



Convention Capsule 1

49th Annual CUPE Ontario Convention - Caesar's Windsor - May 24, 2012

Are we ready for the struggle?

The CUPE Ontario convention opened with a bang on Wednesday evening as delegates were treated to a keynote speech by Grace-Edward Galabuzi, professor of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University and a former CUPE 3903 member.

After recognizing CUPE's many roles in our communities, Galabuzi highlighted the part we have to play in building a better Ontario – it is our vigilance, resolve and militancy that will push us to act against a provincial government that has turned its back on Ontario communities.

He noted that this is a critical moment in the history of our province, as the Liberal government pushes its austerity agenda at the expense of public-sector workers. In an age when labour is struggling, we need new energy to fight for the gains we have made for workers in the past, he said.

We should take inspiration from youth, he added. They have infused spirit and energy into the movement this year, first at Occupy and now in the 100-day-old Quebec student strike.

Changing the channel of the economy

The media portrays CEOs as economic superheroes and raise alarm about government deficits, but rarely do they mention household deficits, massive corporate profits, or the problems of poverty and growing inequality.

On Friday morning, join CUPE National President Paul Moist for an economic literacy breakfast and start a new discussion on the economy – one where we talk less about what's in the interests of banks and corporations, and more about what's best for Canadian workers, their families, and their communities.



“At a time when poverty is rising and social assistance rates are so inadequate to meet the challenges of livelihood and dignity, when defined-benefit pension plans are being converted into privatized RRSPs and when good-paying jobs are being exchanged for low-paying and insecure jobs, are we up for the fight?” Galabuzi asked.

Now more than ever, he concluded, we need to stand up for the services we deliver and for the good jobs our communities rely on.



Convention greetings

Convention's opening night brought greetings from Andrea Madden, president of the CUPE Windsor District Council, who also brought greetings on behalf of Windsor & District Labour Council President Dino Chiodo, who was unable to attend because of bargaining. Greetings also came from Ontario Federation of Labour

President Sid Ryan, who first came to Windsor in 1992, when he was elected President of CUPE Ontario. "20 years ago, Windsor was an economic basket case," said Ryan. "If anyone thinks we need corporate tax cuts, you're mistaken because after 20 years of corporate tax breaks, Windsor is where it was 20 years ago. Worse maybe, 20 years ago, they had the General Motors plant with 8000 workers."



Be a CUPE video star

Come to the Mercuri room on Thursday and join our Member Profile project. Interviews and photos may be used in videos, newsletters or ads, and are an important way we educate people about the vital work we do.

10:00 a.m. - noon and 2 - 6 p.m., Mercuri Room

Stop the cuts!

At noon, CUPE Ontario members will join labour and community allies in Charles Clark Square to send a strong message to Queen's Park: it's time to stop the attack on public services.

Our work provides the vital public services communities rely on. Layoffs, wage freezes and attacks on retirement security will only hurt the economy and communities like Windsor. And there's also Dalton McGuinty's sneaky new legislation that will allow behind-closed-doors privatization of almost every public service. Come and make a statement they'll hear at Queen's Park!



Mark the time and location! Day 2 Events

- ⇒ 9 a.m. – Convention video (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 9:15 a.m. – CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 11:30 a.m. – CUPE National President Paul Moist (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ Noon – Rally (Charles Clark Square)
- ⇒ 2 p.m. – Injured Workers and Sisters in Solidarity Awards (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 2:15 p.m. – CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 3:20 p.m. – CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 5:30 p.m. – All-candidates Forum (Augustus Room)
- ⇒ 6:30 p.m. – CUPE Has Talent night (Honest Lawyer Pub)