

Equality Now!

In January, CUPE Ontario's Equality Committees will be meeting to develop a two-year action plan so that the Division can move forward on addressing equality issues as a union. Unfortunately, we do not have the support at the National Executive Board to address equality issues that impact on the national structures, including organizing, employment equity, education, etc. The Ontario Division does commit, however, to continue to advocate for equality issues at the National level and to move forward on those issues over which we have direct jurisdiction in CUPE Ontario.

CUPE members in Ontario want to see significant progress from our National Union on the following issues:

- ❖ **Organizing:** Racialized workers and women are more likely to join a union if asked. Organizing resources must be concentrated on these realities. Organizers from all equality-seeking groups must be trained and used in organizing campaigns. Organizing needs to be seen as a political priority and must be linked to our political campaigns. An organizing campaign to unionize Personal Support Workers must move forward. We must also see a coordinated action plan to organize wall-to-wall on campuses and in the childcare sector.
- ❖ **Employment Equity:** The Trainee Rep program (a leadership course that is a step towards becoming a national staff representative), must be organized for all equality-seeking members. Trainee rep courses for racialized and aboriginal workers must commence immediately, and members who graduate from these courses must be offered temporary assignments and move to permanent staff on a priority basis.
- ❖ **Bargaining:** The most marginalized members of CUPE are those who have the weakest bargaining structures. Women in long-term care and childcare and part-time workers who are more often women and racialized workers tend not to have pensions, adequate benefits and decent wages. Bargaining structures need to be developed that will win bargaining strength, including coordinated bargaining councils.
- ❖ **Representation in Leadership:** While the NWTF structural recommendations did not receive the constitutional majority at our National Convention, the majority of delegates did vote in favour of the recommendation. Leadership at CUPE National needs to recognize this and ensure that resources are allocated within the 2008 budget that will address the barriers facing women and other equality-seeking groups in achieving leadership positions. These measures should include the following:
 - **Education:** Courses on Human Rights, Women Breaking Barriers, Aboriginal History, Queer and Disability Issues should be offered at all levels and financial barriers should be addressed so that as many members as possible are able to access the courses. In addition, an anti-oppression framework should be integrated into all CUPE education courses.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Programs must be developed for members of equality-seeking groups – and resources allocated for meetings of caucuses, list-serves and other measures that will enable members of equality-seeking groups to meet and discuss issues of concern to them.
 - **Code of Conduct and Harassment Procedure:** CUPE meeting places are not always safe places. A code of conduct and harassment procedure must be developed to ensure that all members are safe at all CUPE events.
 - **Equality Committees and Aboriginal Councils:** Adequate resources need to be assigned to committees and councils for them to effectively engage in developing and implemented their yearly action plan. More transparency needs to be applied to the (s)election of members.
 - **Diversity Vice-Presidents:** Action Plans developed by the DVP's in conjunction with their respective committee members and caucuses need to be adequately resourced so their recommendations can be implemented. Budget needs to be allocated for the DVP's to meet with their caucus members at CUPE National and Division Conferences.