of Locals	No. of members	No. of Officers ²¹	Location of Regional Office
Atlantic	37	3,721	5	Halifax
Quebec	31	4,996	6	Quebec City
Metro-Montreal	2	7,006	6	Montréal
Central	40	5,269	6	Ottawa
Metro-Toronto	1	8,518	6	Toronto
Ontario	31	9,022	7	London
Prairie	37	9,503	7	Winnipeg
Pacific	38	7,579	6	New Westminster
Total	216	55,584	49	

Each region is headed by a National Director, who is supported by 2 regional executives (a Regional Grievance Officer and a Regional Education and Organisation Officer) as well as a number of regional union representatives, and appropriate administrative staff. All staff in each region operate out of the same regional office.

The regions have representative/democratic functions, service delivery functions and control functions.

The main representative/democratic functions are:

1. to help locals prepare resolutions for convention or for collective negotiations;
2. to act as the link between the members in the region and the rest of the union;
3. to represent the needs of the region at the national level, particularly on the NEB;
4. to represent the members to Canada Post officials at the regional level.

²¹ National Director, REOO, RGO, plus Regional Union Representatives. Support staff are not included.

The main service delivery functions are:

1. to assist locals in the preparation of grievances, and to help in the management of the grievance process up to final resolution, to organize and conduct union education according to programs established by the national office;
2. to provide other services to members – including education and advice on pensions; health and safety, and other services for the well-being of members.

The main control functions are:

1. To ensure effective democratic functioning of the union locals in its region;
2. to monitor compliance of locals with the constitution, policies and by-laws of the union.

The regions do not have their own sources of revenue. All their revenue comes from the National Office. National Directors are continually appealing to the NEB for funds for special projects.

Despite their varying sizes and geographical situations, the 8 regions are treated equally in terms of access to educationals, and representation on the NEB.

What we heard:

Because the regions play such a large role in the overall management of the union it is not surprising that we heard many comments. Some comments refer to ALL REGIONS; some refer to issues with specific regions.

A. Issues regarding all regions

1. **There are too many regions.** The regions have been gradually added over time, mostly for political reasons, but do not make sense from an overall union management point of view. Having 8 regions is very costly.
2. **The regions do not add much value in the grievance process** – and actually contribute to the bureaucratization of the union. The regional officers are swamped with paperwork (most related to grievances) and are never on the work floor. Regional offices have become paper processing machines. This has disempowered locals.

3. **The regions should be stronger and have more autonomy.** The regions should be given greater budgets, responsibility and more staff to deal with local issues.
4. **The regional Union Representatives do not need to be all concentrated in 1 office.** Most of the regions cover huge geographical areas. For many members, it would take almost as much time to get to the “regional office” as to the national office. Concentrating the Regional Union Representatives in one regional office also effectively excludes those who do not live in that city – especially people with families.

B. Issues with respect to specific regions

1. **It does not make any sense for Toronto and Montreal to be both “regions” and “locals”.** This amounts to a subsidy for these large locals, since the budget for the regional staff is paid for by the national union. It also creates conditions for a power struggle between two levels of the union both of which represent the same set of members. This is acute in one of the regions.
2. **The Atlantic Region is too small to be a region.** With only 4000 members, it does not make sense for the Atlantic Region to have a seat on the NEB and to have equal access to education programs to much larger regions.
3. **In several regions, one large local effectively controls the region.** This is the case for the Pacific Region, Central Region and Quebec Region.
4. **The Quebec region is poorly configured from a service delivery point of view.** Gatineau and the east and north of Montreal are much closer to Montreal than to Quebec City.

A. Various options to consider for overall regional structure.

1. Maintain Status Quo

PRO The regional configuration reflects the reality of power in the union.

CON The current structure is designed for political reasons – not service delivery reasons.

The current structure is very costly.

What we have now is a collection of “independent fiefdoms”. The National Directors are first and foremost defenders of their region, rather than custodians of the union as a whole.

2. **Reduce the number of regions significantly. Several different options have been proposed (6 regions, 5 regions, 4 regions). Each has advantages and disadvantages.**

(The following arguments apply whether the reduction is to 6, 5, or 4 regions.)

PRO Significant cost savings. CUPW has been gradually increasing the number of regions. Often this was done for political reasons – not service delivery reasons. Each time new regions were created, additional costs were added. It’s time to start over.

If the regions are larger, the National Directors will take a more “union-wide” view of their role.

CON Larger regions will mean that the region is even further from the members. Reducing the number of regions will entail a “bunfight” amongst directors and Regional Executive Committees to retain power. This will be destructive to the union.

3. **Reduce the role of the region in processing grievances.** (See section on “Grievances”)
4. **Give National Directors more financial autonomy, while making them accountable for the management of their budgets.** (See section on “Finances”)
5. **Reduce the size of the regional offices and create satellite offices in various cities across the regions.** As an example, instead of concentrating all the Regional Union Representatives in Winnipeg, the Prairie region could open “satellite” offices in Calgary and Edmonton. Same for other regions. These offices could serve as a hub for local unions in the region. Appropriate staff could be assigned to these regional offices. This system was in effect between 1971 and 1977, but technological advances in communications make this option one to revisit.

PRO This would reduce travel time and expense.
The regional staff would be much closer to the various locals.
This would make regional union rep jobs more “accessible” to women and those with families.

CON There is a strong sense of “team” and “group learning” that comes from concentrating a number of people together. Union Representatives spread out would lose this.

The “greater accessibility” is an advantage, but has to be put into perspective. It would affect 2 or 3 people at most.

Regions already have offices/leases in specified areas.

The travel savings are more apparent than real. Most of the travel would not be affected.

B. Various options to consider for Specific Regions

1. **Eliminate the service overlap between “region” and “local” in Toronto and Montreal, by eliminating the “Metro-Toronto” and “Metro-Montreal” regions.**

For representative reasons, the Toronto and Montreal locals could still have direct representation on the NEB. Each local will have to determine how to designate their representative.

PRO Having a “region” and a “local” represent exactly the same members²² is like having two governments for the same city.

Because the region’s expenses are paid for by the national union, this amounts to a significant subsidy for these two locals.

CON These are the two key locals in CUPW. They are unlike any other region and should be treated accordingly.

2. **Create 1 Quebec region, with a number of satellite offices.** Encourage the two Quebec Regions to review the CUPW structure in Quebec with an eye to creating a more efficient structure. The Quebec regional office, based in Quebec City services the whole of Quebec, except for the Montreal which is in the middle. This “donut” shaped region is not logical. It leaves all of Western Quebec very far from the regional office. However, consistent with CUPW policy on Self-determination for Quebec, it seems logical that it should fall to the Quebec region itself to make recommendations. Montreal to keep direct representation on the NEB.

²² In the case of Montreal, there is a very small difference. The Metro-Montreal Region includes 2 locals: Montreal and the Messenger local.

PRO Better service, more cost effective

CON Montreal was taken out of the Quebec region several years ago, because its dominance in the region was causing friction.

3. **Create 1 Ontario region, with a number of satellite offices.** Ontario is currently divided up into 3 regions – “Ontario”, “Metro Toronto” and “Central” regions. Among the options are: to reconfigure Ontario as one region, with an office in Toronto, and with 2 or 3 satellite offices. Toronto Local to keep direct representation on the NEB.

PRO Better service, more cost effective

CON There is a “representation” issue. Ontario is the biggest concentration of members. To reduce it to one region is unfair.

13. The size and shape of locals

According to the constitution *“The local is a group of members composing a basic unit of the union and having received a charter from the National Executive Board.”*

CUPW currently has 216 locals spread across the country. The locals range in size from over 7000 in the case of Montreal and Toronto, to as few as 5 or 6 in some isolated posts. There are 9 very large locals that have over 1000 members. A few have full-time officers. On the other end, there are 30 locals with fewer than 20 members.

According to the constitution, locals receive 26% of union dues collected for their own purposes. In addition, locals are given supplemental funds on a sliding scale. Locals with fewer than 250 members receive \$250 per month, larger locals receive less on a per capita basis).²³

The CUPW constitution is very detailed respecting the structure and responsibilities of locals. Amongst other things, the constitution directs locals to create a number of local committees:

²³ In addition, 44 locals assess local dues to supplement revenues from the national office.

- an organizing committee,
- a grievance committee,
- an education committee,
- a women's committee,
- a human rights committee,
- a trustee committee.

In addition, locals are encouraged to form “Pension and Retiree Benefits” committees where appropriate.

Locals are also directed to be affiliated with the Provincial Federation of Labour as well as regional labour council. The structure and obligations of each of these committees is outlined in the constitution.

Locals are very limited as to what they can spend their funds on. Any expenditure outside of limits described in the constitution requires the prior approval of the NEB.

Locals may pass their own by-laws but these are subject to approval by the NEB. The NEB may also make recommendations to the Local regarding its by-laws.

What we heard:

We heard problems with locals that are seen to be “too big” (we interpret this to be locals over 1000 members) and problems with locals that are seen to be “too small” (we interpret this to be locals with fewer than 20 members.) The problems are different.

(a) The problems of “too big” locals

- *Where the local is too big, members have no feeling of “ownership” of the local. The “too big” locals are all located in major urban areas. It takes a long time to cross a city to attend a union meeting. As a result, participation in union affairs is quite small, and the union ends up being in fact taken over by a small group of people. The current Toronto local includes what were 13 different LCUC locals.*
- *There is often a difficulty in getting a quorum at meetings.*
- *Members often do not know the local executive.*
- *The biggest locals – Toronto and Montreal – are “city states”. Their size makes it very awkward for the rest of the union.*

- *A couple of “medium sized” locals in terms of membership are “too big” with respect to geographic area. Edmonton is probably the largest geographically, but others are also very big. This creates significant problems for servicing members.*

(b) The problems of “too small locals”

1. The small locals are “out of the loop” as far as the union is concerned.
2. There is no “union life” and often it’s hard to get people to run for executive positions. As a result, all the work falls on the shoulders of one (or two) people.
3. The “too small locals” are often very isolated. (e.g. Inuvik or Sioux Lookout). This makes it very difficult to participate in union activities.
4. Sometimes a small group (sometimes even a family group) “takes over” the union and effectively excludes others.
5. There is often little knowledge in the local about the collective agreement or even the CUPW constitution.
6. “The list of “obligatory” committees in the constitution is a joke. Few small locals actually create these committees. They are technically in violation of the constitution.”²⁴

(c) Other problems respecting locals:

1. Locals have had new members (particularly the RSMCs) added to their responsibility with no additional resources. In the case of one local, bringing in the RSMCs added 20 new locations often more than 50 km from the local office. The workload in servicing these members is too much. As a result, the union executive is exhausted, and the new RSMCs are unhappy because they are not getting the service they expected.

²⁴ In fact, the constitution allows small locals who can’t create these committees to pass responsibility to the local’s executive committee. Whether they in fact take up the responsibilities is not known.

2. Some locals should be reviewed geographically. In the case of one Alberta local, some of the new RSMCs are actually much closer to another local in B.C.

A. Various options to consider for Very Large Locals

1. **Maintain Status Quo**

PRO The large locals have a history and a geographical logic.

CON It is not clear that any of the challenges facing the largest locals will be solved by fiddling with structure.

2. **Split up the largest locals – especially Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver²⁵**

PRO The three largest locals have a preponderant influence in the union – both nationally and regionally.

Breaking up the local into 2 or 3 geographical components will enhance participation. It is very difficult to get members to come from say – the south shore of Montreal – to a union meeting.

CON “Splitting” will be hard to do, with uncertain benefits.

3. **Encourage the largest locals to review their own size/structure with an eye to improving services for members and bring recommendations forward to the NEB for discussion/approval.**

PRO Each large local faces its own challenges. This approach allows each one to work out its own approach to restructuring.

²⁵ The recommendation to “split up the large locals”, which we heard frequently, almost always comes from those in smaller locals. It mainly represents a frustration with the political importance of the large locals, rather than their ability to provide services to their members. Similarly, the recommendation to “merge small locals” invariably comes from people not in those locals.

CON It won't happen. Unless there is an outside stimulus, the existing leadership of the locals will want to hand onto the current structure.

B. Various options to consider for Very Small Locals

1. **Maintain Status Quo**

PRO The small locals have a history and a geographical logic.

CON It is not clear that any of the challenges facing the smallest locals will be solved by fiddling with structure.

2. **Set a CUPW minimum for locals – say 20 members – and amalgamate those that are smaller, except in special circumstances.**

PRO Many of the smallest locals are very weak, and there is no “union life”. Amalgamating would make them stronger. This will reduce the number of very small locals which are over-represented at convention.

CON Amalgamating locals doesn't in fact make them stronger – it just hides the weaknesses. Small locals are generally geographically remote from others. Putting 2 small locals “together” when they are actually 50 or 75 km from each other doesn't really strengthen them. Nor does “attaching” a small local to a bigger one which is far away. In fact, it usually amounts to a “takeover” which does not, in fact, encourage democracy in the small local.

3. **Add a day for small locals at the Regional Presidents meeting.** The needs of the presidents of small locals are usually quite different from those of medium and large locals. The Regional Presidents' meeting should be rethought to pay special attention to this dynamic. Adding a day for small locals might be a good way to start.

PRO Without extra help, the presidents from small locals cannot effectively participate in the Regional Presidents meetings.

CON Every local should be treated equally.
This will entail extra costs

C. Various options to consider for other issues regarding locals

1. **Give added resources to locals based on the number of RSMCs that are in the local.** (cf. section on grievances)

PRO Servicing the RSMCs is time consuming and costly. The weight of this falls on the local executives.

CON This will be unfair. Some locals have RSMCs working very close to the urban areas, others have RSMCs spread out all over. There can't be the same for every local.

The main problem in servicing RSMCs is not MONEY – it's TIME. Giving a few extra dollars isn't going to change anything.

2. **Encourage all locals to review their geographical boundaries and to submit, through their national director, any suggestions for changes which will enhance the efficiency of the union.**

PRO While it is the NEB's responsibility to approve, it is the locals who know how to best provide services to members.

CON National Directors may not be willing to push forward recommendations. Local (or even regional) leadership may not want to give up "turf".

D. Servicing special groups of members

The overwhelming majority of CUPW members work in “urban operations” and most are either letter carriers or mail clerks. However, there are a number of special groups of members who have special issues that deserve attention.

In this, CUPW is moving along a path that many other unions have followed – from being “craft” unions (representing one “trade”) to “industrial” unions, representing all the workers in a particular company or industrial sector. Large unions like CAW, CEP, and CUPE have had to change their structures to account for their new heterogeneous membership.

There are a number of sub-groups within CUPW, but we have identified 4 in particular.

- A. RSMC
- B. Temporary Workers
- C. Private Sector Bargaining Units
- D. Groups 3/4

14. Rural and suburban mail carriers (RSMC)

Background

In 2003, CUPW won ‘voluntary recognition’ to represent 6,500 RSMCs, majority of whom are women. Their current contract expires in 2011. RSMCs work in both urban and rural areas so their jobs are not all alike. The biggest problems are in areas where RSMCs do similar work to postal workers who earn more than they do, or where they work in isolated areas.

Before joining CUPW, RSMCs were contract workers – most contractors earned very little but a small number made as much as \$100,000 per year. There has been some pushback given the attempt by the union to equalize routes so that people make more or less the same for doing the same job. There are also cultural differences. RSMCs were contract workers so some have more of an individual than collective outlook.

A national transition committee was set up with 3 union and 3 mgt reps, paid for by CPC as an advisory committee to the corporation. Their job is to deal with the restructuring of RSMC routes and their compensation.

It seems to be generally true that the marriage of RSMCs and CUPW has been a rocky one. Some people are generally optimistic, but many are angry. It is not only a “structural” issue, but part of the issue is definitely “structural”. In any event it is a challenge the CUPW leadership will have to deal with.

What we heard:

First of all to accentuate the positive:

- *Important to bring RSMCs into the union; they were abused by Canada Post for a long time – they now have many benefits they didn't have before;*
- *The entry of 6,500 RSMCs has also been good for the union. It is the first step in making CUPW an “industrial” rather than a “craft” union.;*
- *Some RSMCs have taken leadership roles within the union. For example there are 10 RSMCs on Local Executives in Ontario as well as many shop stewards and health and safety representatives;*
- *Some locals have designated a position on their executive for RSMCs;*
- *Some RSMCs have organized themselves – by setting up a website so that they can communicate on their issues;*
- *The RSMC issue is being slowly resolved.*

All that is good. HOWEVER, both RSMCs and other CUPW members told us that there are some important issues that need to be resolved.

Here are some comments from RSMCs:

- *RSMCs do not feel part of the union There is a ‘them and us’ mentality*
- *Union does not really understand RSMC issues and has fallen down in representing them. The urban sector needs to be better educated re RSMC working conditions.*
- *RSMCs feel they are treated as “second class citizens” by Canada Post and “second class members” by CUPW.*
- *They were led to believe that if they joined the union they would make what letter carriers make.*

- *“we make less than a carrier with less benefits and tougher working conditions – and get little respect from the union or employer.”*
- *RSMCs have different process for negotiations; Example given of RSMC president not able to speak for her group 1 and 2 members while a group 1 or 2 president can speak for RSMC members*
- *Fewer services for same dues - little education; few grievances*
- *We are tired of being told to “be patient” and that “our contract took 40 years to develop”. We don’t want to do the same job for less than you. We want the same contract, and the same working conditions*
- *Transition Committee is not seen by RSMCs as representing our interests - not seen as representative (majority men; one person not RSMC); conflictual relations with some regions*
- *No place for RSMCs in the constitution or the structure - assumes all members are urban workers;*
- *Many of us had unrealistic expectations when we joined.*

Here are some comments about the situation of RSMCs from other union members:

- *Local activists don’t know the RSMC contract or understand their situation and feel overwhelmed – unable to adequately represent*
- *The RSMCs were “dumped” on our local. It’s a lot of work, and we don’t have the resources to deal with it.*
- *Most officers in leadership positions also feel that the union has not done a good job in integrating RSMCs into the union.*

Various options to consider

1. **Create a new NEC position for the RSMC – a Vice-President, unless and until RSMC are incorporated into “Urban Operations” contract.**

PRO This would finally give this group a “voice” at the highest levels of the organisation

CON This breaks the organizational pattern of electing all VP's from the whole base
If a spot is designated for one group of workers, all workers might request the same. (eg new private sector bargaining units, groups 3 and 4 who feel disenfranchised etc.)

2. **Create a new National Union Representative position at national office specifically responsible for the RSMC (this is a variant of option 1).**

PRO This would finally give this group a "voice" at the highest levels of the organisation (same as above)
A designated National Union Representative would ensure a voice for RSMC issues and could also help provide training to regional Union Representatives and Local Stewards on relevant issues

CON still some discomfort at giving one group a specific representative at national office.

3. **Assign one NEB member responsibility for all non-urban contracts, including RSMC (and PSBU).**

PRO This would ensure that there is one national officer at the NEB with knowledge of the RSMC contracts.

CON This would not necessarily give RSMCs the kind of representation they are seeking as the officer would be responsible for private sector bargaining unit contracts as well.

4. **Actively promote merger with the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA), most of whose members work closely with RSMCs in rural areas.**

PRO Would increase membership in CUPW
Would reduce the isolation of RSMCs
Would make it more feasible for locals to service remote areas

CON Some CPAA carry out management functions and might not be interested in being part of a more militant union like CUPW

5. **Union representatives on the Transition Committee to be elected by RSMCs.** (They are currently appointed by the NEB).

PRO Elections would ensure confidence that committee members would represent RSMCs

CON Hard to change horses in mid stream
The transition committee might be wound up in 2011 in any event.

6. **Replace the “RSMC Transition Committee” with regional committees.**

PRO The national transition committee was a helpful structure for the first years as a national presence for RSMCs. However, regionalizing their function would help ensure more participation and communication with RSMC members.

CON This might lead to different standards across the country. And if CPC could not be convinced to provide resources for regional consultation on routes, this would increase costs to the union.

7. **Make the demand setting process the same for RSMCs and urbans.** (See bargaining section.)

8. **Organize a national RSMC convention before the CUPW convention, with representation from all regions.**

PRO RSMCs feel excluded and unable to participate in the union. This will allow them to get better involved in key union debates.

CON Depending on numbers the costs could be considerable
Might encourage “separation” rather than “unity”

9. **Give locals additional funding to help service RSMC members.** (See financial section.)

15. Temporary Workers

Background

Most new workers are brought in as temporary workers and are on probation for varying time periods before they can become full-time. Temporary workers are not defined as either full-time or part-time. Some are hired at Christmas or other peak mail periods. Many temporary workers are young workers

What we heard:

- *Temporary workers do not feel adequately represented by the union*
- *Union needs to keep the temporary workers up to speed on any shift changes since many need to supplement their income with other part-time jobs.*
- *Temporary workers have to pay full monthly dues irrespective of how many hours they work.*
- *When first introduced to Canada Post, the temporary workers earned a few hours pay, but then had to pay it all to the union in dues. This leaves a bad taste.*
- *Temporary workers have fewer benefits and rights and do not receive adequate representation by the union.*
- *The current orientation process for temporary workers gives a bad impression of the union since they usually hear only from the corporation, not the union.*
- *They don't receive (but should) benefits such as bonuses that full-time workers receive – perhaps calculated on # of days worked.*
- *The term 'Temporary Employee' is just that, temporary. The situation should not be permanent! The union needs to fight for more full-time jobs.*

The union has developed a new course on Temporary Workers to help inform those workers of their rights –but also to help educate activists on the issues facing these workers.

Various options to consider

1. **Temporary Workers should pay dues based on hours**

PRO This is a fairness issue
Would mirror what other unions are doing²⁶

CON All workers have the same rights and privileges and so should pay the same dues to the union.

2. **CUPW should encourage locals to pay more attention to welcoming new temps and introducing them to the union.** We should see temporary workers as a “source of new blood”, rather than as an “additional problem”.

PRO The employer is winning the “hearts and minds” of new workers, while the union is sleeping.

CON It is extra work for the local

16. Private Sector Bargaining Units (PSBU)

Background

After several years of active organizing activity, CUPW now has many private sector bargaining units representing members who work as cleaners, couriers, printers, drivers etc... In some areas enough workers were organized in a company to allow them to form their own local. In many cases, they were incorporated into existing urban sector locals.

What we heard:

- *PSBU members generally do not yet feel they are really full members of CUPW*
- *Where private sector workers were organized in sufficient numbers to have formed their own active and dynamic local they reported good relations with the union.*

²⁶ The CAW, for example, uses 40 hours per month as a cutoff point.

- *Where new units were too small to form locals and have been incorporated into other locals, they do not feel adequately serviced.*
- *New members report they are not getting information about the union*
- *New contracts are not always understood by stewards who have to represent the new workers.*
- *Locals are not able to adequately service new bargaining units. Eg. Cleaners in Ontario who were mainly Portuguese speakers decertified.*

Various options to consider

1. **Encourage every local to have a representative from every bargaining unit on its executive.**

PRO It is important that there is a union presence following certification to answer questions and to provide a face to the union. The Local also needs information about the needs of new members so that they can be properly serviced as quickly as possible.

CON The Local might need additional resources to provide adequate services and education of activists about the new contract.

2. **Ensure national representation for private sector bargaining units**

Option 2 (a): A designated National Union Representative.

PRO A designated National Union Representative would ensure a voice for these workers. A designated National Union Representative could also help provide training to regional Union Representatives and Local Stewards on relevant contract issues.

CON If a spot is designated for one group of workers, all new groups of workers might request the same.

Option 2 (b): Assign one NEB member responsibility for non-urban contracts.

PRO This would ensure that there is one national officer at the NEB with knowledge of non-urban contracts.

CON Assigning responsibility does not ensure a voice. The Vice-President would not necessarily be elected from the private sector membership since it remains small.

3. Organize a training day (orientation) for every new bargaining unit as an introduction to the union.

PRO This would ensure that new members get information immediately after certification on the union: what it can offer and how they can participate.

CON Orientation sessions may be difficult to organize and would increase costs.

17. Groups 3 and 4

Approximately 85% of the current CUPW membership works in “Urban Operations” – most of them in groups 1 and 2. However, Urban operations also include two other groups of members with special jobs and special needs. These are the approximately 650 Group 3 workers, and another 100 or so members in group 4. These two groups of employees were folded into CUPW from UPCE/PSAC and IBEW respectively.

Members in group 3 and 4 are highly skilled (mostly male) mechanics and maintenance workers and are the highest paid workers in the bargaining unit. Whether the pay differential is too much or too little is part of an ongoing discussion.

Members of Groups 3 and 4 work in about 20 mail sorting facilities – from Halifax to Vancouver. Because they represent a small minority in each local, CUPW members from groups 3 and 4 face significant challenges in being elected to their local union executives, or in being selected as delegates to convention or to union educationals.

A major challenge for the union is how to ensure that Groups 3 and 4 feel adequately represented in negotiations, are adequately serviced, have equal opportunity in union education, and are represented appropriately at convention.

What we heard:

Many members from groups 3 and 4 told us that they do not feel that CUPW has done a good job of representing their interests. Here are some of the observations we heard:

- *During recent bargaining, the national negotiating team did not adequately understand the needs of Groups 3 and 4. As a result key concessions were made without adequate discussion*
- *CUPW is too focused on “equality” and does not recognize that highly skilled technical work is worth more on the labour market than other work.*
- *Group 3 and 4 issues don’t get picked as priorities in bargaining – and as a result our needs are ignored.*
- *We feel excluded from the union. We were forced to join but we are ignored. As a result, we don’t participate very much.*
- *Union reps don’t understand the parts of the collective agreement that refers to our issues.*
- *There are some thorny issues with regard to the apprenticeship training. The program has allowed members with seniority in the union to “leapfrog” over Group 3 & 4 members – sometimes bypassing those who actually trained them.*

Various options to consider

1. **Organize a triennial “Group 3 and 4 Conference” of say 30 – 40 people prior to convention or bargaining.** Resolutions/demands could go forward from this group to Convention or to the Negotiating committee. This was organized in 2006, and was appreciated by the members.

PRO A “GP 3-4” conference would allow these members to share their experiences and shape their resolutions or demands.
It would also allow the National Leadership to understand their special issues.

CON The conference could further the “split” in the union. Instead of integrating the Group 3-4 members, it could encourage them to stand off from the rest of the membership.

More conferences mean more costs.

2. Create a special National Union Representative position for Groups 3 and 4

PRO The groups 3 and 4 National Union Representative would become the advocate for their interests at the national level.

He/she would also become a specialist in the interpretation of the relevant sections of the collective agreement.

CON Would other groups also want the same special treatment?

Groups 3 and 4 are spread across the country. It is not clear whether a group 3 National Union Representative from – say Montreal – would be seen as a good representative for those in Calgary, for example.

3. In locals where there is a concentration of groups 3 and 4 members, designate a specific position on the local executive to represent this group.

PRO This would ensure that groups 3 and 4 issues are brought up at the local level.

CON Giving responsibility for groups 3 and 4 to one person will encourage the other local members to ignore the file.

Should the groups 3 and 4 executive member be elected by only group 3 and 4 members or by the whole local? Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses.

With a “group 3 and 4” specific post on the local executive, this group would have more influence than its numbers warrant.

4. Maintain Status Quo

PRO The union has a democratic structure. Any group of members can get together to press for its interests.

The under-representation of minority groups can be approached differently.

CON The current system continues to ignore the needs of Groups 3 and 4.

18. Retirees

Background

Every year, hundreds of CUPW members take their retirement. Some of them don't want to have anything more to do with Canada Post – or the union. But many do want to remain in contact with the union. Retirees have skills and allegiances that could be helpful to the union – but there are few official ways to incorporate that experience. Retirees are able to participate off-hours in tasks, such as election balloting in large locals, which are difficult for activists working full-time. Those with experience as member educators can be called upon to facilitate courses, assist with WSIB cases and other tasks.

The 2005 national convention established local Pension and Retiree Benefits Committees and the membership status of retired members. A number of locals have established committees. However, as of September 2007 there were only 59 members with retired member status. The union is affiliated with the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC).

Dues are waived for retirees under sections 1.21 and 1.22. These sections also define a process for gaining lifetime member status, with rights to participate in all union activities. There are currently 311 life-time members in the Union.²⁷

²⁷ Tracking retirees, and keeping them in touch with the union seems to be very “hit and miss”. Some locals do a better job of it than others. The number of retirees is likely to increase significantly over the next 10 years.

What we heard:

- *At present, the union activities in which a retiree can participate are quite limited by the constitution – the right to attend local meetings and the right to participate in the local Pension and Benefits Committee – if there is one.*
- *There are a few retiree committees but they don't know what they should be doing and have no way of connecting with each other.*
- *Retirees want input into political issues and into bargaining benefits.*
- *Retiree committees would like direction from national as to what they should do, and how they can get connected to other retirees in the union.*
- *Some Retirees said they would be willing to continue to pay a membership – perhaps 50%.*

Various options to consider

1. **Encourage all locals to create a Retiree Committee and allow the chair of the Retiree Committee to sit as an ex officio, non voting member on the local executive.**

PRO This would provide a way to represent the interests of retirees, especially related to pension benefits. It would provide the local with access to the retirees committee to assist with local activities as needed.

Without some encouragement and support from National, locals are not likely to set up committees. While this may be additional work at the outset, a structured way of drawing on the experience (and time!) of retirees who know the union could be very valuable to the local. There is also a mechanism through the CLC to meet with retiree committees from other unions.

CON Retirees no longer pay union dues.

Retirees sometimes take up too much airtime at union meetings, to the exclusion of younger members.

E. Inclusion and equity

Background

The CUPW is proud to be a democratic organisation. It is a principle of democracy that everyone should be treated equally. But because people are not all the same, turning that principle into practice is not easy for any organisation, including CUPW.

Inclusion and equity can cover a vast range of people and issues. In fact, almost anybody can feel “excluded”. For the purposes of this report, we have focused on 3 major groups of members who, by virtue of who they are, rather than what they do, have challenges in participating fully in the union. They are:

- (a) Women;
- (b) Equity seeking groups (workers of colour, differently abled, Lesbian/Bi/Gay/Transgendered, aboriginals);
- (c) Youth.

Canada Post’s Social Responsibility reports for 2007 and 2008 indicate the following:

Overall workforce In Canada Post²⁸	2007	2008	Canadian Labour Market Availability
Women	48.9%	49.2%	49.6%
Aboriginal peoples	1.8%	1.9%	2.5%
Differently abled	3.7%	3.6%	4.1%
Visible Minorities	10.5%	10.8%	13.0%

²⁸ The statistics do have flaws. They rely on voluntary self-identification and Canada Post indicates that there are more than 4000 partially disabled workers in the corporation, or 6.5% of the workforce. Overall statistics also vary greatly by region across the country. For example, Ontario and British Columbia are the two provinces with the highest proportion of people born outside Canada and the Prairie Provinces have the highest proportion of First Nations peoples.

The CUPW has shown leadership in the development of sound human rights policies, anti-harassment policies, sections 7.58 and 7.59 to help pay expenses and encourage participation of women and equity seeking groups etc. There are national committees established – one for Human Rights and one for Women with mandates and membership outlined in the constitution. These Committees provide important opportunities for members to network and have input to the NEB.

The Constitution says that each Local should have a women's committee and a human rights committee, but small locals can't and many other locals don't have functioning committees. There are no regional committees and few conferences on equity issues.

The CUPW leadership is not reflective of the membership:

- Although approximately half the members are women, there are only two women on the NEB (13%).²⁹ No regional directors are women. Of 11 national union representatives, four are women. (36%). There are 25 Regional Union Representatives and only 6 are women (or 24%).
- There is only one person of colour on the NEB and only 3 of 67 full-time officers are workers of colour.³⁰ There are no aboriginal members and no differently abled workers in National Union Representative or officer positions.

What we heard:

In spite of the above statistics, many members, including those who are part of the dominant group (white men) tended to rate the union high on inclusion. Those from equity-seeking groups, new bargaining unit members, RSMCs, and women generally rated the union low on inclusion.

- *Composition of membership not reflected in the leadership.*
- *Some people may not want to come out – or self-identify as equity-seeking.*

²⁹ (In contrast, 31.2% of Canada Post managers are women.)

³⁰ Furthermore, 2 of these work in one region.

- *Need more work at the local level, especially on human rights issues.*
- *The CUPW constitution does not allow locals to use funds for social events. In most unions this is one mechanism to involve all members, including women and equity-seeking groups.*
- *In Central region, francophone members noted that there used to be translation for regional meetings but this no longer happens. This keeps some members out.*
- *Committee mandates should be reviewed with an emphasis on integrating women and equity-seeking groups into the union.*
- *Involvement of youth and retirees needs more emphasis (see below)*
- *There was also significant push-back on equity:*
 - *feelings that there is already too much attention paid to the issue*
 - *union has good policies, now work has to be done by equity-seeking members themselves to run for positions etc.*
 - *Problem when equity applied and the same people get to attend courses over and over again while many others who are interested, can't attend or some locals always have to provide the gender balance so their male members never get to attend. Leads to resentment in the local.*

Various options to consider to improve CUPW's ability to involve all its members. (*NOTE: Also see options for specific equity-seeking groups which follow*)

1. Have designated seat(s) on the National Executive Board for equity-seeking groups and for women.

PRO Both the CAW and the CEP have affirmative action programs with a designated number of seats for human rights and for women on their NEB. This ensures that a gender and equity lens is applied to all decisions made by the Board. This would not necessarily require a 'designation' of a particular seat, but a review of candidates and then of the overall make-up of the Board to ensure that the Board is reflective of the membership.

CON Problem in how to get representation from all groups. Disabled workers and aboriginal workers, for example, are usually not represented. Some feeling that women and other equity-seeking groups are strong enough to make it on their own and have done so. . Others worry that there would then need to be designated seats for others – youth, RSMCs, etc

2. **Expand human rights and gender training and integrate a module on human rights into all courses and into the Presidents’ meeting.** Human Rights training was mandated for all locals across the country but has not happened to date. One suggestion was to add one day on human rights to the Presidents’ meeting. There might also be training in how to be an ally for different groups.

PRO This work would help raise the consciousness of locals to barriers faced by equity-seeking groups and by women in getting involved in the union and provide an avenue through Presidents’ meetings to share best practices. The CLC has excellent materials, produced by the CAW, on how to be an ally for different equity-seeking groups.

CON There would be resistance from some members who already believe that there is too much emphasis on equity.

3. **Write the constitution in clear language** (see separate entry on constitution)

19. Women

“There is an old boy’s network in the region and in the locals.”

Background

The CUPW has been a strong voice on women’s issues in the community and within the labour movement – and has often led the way in the inclusion of women in the union.

In 1983 the union adopted on-site childcare at constitutional functions, reflecting the growing demands for inclusion of women in the union and paved the way to expanded funding for childcare offsite in 1986. In 1990 the growing commitment of CUPW to equity and social justice was reflected in the creation of a National Women's Committee to promote the inclusion of women in union activity and educate the members around equality issues. In 1993, the Convention created a specific fund to "assist CUPW women in participating in trade union education conferences and seminars for women and forums sponsored by women's organizations". At that same convention, Local Women's Committees were mandated.

Resolutions in 1996 were adopted to ensure gender balance on appointed national union committees, gender parity on committees with two delegates per region, and at a minimum, gender parity in the union's education program and seminars. In 1999, the Convention established a Quebec Women's Conference to be held every two years open to sisters from both Quebec regions.

A key mechanism in promoting these changes, and for ensuring that women's voices continue to be heard in the union, is the National Women's Committee.

The National Women's Committee meets twice a year is composed of one woman from each region, elected by the women's caucus at national convention, as well as women in elected union positions.

The Women's Committee recently conducted a survey which looked at the role of women in the union. The results show that women are under-represented in leadership and continue to face barriers. (See statistics on page 76).

The majority of RSMC members are women and their increased involvement in the union will therefore be a way to also address women's inequality and increase the involvement of women in the union.

What we heard:

- *There is a need to add an equity lens to gender since many women from equity-seeking groups suffer from multiple forms of oppression.*
- *Many women feel that gender issues have lost ground in the union.*

- *A major barrier for women is the requirement for moving if taking on an elected union position at the regional or national level. If union representatives were placed in the field more women would be able to run for positions*
- *Some women are feeling unsafe in the union. Article 8 needs revision.*
- *Women themselves are divided over whether there is a need for structural changes such as designated seats, to advance gender parity in the union.*
- *The National Women's Committee has no clear mandate and there is no ongoing networking at the regional level between meetings.*

Various options to consider

1. **Review the mandate and role of the National Women's Committee and add additional meetings using computer technology, giving them the financial resources to assume this role.** Additional meetings using Skype, video-conferencing or other technology would assist in helping members define their role and responsibilities in the regions.

PRO This is what the Women's Committee itself recommends.

CON There is already financial provision in the constitution which has not been used
Unclear who and how to access those funds.

2. **Eliminate the National Women's Committee and encourage the creation of women's committees in each region.**

PRO This would involve more women and help encourage the development of Local Women's Committees.

CON The gender lens provided by the National Women's Committee to the NEB would be lost unless more women were elected to leadership positions.

3. **Develop a leadership program for women.** Many unions have developed leadership programs for women to help build skills and build women's confidence to seek elected positions. (CAW, CUPE have excellent programs). It would also be important to add a broader equity lens to the program. This program might be run as an option during the regional one-week educationals.

PRO In other unions, these courses are credited for helping more women run for leadership positions in the union and have helped build union solidarity, linking women across sectors and locals.

CON Push-back from men – especially those who already feel that they have less educational opportunities than women.

4. **Develop a mentoring program for women who wish to take on leadership positions**

PRO The CEP women's committee initiated a mentoring program in their union which could serve as a model – both of what works and problems to avoid. Such a program would give women some initial support and confidence in seeking leadership. This might be part of the role that select retirees could be asked to play.

CON This requires a training program for mentors as well as training for those who will be mentored as to the roles and responsibilities of each. It might add to an already heavy workload for women presently in leadership positions.

20. Human Rights Groups

Background

Immigrants, who are now predominantly people of colour, will be responsible for all of Canada's new population growth by 2030. Aboriginal workers, one of the few sectors of the population that is not 'aging', will form a larger percentage of the workforce, as will youth overall. In larger cities, such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, the colour of the workforce has already changed dramatically. Given these changing demographics, it is imperative that the union movement change its structures to make them more inviting to diverse workers.

In 1996, the CUPW created the National Human Rights Committee, a reflection of National Policies around human rights and social justice, as well as the work of an increasing number of CUPW activists around human rights and diversity issues. In 1999, the Convention expanded the work of the Committee and the incorporation of Local Human Rights Committees.

The national human rights committee is composed of 4 members per region (32) - one from each working group: workers of colour, aboriginal, differently abled, LGBT - as well as all elected officers and union representatives from equity-seeking groups.

The Committee meets twice a year in Ottawa. Regional members of the committee are chosen by the NEB (i.e. regional directors) after a call of members to express interest. Unlike the Women's Committee, members are not allocated funds to do committee work in the regions, partly due to the large size of the committee. The cost of meetings is high given the number of members (approximately \$160,000 in 2007-2008).

See the overall introduction for changing demographics of the workforce and importance for the union to incorporate equity-seeking groups in order to build the union.

What we heard:

The Workers of Colour group submitted a proposal to the Committee which, in addition to our conversations with all working groups, was very helpful in preparing our report.

- The National Human Rights Committee is an important mechanism for bringing issues to the NEB as well as networking across the union.
- Aboriginal members are very underrepresented in CUPW compared to even the Canadian average, and more so in Prairie region. (about 4% of Winnipeg Local vs approximately 15% of Winnipeg population)
- Aboriginal members are not properly represented when the union has meetings with the employer about their issues. (e.g. in discussions that by 2011 Canada Post should hire 1200 First Nations to meet target; in grievances, arbitration, hiring etc)
- Differently-abled workers don't hear about what is being put forward about injured workers from the NEB, CLC, Federations of Labour etc.

- There is lack of communication with deaf workers who are isolated on the work floor and need to know their rights.
- Union needs to help new immigrant members adapt –so they see the union as an organization to help them
- The LGBT Committee does not feel it has adequate representation of transgender issues, in spite of the provision in the Constitution (4.07)

Various options to consider with respect to increasing the union’s ability to involve members from various equity groups.

1. **Create a full-time, national Human Rights Officer position.** This officer could be a hired National Union Representative from one of the equity groups and reporting to the 2nd Vice-President – or elected by the Human Rights Caucus at convention. The person would be in charge of issues related to all working groups of the HR committee and assist in ensuring an equity eye on the work of the organization.

PRO This has been done by many unions. The CEP has an equity officer (also responsible for the women’s program), the PSAC has a Human Rights officer and the BC Nurses Union just hired their first equity officer, located in the education department. Other unions, such as CAW have human rights departments. This position could help ensure, for example, that aboriginal members were represented on the union side when their issues were to be discussed with management.

CON Designated position sets a precedent for others who want more representation.

2. **Replace one of the national human rights committee meetings with regional conferences – and networking by other means between meetings.** Regions could join together for conferences – example, one in the West, one in Ontario, one in Quebec, one in the Atlantic.

PRO This would expand the number of members who could be involved in the work of the committee.

CON This reduces the networking at the national level among regions.

3. **Abolish the National Human Rights Committee completely and create Regional Committees instead.**

PRO This would reduce travel costs and greatly expand the number of members who could be involved.

CON The equity eye on the NEB would be weakened unless there were more elected officers from equity seeking groups or a human rights officer elected or hired who would be available to review NEB decisions.

4. **Reduce the size of the National Human Rights Committee.** Representatives could be elected at regional conference caucuses or elected on a per capita basis, giving more representation to regions with larger numbers of equity-seeking members. One national elected officer or National Union Representative for each caucus would be eligible to attend and would chair each working group. A regional officer would only attend if there was no elected national officer or National Union Representative elected from that caucus.

PRO This would reduce the size of the committee by about half and make it more manageable and less costly. The savings could then be applied to the regional conferences.

CON Working Groups would be smaller, so there would be less input from each region.

5. **Apply a more rigorous equity lens, in addition to the gender lens, to all union activities: selection of participants to education programs, to international delegations etc.**

PRO This is already the practice in some regions but not in all. This ensures that members from equity-seeking groups have an equal chance to participate in union activities, recognizing the multiple additional barriers that those members face in the union, the workplace and society.

CON Push-back from members of dominant groups who feel that this gives others an unfair advantage at their expense.

6. **Gather and publish statistics on the state of equity in the union at local, regional and national levels.** Following the lead of the Women’s Committee, the union should collect data on membership and participation regarding different equity-seeking groups.

PRO “What gets measured, gets noticed”

This would help identify where the problem areas are and gather ammunition for making proposals to address specific barriers.

CON Some equity-seeking members do not wish to self-identify so the stats would not be entirely accurate.

21. Youth

Background

The generation issue is affecting many unions – including CUPW. As of July 1 2008, the median age of Canada’s population was 39.4 years. The median age in CUPW is 48, and thousands of members, including many activists and union leaders will retire from Canada Post in the next five to ten years.

According to the 2007 Area Council Discussion Paper, “many younger workers are taking on leadership roles in the union as shop stewards, local executive members, facilitators and advocates. Younger members represent CUPW in UNI, at the Canadian Labour Congress and the Quebec Federation of Labour and at provincial and territorial Federations of Labour. “

Canada Post Corporation does not include youth in its employment equity plan and so we do not have data on whether the number of youth hires is increasing or decreasing. We do know that in labour overall, it is decreasing in proportion to older workers.

What we heard:

- More attention has to be paid to getting young workers involved.
- Younger workers are often stuck as temporary workers. Temps chronically fear making waves since they could lose their jobs and have little union protection

- Some youth members do not want to be considered as an ‘equity-seeking’ group.
- Using more youth-friendly communications technology (internet, facebook, skype, etc.) would help and this would include a redesigned website.

Various options to consider with respect to youth involvement

1. **Mentoring program for young activists**
(See mentoring suggestion under Equity #2 – Women).
2. **Use more advanced internet technology** (See Communications section)
3. **Create a Young Workers Committee – perhaps as a working group of the National Human Rights Committee**

PRO Other unions, such as the CEP, have successfully engaged younger workers through a National Committee to advise the union and to take leadership in how to involve more young workers in the union.

CON Other National Committees or working groups have not led to increased involvement at the local and regional levels. It costs money to hold national meetings.
4. **Hold a young workers’ conference perhaps linked to national convention or regional meetings.**

PRO Other unions have used young workers’ conferences to provide a focal point for mobilizing young workers and an opportunity for them to network amongst themselves.

CON Would require both human and financial resources to organize.
5. **Include youth in delegations sent outside of Canada**

PRO Involvement in an international delegation helps the union build future leadership and ensure that young workers understand the importance of international solidarity.

CON Resistance from older activists and officers who have been involved in solidarity work and feel some entitlement to participate on delegations.

F. Improving the democratic functioning of the Union

22. Special needs of Quebec

Background

CUPW has adopted a strong position with respect to the role of its Quebec members in the union. In specific, National Policy C-1 affirms CUPW's support for the principle of the right of self determination for Quebec.

The same policy also recognizes that the role of CUPW within the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ), as well as « all social and political issues » in Quebec are under the jurisdiction of the Metro-Montreal and Quebec regions.

Finally, it also accords the Quebec Regions greater autonomy with respect to union education, women's issues and international solidarity, amongst others.

Most of the large pan-canadian unions give significant powers to their Quebec regional organizations, including full power to participate as appropriate in the Quebec union movement which is largely organized under the FTQ. They have found that this is the way to encourage their union and its members to participate in the Quebec labour movement.

However, while the principle of « self determination » for Quebec within the CUPW seems very clear, it is less clear what that principle means in practice. The two National Directors from Quebec seem to have exactly the same powers as those of the other National Directors. Similarly, the two regional offices seem to operate under the same rules as those of the other regions.

What we heard:

- *This is a policy which has never been put into application*
- *Great words... but little effect*
- *We are not able to be full participants in the FTQ – we always have to ask the National Office before we can say yes to anything*
- *We don't have the respect of the other union leaders that we should have*
- *CUPW is a great union, but we are on the outskirts of the union movement in Quebec*

Options to consider

1. **Create 1 Quebec region, and change the title of the senior Quebec officer to « Executive Director – Quebec.** The Executive Director – Quebec should have full decisionmaking powers over social and political issues with respect to Quebec and the FTQ as long as these decisions are not contrary to CUPW policy. S/he should have a budget and broad latitude to allocate funds as appropriate.

PRO Would start to put policy C-1 into practice
CUPW would be better recognized within the Quebec union movement
Would strengthen the Quebec union movement
Would increase the ability of the Quebec region to respond rapidly to political/social events

CON Fear that the National Union would lose power over one region
Fear of “breaking up” or “weakening” the union
Fear over losing financial control

23. The National Convention

The CUPW National Convention is the highest decision-making body of the organisation. The convention delegates elect all the national executive officers and the national union representatives. In addition, the various regional caucuses at convention each elect their own regional executives (including their own National Director) and Union Representatives.

The delegates also pass motions governing the finances and policies of the organisation.

The national convention takes place every 3 years. At the last convention, there were approximately 650 delegates. Each of the union’s 216 locals has an automatic right to send one delegate. An additional delegate is authorized for every 100 more members.³¹

³¹ Approximately 60 elected officers who are “ex-officio” delegates to the convention are included in this total.

There are certain eligibility requirements to be a delegate. Some of these are specified in the National Constitution, and some are specified in local by-laws.

The National Convention normally takes 5 days. Resolutions come forward from all areas of the union. Of course, not all resolutions can be brought to the floor. The General Resolutions and National Policies Committee, which includes representatives from each region, reviews all the resolutions submitted and prioritizes resolutions or prepares “composite resolutions” to be brought forward for discussion.

The cost of the triennial convention, including the preparatory conferences, is approximately \$5 million.

What we heard:

The CUPW national convention is five days of intense political activity and lobbying. Varying points of view about the future of the organisation, its direction and strategy are hotly debated. Furthermore, individual careers are made or broken by decisions of the convention. As a result the convention is always a high-stakes, and high tension event.

Because it is the highest decision-making body, the convention is where the debate is sharpest. It is also to be expected that the various groups and subgroups within the CUPW membership would like to see their influence expand at the convention.

Here are some of the comments we heard about the convention.

- ***Giving each local 1 delegate at the convention is quite undemocratic and inefficient. It means, in effect, that very small locals – of 5 or 10 members are far over represented, while inversely the really big locals like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are far under represented. This obviously has an influence on where the union puts its priorities. It means that minorities are underrepresented because they are concentrated in the metropolitan areas.***
- ***Giving each local 1 delegate to convention works against the efficient operation of the union. Because each local has a delegate, there is a built-in reluctance to close down or merge tiny locals. This promotes inefficiency in the union.***

- **Conventions are too frequent and too big and, as a result, too expensive.** CUPW is a national union. But it is not among the biggest national unions in the country. Yet its national convention is the size of unions 2 or 3 times the size of CUPW. Does the convention really have to be so big or so frequent?³²
- **The 5 or 6 largest locals have effective political control over the union.** Not only do they have a solid voting block at the convention – they also come to the convention prepared on a number of questions. They almost always get their way. The small locals, the isolated locals, are just left behind.
- **There is limited speaking time at convention.** Debate at the convention is limited because of limited speaking time. Several people complained that the excessive number of “outside” speakers (e.g. other labour or political leaders, international visitors, etc.) meant that many resolutions never got to the floor.
- **Every convention adds more costs to the union.** More regions, more UR’s more this or that. The convention never cuts anything – as a result the costs grow and grow.
- **There are significant groups of members who are not represented (or are severely under represented) at convention.** These include RSMCs, PSBUs and the “equity seeking groups.” These groups are perennial minorities in their own locals and regions and therefore are not often elected as delegates to the convention. As a result, their issues tend to fall off the table.
- **The atmosphere at the convention is “intimidating”.** It is particularly true for those who have positions that are “not accepted” by the majority of delegates. If you are “not on the right side” you can feel intimidated. There is not a feeling of free expression.
- **The process for bringing resolutions to convention is costly.** The number of weekends and evening spent by Union Representatives and local executives is mind boggling.
- **The “national directors” for each region are elected at convention by a too small number of people (40 – 70).** As a result, they are not known by or visible to the membership.

³² By way of reference, at the recent Public Service Alliance of Canada convention there were 460 delegates for 170,000 members. That is 1 delegate per 400 members. CUPW’s ratio is 1 delegate per 85 members.

Various options to consider

The Independent Working Group feels that while all of these issues are related to the “structure” of the convention – they are not all purely “structural” issues. If it is true that the atmosphere at the convention is “intimidating”, that is an issue that should be addressed. But it can not be easily dealt with by a change in structure.

On the other hand, there seem to be 3 or 4 main structural changes that could be considered to improve the functioning/efficiency of the convention.

1. **Maintain Status Quo (1 delegate per local) regarding selection of delegates.**

PRO The current procedure is a balancing act between the need for equality in democratic representation, and the need for the union to make sure that all its far-flung members feel they can participate in the union.
The under-representation of minority groups can be approached differently.

CON The current system is undemocratic and unfair.

2. **Replace the 1 local – 1 delegate system by a system of selecting delegates by regions or areas.** (This would be similar to the system used before 1989 in which delegates were chosen by Area councils. The current BC region, for example, has 3 Areas. Each Area would select a number of delegates to convention according to its membership size.)

PRO This system would allow for strict “representation by population” – but it could also be tweaked to allow for more representation by smaller locals, or isolated locals, for example.

This system would also make it easier to reduce the size of the convention. The convention size could be established at 400 or 500 (or whatever number seemed appropriate) and each area or region would be allocated delegate spots according to its population.

CON The Area Council approach, (the old CUPW approach) had a number of flaws – including the fact that the larger locals in each area ended up dominating the process. The current methods based on the LCUC practice make sure that this cannot happen. Many small locals have very little connection with the union. The Regional Presidents Conferences and election to convention are among the few links to the union. Dropping the right for each local to send at least 1 person to the convention essentially disenfranchises many union members.

3. Ensure that various “subgroups” of members are represented at convention according to their population in the union.

PRO It is important that the union try to make sure that all its members feel that the union both understands and deals seriously with their interests.

CON Delegates are selected at the local level. It is up to the subgroups to press their candidacy at the local level. There is a long list of potential groups seeking special consideration. How far would this go?

4. Reduce the size of the convention by half (from 1 delegate per 85 members to 1 per 200 members.) This would mean a convention of about 275 delegates.

PRO The current convention is too big and too expensive. Because travel, wages and accommodation of delegates are borne by the national union, this could amount to a considerable saving for the national union on an annual basis. Improved decision-making. The convention as currently structured is also more “theatre” than a real decision-making body.

CON Reducing the size of the convention means that more and more locals, and more and more members, are excluded.

5. **Reduce the amount of time devoted at convention to “non CUPW” issues and spend more time on debating our own resolutions.**

PRO The convention is not able to deal with all the resolutions submitted to it, and debate on many is too short. At the last convention, a considerable amount of the total convention time was devoted to “non-CUPW” speakers including international speakers and invited guests.

CON The CUPW exists in a national and international framework. It is important for us to recognize that we are not an island but also a member of the provincial and pan-Canadian labour movement and in fact a member of the international labour movement.

6. **The National Executive Board should be elected by universal ballot of all CUPW members, and not chosen by a select few at convention.**

PRO This is more democratic, because all members have a say. It will reduce the influence of the “in crowd” and especially of those large locals which can coordinate beforehand.

CON To do this effectively and fairly, the candidates (there could be several candidates for each of the positions) would have to travel the country widely to meet members. This would be hugely expensive. It is actually rather Undemocratic. In a campaign, few candidates could meet more than the 10 – 15 largest locals. So, in the end, the largest locals would decide the vote and the smaller locals could end up being even further out of the loop.

24. Getting and keeping the best staff we can: Election versus professional recruiting

Background

Until 1983, technical specialists at the national level and regional level were all appointed staff. At the 1983 convention, as a result of widespread dissatisfaction with the appointed officers, the decision was made that, with the exception of a few specialists and support staff, all full-time CUPW officers and union representatives will come from the memberships and will be elected at Convention. The merger with LCUC did not change this decision.

Currently 18 national positions – Resident officers, National Union Representatives plus Alternate Union Representatives are elected at convention. In addition 8 national directors, and 41 regional union representatives plus alternates are also elected by regional caucuses.³³ In summary, the CUPW convention elects a minimum of 75 representatives plus alternates to various positions.

Broadly speaking the CUPW membership feel really proud that most of their staff are elected and come from the membership. This is unique to CUPW. When we look at other unions, none of them have nearly so many elected positions.

However, those active in the organisation also recognize that this creates a heavy political environment that is part of their daily activities. Convention is all political and election could go on until middle of the night.

What we heard:

- Electing everyone is a great strength, but also a great weakness
- We need to keep electing people. If they are permanent in the job, no motivation – if elected have to be careful if they want to be re-elected.
- If you are a UR, you have to do what people (i.e. the membership) tells you.
- Hiring full-time staff would deviate from our philosophy

³³ This is not all. A number of other positions, including membership in the National Board of Trustees, are also filled by election at the convention.

- Our union has to be more practical, more professional – have a better mix of elected and hired people
- Officers would start to appoint their friends
- Elected people are not necessarily qualified for the jobs they get elected for
- Some positions do not need to be elected.
- There should be a limit on the number of terms one can hold an office

Various options to consider

1. **Status quo** – Keeping it as it is right now

PRO Respect the culture of CUPW

Subjecting staff to an election every 3 years is the best way to ensure control by the members

We are proud of this aspect of the union

Incompetent people will be replaced by members

CON This system favours those who are political and who have big mouths at convention

Newly elected people from the field take a long time to know the “ropes”. More work for co-workers while the newly elected learn the job

No effective monitoring system. How would the members know if they do a good job?

Because mandate is for 3 years, people from out of town will not apply – the move is too disruptive/expensive.

Difficult for young and equity groups to get elected

The system favours incumbents

Electing 75 positions plus alternates takes at least a full day + of convention

Expensive moving people around.

2. **Make some positions at national and regional level 3 year renewable contract positions.** Identify which positions (e.g. outside organizing, communications, etc.) which require high degree of technical skill. Staff to be hired by transparent process using clear criteria. Renewable after 3 years.

- PRO** A proper hiring process could bring better expertise
Stability in the job – better experience
More members could be interested to move for a permanent position
Keep corporate memory
Less politics – more “professional” decisionmaking e.g. in how to handle grievances
Not being afraid to train and mentor other co-workers or members in locals
Better working conditions
- CON** Will probably cost more money
If incompetent – more difficult to fire them
Members will feel they have less of a “say”
Fear they will be chosen amongst friends if process not properly done

25. Creating a healthy atmosphere within the union: addressing harassment

“We eat our own!”

Background

CUPW has consistently taken a strong stand against workplace harassment in the face of actions by Canada Post managers. The union also has strong language in its policies against harassment, violence and discrimination inside the union.

However, in questionnaires and group interviews, when asked if members treat each other well, people overwhelmingly said ‘no’. For some, “this is the biggest challenge in the union”.

Members of the Structure Review Committee were dismayed by the number of mediations and unmediated disputes across the country and in the national office. There have been incidents in several regions which have left people feeling upset with how harassment between union members/leadership is being dealt with in the union. People reported that the union has had assaults, racist-sexist remarks, even bullying. It is difficult to learn and operate in a conflictual environment so this culture negatively affects the work of the union and greatly weakens solidarity at all levels. It seems that the aggressive way many CUPW unionists treat each other is directly linked to the political fall-out from so many elected positions - and a matter of real concern to members and activists alike.

When relationships turn nasty, there is no process of mediation prior to charging someone under Article 8³⁴, which is a serious step to take and results in long-standing damage to the organisation.

What we heard:

- *At present, charging another union member under Article 8 is a long drawn out process that is followed by an appeal.*
- *When you speak out against an officer of the union, you are automatically moving onto political terrain. You will have new friends and new enemies.*
- *If there are problems within the regional structure, there is no avenue for dealing with them*
- *We need something for locals and activists so they know how to behave respectfully with each other.*
- *Internal fights are taking us away from the real fight with the employer*
- *Activists feel that the personal attacks on officers and union reps challenge their credibility but also discourages members from getting active.*
- *The union is not equipped to deal with internal harassment issues*
- *There are no teeth in Article 8 and there is never time to deal with it at Convention.*
- *'We eat our own', rather than respecting their years of service to the union.*

³⁴ Article 8 (Discipline) is the mechanism for charging a union member or officer with an offence. It does not specifically deal with harassment. Offences and penalties are listed and 3 levels of disciplinary committees set up at the local, regional and national levels. Committee members receive a manual, but no training is provided. The process is described in some detail in Article 8— including an Appeal process to an elected appeal board.

Various options to consider

1. **Create a mediation process to be used before recourse to Article 8**

This could be an impartial mediator, brought in from outside the union. This would be the first step before charging someone under Article 8.

PRO This would provide an avenue to solve an issue before it escalates to a charge – and would be divorced from politics by bringing in an impartial outsider with mediation skills.

CON In the present environment in the union, there may be many cases and would require time and money to deal with them.

2. **Develop a code of conduct for union activists and have it debated in locals.** This process has already begun with the NEB and several Locals have expressed interest in developing their own codes.

PRO This would be one step in changing the organizational culture of how members are expected to treat each other.

CON A code of conduct in itself does not change how people engage with each other.

3. **Provide training for national, regional and local executives in how to deal with conflict in a constructive way.** There is a need to change the organizational culture so that it is not ‘okay’ to trash individuals with whom you have a political disagreement.

PRO There are skills in giving constructive feedback, in putting conflict on the table in a positive way which can be taught and practiced. These skills would help change the way members deal with each other.

CON This does not eliminate the competition for political positions in the union, which is responsible for a good deal of the behaviour.

4. **Change the appeal process from the elected Board to the President**

PRO In most unions, it is the President who has the final say. An elected committee is more cumbersome and open to the charge of manipulation.

CON The President of the union might not have the confidence of the member lodging the charge.

G. CUPW and the outside world

26. Labour and community outreach

“I would like to see my local executive much more involved in community activities. The people we support now will be there for us in the future”

Background

The CUPW has a reputation for active involvement in joint work with other unions as well as coalition work with other civil society organizations. The union has a specific policy (B-8) to strengthen central labour bodies. The CUPW President sits on the CLC Executive Committee; Locals are encouraged to participate in local labour councils. The union is active in Federations of Labour in all provinces, and a CUPW member is currently president of the PEI Federation. Last year the union spent \$134,624 on support to this work.

The CUPW also provides funding for community and national organizations at the national level.³⁵ The National spent \$88,850 in 2007-2008 to support coalition work. Section 9.36 defines what Locals can spend their money on, which this does not include support to community organizations.

What we heard:

On the positive side...

- *The union recognizes the importance of working with other parts of the labour movement and civil society.*
- *A significant number of locals (estimated 100) are involved in the labour councils and most regions are involved in their provincial federations of labour.*
- *CUPW seen by others in the labour movement as an important actor in coalition work.*
- *This work builds long-term relations which can benefit the union in tough times.*

³⁵ For example, CUPW has built alliances through a variety of coalitions with labour and other organizations at the national level, including: Common Frontiers, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, the Canadian Peace Alliance, the Maquilla Solidarity Network (MSN), the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, ChildCare Advocacy Coalition, Frontlines, Ad Hoc Women’s Coalition for women’s equality, and are members of other organizations such as CRIAW and Fafia.

- *“We are now able to get support of labour and coalition allies. Did not always have that. We were isolated when JC went to jail.”*

Challenges

- *Some members feel that the Union takes on too many causes*
- *Some local unions don't get involved*
- *Little coordination between national and locals re messages to and from labour bodies (CLC; provincial federations of labour and labour councils)*
- *Need to get more involved in communities (not just at national level)- develop allies with equity-seeking groups. Locals should be able to contribute to local community activities.*

Various options to consider

1. Increased national direction and coordination of involvement in joint labour bodies.

PRO If the Union President keeps locals informed of the CUPW's position on key issues under discussion in the Canadian Labour Congress this ensures that the same message is being communicated at all levels of the organization.

CON This adds to the workload of the National President and there is no assurance that the information will be communicated to the CUPW labour council representative.

2. More freedom for Locals to choose areas of community involvement. (i.e. remove NEB approval process) . As it currently stands, local unions are limited by the constitution as to what community activities they can get involved in or contribute to

PRO Contributing to local community activities helps build allies and ongoing working relations.

CON There is a danger that locals will choose to support activities and organizations which go against the orientation of the national union.

3. **Use local and regional education programs and conferences to deepen links with community organizations.**

PRO Inviting resource people from the community to participate in plenaries and workshops can help support local issues as well as build support for CUPW workers and the Union.

CON This limits the plenary space for national and international issues that the union wants to introduce in all regions.

27. International Solidarity

Background

The CUPW, like most labour organizations, recognizes the importance of developing links with workers in other countries in the context of an increasingly globalized world. The NEB “*policy paper on international solidarity work and the international postal fund*” produced in 2003 lays out the objectives of CUPW’s international work:

- to strengthen other postal unions or labour organizations with a postal component;
- to strengthen CUPW through our international work;
- to build international solidarity work in the regions and locals.

The union also has a policy (B-14) on international workers’ solidarity, as well as specific policies on Colombia and Cuba and on global issues such as peace and disarmament, pollution and nuclear energy.

In its 2000 collective agreement, the CUPW was able to negotiate an international fund (Appendix R) of \$200,000 per year. The funds are to be used to... “*maintain a relationship of exchange with postal workers from other countries and their unions...and to facilitate the participation of union members in international union activities*”. The NEB policy paper also outlines “guidelines for access” to generate interest among locals and regions to propose their own projects. However few locals have taken advantage of this opportunity.

The majority of the international solidarity work takes place in Canada. The “Modern Post International” conference held June 17-19 2009 in Ottawa involved over 100 CUPW members including representation from all regions, as well as postal unions from 7 other countries. Other activities in Canada include organizing visits of postal workers to Locals, building alliances among allies on globalization, and funding projects proposed by postal unions in the south.

However, many members and activists are principally aware of the international delegations that the CUPW sends abroad. Between June 2008 and June 2009, approximately 68 CUPW members (most in leadership positions) traveled outside Canada to participate in 28 events. Several of these trips were linked to exploring what other unions have experienced with the ‘modern post’ initiative of Canada Post. The NEB makes decisions on participation in events and selection of participants.

International speakers are sometimes invited to speak at regional educationals and national convention. The national union also distributes periodic bulletins and publications on international issues to Locals – 3 Bulletins and 2 Backgrounders were produced in the 18 months between January 08 and June 09.

What we heard:

- *Good to be involved internationally and look at things in a broader perspective*
- *A lot of support when there is a clear link to our situation – e.g. delegation and conference re modern post. Less support without that direct link.*
- *No transparency in how people are chosen for delegations. Clear criteria should include equity as well as gender balance as part of considerations*
- *Little feedback into the union – lack of accountability*
- *No agenda when we send people on delegations. They should meet beforehand and have goals and a process for feedback*
- *Some members feel it is a waste of money – especially when they hear stories of Cuban delegation members going to the beach instead of participating in the conference.*
- *Members (as well as many activists) don’t understand the links between the international work and their situation*
- *Too thinly spread – need to have some way of giving priority to certain issues*

Various options to consider

1. **Develop an application process for delegations with clear selection criteria and follow-up requirements.** Members have a right to know why the union decides to participate in particular events or delegations and the basis for selection of participants to ensure that it is not just political favouritism. Suggested criteria for delegations might include gender, equity, regional and sectoral balance, and a plan for reporting back to membership on what the union gained through its participation...

PRO Will lead to more membership support for international work; accountability through reporting back will increase the impact of the delegation.

CON NEB members will have less direct say in who gets to participate in international events.

2. **Send fewer people on international delegations but offer them more support in doing follow-up with members.** Delegates might decide prior to the trip how they would report back to members in their region. Membership meetings, regional educational sessions, local workshops, newsletter articles are some of the possibilities.

PRO Would increase the impact of the delegation and provide an opportunity for international solidarity education with the membership. It could also increase support for international involvement.

CON It would require some additional resources: paid leave time for delegates and support from the regional office

3. **Establish clear, strategic objectives for delegations, linking international solidarity work with union priorities.**

PRO Members will more easily support international solidarity work when they can see how it builds the union. With limited funding for international delegations strategic objectives help ensure greater impact from the activity.

CON Sometimes, as in the case of continuing solidarity with the Cuban revolution, solidarity links are historical, rather than necessarily linked to current union priorities.

4. **Increase international solidarity education to show how CUPW involvement in this area benefits members.** To expect support from the membership, and from activists, for international solidarity work, there is a need for a greater effort to show why it is in the interests of the union and its members to be concerned about what is happening to working people in other countries. Abstract principles of “international solidarity” are not enough for most members.

PRO In the longer term, will lead to more support for international work.

CON Some projects may initially be resisted as not relevant to work floor issues.

5. **Increase communications about ALL the international work of the union.** Mechanisms are needed to inform members about the work the union is doing internationally (in areas other than delegations), why it is important, and how they can get involved (guidelines for access from the NEB policy paper). The proposed International Solidarity Newsletter is one such mechanism. However, electronic mechanisms might also be considered.

PRO Publicizing other aspects of the international solidarity program will help members understand that it is about more than delegations.
Motivate locals to get involved in and propose international solidarity projects.

CON Difficult to get members who are not already interested and involved to read an international solidarity newsletter.

Appendix: Where the data comes from

The Independent Working Group would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who shared their time and insights with us. We apologise if we have left any names of individuals or organizations off our list.

A. Individual Interviews

- Denis Lemelin, President
- All 7 members of the National Executive Committee (NEC)
- All 8 National Directors
- All national department directors
- All National Union Representatives
- Most Regional Union Representatives (a few were unavailable)
- 4 Past Presidents: Jean Claude Parrot, Darrell Tingley, Deborah Bourque, Dale Clarke
- 5 individual staff members
- 2 retired members
- 3 others

B. Group Interviews

National staff/officers

- COPE union executive (and members) in Ottawa
- CUPE Technical Staff union
- National Union Representatives, Ottawa

Regional staff/officers

- Regional Executive Committee members in all regions
- COPE staff in most regional offices

Locals

- Workshop with 15 Locals in Ontario region
- Toronto Local Executive
- Montreal Local Executive
- Montreal Local membership meeting
- Vancouver Local membership meeting
- Vancouver Local Trustees
- Vancouver Local Human Rights Committee
- Fraser Valley Local
- Calgary Local Executive
- Winnipeg Local Executive
- Edmonton Local Executive
- Edmonton Local Structure Workshop

Locals (continued)

- Nova Local
- Workshops with Presidents of the Quebec Region from the Sherbrooke, Saguenay Lac St-Jean, Quebec and Mauricie Locals.

Members/Others

- Members of groups 3 and 4 – Toronto
- RSMCs – Ontario
- RSMCs - Prairies
- Young Workers – Ottawa

C. Meetings

- Presentation and discussion to Regional Presidents' Meetings: January/February 09 (all 8 regions)
- Presentation and discussion at all Regional Educationals – March-June 09 (8 regions - @65 members)
- Presentation and discussion at National Committee Meetings:
 - Women's Committee
 - Human Rights Committee and to the four working groups
 - Transition Committee
 - Appendix AA Committee
 - Route Measurement Committee
 - Health and Safety Committee
 - National Board of Trustees
- Regular updates to the National Executive Board (NEB)

D. Written Submissions

Returns from discussion paper submitted by Locals and Regions

- 5 Atlantic (13.5%), 7 Prairies (18.9%), 6 Pacific (15.8%), 4 Central (10%), 14 Ontario (45%), 1 Toronto (100%), 2 Quebec (9.7%) and 1 from Metro-Montreal (50%).

Written commentaries

- 163 individual members

Email-commentaries

- 226

Additional Submissions to the Working Group

- 5 individual members
- National Women's Committee
- Workers of Colour sub-group: National Human Rights Committee
- Appendix "AA" Committee members
- CUPE technical staff

Other Unions – interviews and/or review of constitution

- Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
- Canadian Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP)
- BC Nurses Union (BCNU)