



## 2025 CUPE National Convention Delegates Report

This October, CUPE 3903 brought eight delegates to the [2025 CUPE National Convention](#), held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. While there were multiple frustrating aspects of our experiences at Convention, there were also some spots of hope throughout. Our delegates were active with voting, flyering, tabling, attending meetings, speaking at the mic, making connections, and more.

For the 2025 CUPE National Convention, CUPE 3903 sent the maximum possible number of delegates for the membership size of our Local, which is seven delegates plus one additional equity delegate (for a total of eight). Having more delegates present allowed us to be more visible representing the issues we care about and to have more voting power.

Sending this many delegates was possible because the National Convention was held in Toronto this year, minimizing often prohibitive costs like travel and lodging. Six general delegates were elected by the membership at our September General Membership Meeting, and two delegates were elected by the Trans Feminist Action Caucus, with the fees for the latter delegates paid by TFAC.

The Convention proper ran from Monday, October 6, to Friday, October 10, with Sector Council meetings (for which there was an additional registration fee) taking place on Sunday, October 5.

Although the Post-secondary Sector Council meeting provided a good opportunity to meet and network with members and CUPE Locals across our sector, it was less focused than its counterpart Sector Council meeting held at the CUPE Ontario Convention, which largely centered on strategizing about which resolutions university-sector delegates would collectively push to get passed. In the Sector Council meeting at the National Convention, resolutions that were prioritized for the Post-secondary Sector included Resolution 11 (to coordinate bargaining and strategy sharing to combat contracting out in food, custodial, and housing services) and Resolution 204 (campaigning and lobbying to resist cuts to post-secondary education).

Otherwise, this sectoral meeting focused heavily on the emerging impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies on post-secondary sector workers. CUPE 3903 delegates collaborated to discuss the ways that we see AI impacting our work already as teaching assistants and contract faculty. With the help of CUPE's workplace mapping tool, we had a thorough dialogue about the various issues that AI poses—grading concerns, academic honesty, intellectual property, data-harvesting—and how to address those in future bargaining. Broader discourse in the meeting about artificial intelligence included resources like [CUPE's guide to understanding](#)

[artificial intelligence](#), as well as the disproportionate gendered impacts of AI in the workplace when it comes to undermining women-dominated professions.

There was also participation from CUPE 3903 in the Post-secondary Sector Meeting when it came to pervasive systemic equity issues at universities and colleges. Many delegates from other CUPE Locals spoke to the equity concerns they are seeing in their contexts, which were complex and varied. A delegate from 3903 spoke at the mic about the many equity-related issues at York, including the recent wave of program suspensions impacting programs like GSWS and Indigenous Studies, weakening of sexual violence supports on campus, and changes to disability support as well.

The following day, it was time for the official “Convention Business” to start! However, much of the convention was taken up with speeches and reports from committees, many of which were merely vague presentations or speeches from politicians that left little room for engagement by the delegates. In the opinion of our delegation and many others at convention, too little time was devoted to the business of discussing, debating, and voting on constitutional amendments and resolutions. It is worth noting that several NDP leaders, a leader of an American union, and an expert on misinformation in the manosphere, were all given substantial airtime. In response to the latter’s presentation, which concluded that “non-men” are most susceptible to misinformation, a racialised delegate requested that speeches instead be geared towards informing the room of standard procedures. This is one of the most consistently frustrating aspects of conventions, both at the divisional (Ontario) and National level. This disappointing pattern was a motivating factor behind our Local’s submission of Constitutional Amendment C7, which pushes for more time to be allotted for resolution and constitutional amendment related matters at Conventions.

Delegates attended caucus meetings outside of the regular convention business sessions, including the Black and Racialized Caucus and the Disability Caucus. Both of these caucus meetings focused a significant amount on the shortcomings of the National Convention and CUPE more broadly when it comes to equity-deserving groups. This critique was needed at a Convention where racist views were openly espoused by some delegates speaking at mics and where there was often a notable inattention to making things accessible for disabled people. Both caucuses were also spaces to find common ground through shared experiences, strategize around resolutions that matter, and keep pushing toward meaningful progress.

Other notable events and activities that delegates attended outside of formal Convention business included a meeting of the Action Caucus, an International Solidarity Forum, various strategy meetings for Labour for Palestine (L4P) and the Diversity Vice-Presidents (DVP) Constitutional Amendment, [overdose prevention training](#), and a Migrant Workers’ Solidarity info session. These provided spaces outside of the formal structure of voting and speeches to hear new perspectives, organize with others, and learn new things. Most of these events, activities, and caucus meetings presented accessibility challenges that could be barriers to attending, such as their scheduling: often occurring very early, very late, or during lunch. Given that the session for first time delegates was also held at an early hour prior to convention, many missed

out on the chance to learn about the structure which would later limit their ability to participate and speak at the mic. For instance, the chair at several times interrupted speakers to ask them if they “had a point to make,” but it was unclear to many first time delegates that this referred to a specific point (i.e., of privilege or order).

The lack of widespread support at the Convention for liberation and inclusion was deeply upsetting, but some of these spaces provided a bit of shared solace from the often harmful rhetoric that accompanied contentious votes on the floor. For example, at the [International Solidarity forum](#), delegates listened to union leaders from the Philippines, Palestine, and Colombia speak to their unique issues and the importance of building solidarity beyond borders to achieve transformative justice. Our delegates also supported others with navigating the Convention—encouraging members of other Locals, helping file an ombudsperson report about harassment, providing much-needed information, and being a recognizable presence in support of social justice.

Our delegates were active in brainstorming and coordinating to create more meaningful change, working especially with caucuses, activist organizations, Aubrey Gonsalves (DVP, Black and Racialized Workers), and many members of other Locals. In collaboration with seven other Locals, CUPE 3903 took a lead in helping draft and submit Emergency Resolution 804 at the Convention. This resolution addressed solidarity with the Freedom Flotilla that was intercepted while trying to break Israel’s illegal siege on Gaza. Although ER 804 was not brought to the floor, after it was submitted, CUPE National [released a statement condemning the hijacking of the flotilla](#). It is also worth noting that delegates with the Labour for Palestine Caucus, when asking for clarity on the convention schedule and arrival of emergency resolutions to the floor, were quickly shut down by being ruled “out of order”. Delegates speaking out of order in regards to other business were not cut off with the same swiftness.

In the National Executive Board (NEB) elections, delegates at Convention re-elected Mark Hancock as National President and Candace Rennick as Secretary Treasurer. In the divisional caucus elections, many of our delegates supported Fred Hahn (who is also CUPE Ontario president) in his re-election campaign for GVP (general vice president) for the Ontario Division, a position which he has held for 10 years but he was soundly defeated by Dawn Bellerose, who has been active in CUPE Ontario as a Vice-President and with CUPE National’s Indigenous Council. Her speech characterized Hahn as a divisive figure, which some in the room seem to have interpreted as to the controversy concerning his public expressions of solidarity with Palestine. In her speech, Dawn emphasised that she bore no ill will to Fred, saw him as a valuable union comrade (though perhaps one who appreciated the spotlight too much), and believed that sustaining organisational change requires occasional leadership turnover. This was a bittersweet moment given our recognition of Fred’s hard work in this role, coupled with the fact that Dawn will be a strong champion for Indigenous women on the NEB.

Our delegation campaigned heavily for the passage of Resolution 113, which our Local submitted along with 22 other parties. It called for CUPE National to follow the lead of many others in the labour movement—as well as the CUPE Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia

divisions—to endorse, support, and concretely implement actions of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against the apartheid-state of Israel, to peacefully resist the genocide against Palestinians. Some delegates—several of whom are members of L4P—participated in meetings both at the Convention and in the months leading up to it to strategize about how to get the resolution brought to the floor and passed. Our delegates distributed informative flyers and buttons in support of the resolution and tabled at the L4P table in the CUPE Village, which was combined with the International Solidarity table.

When Resolution 113 finally came to the floor near the end of the day on Wednesday, it provoked the most contentious debate of the Convention. At the “pro” mics, our delegates spoke boldly in favour of the resolution and of the importance of BDS as a tactic to fight against genocide. These voices contrasted with anti-Palestinian rhetoric from “con” speakers who often weaponized purported safety concerns. Procedural maneuvering, including calls for decisions to be made not by the usual holding up of voting signs but by a secret ballot, required the extension of the afternoon session well beyond its scheduled end time. Because of this, although the vote was counted at the end of the day Wednesday, the results weren’t announced until the following morning. The [announcement of the defeat of Resolution 113](#)—823 opposed, 641 in favour—left our delegation bitterly disappointed and disheartened. While it is unconscionable that union members are unable to extend their solidarity to Palestinians during what even the UN has acknowledged is a genocide, comrades who have been in this fight for many years remind us that not long ago, it would have been unimaginable to have the support of over 600 delegates.

News of the defeat of Resolution 113 was followed the same morning by the disheartening defeat of Constitutional Amendment C12, submitted by the NEB and many other parties, which would have created five additional Diversity Vice-President positions on the NEB. One of our delegates spoke powerfully at the mic in favour of this amendment, highlighting how crucial it is for women’s voices and diverse voices to be prioritized in union spaces and leadership. This amendment had been ardently supported by several equity caucuses, and the arguments against it (like the arguments against the BDS resolution) made clear that many delegates’s commitment to social justice and equity is superficial at best, non-existent at worst.

Some constitutional amendments and resolutions passed at the Convention, however, could have a positive impact for CUPE 3903 members. These include Constitutional Amendment C28, providing an alternate process (i.e., other than the CUPE trial process) for harassment and discrimination complaints filed with the NEB. A delegate who spoke at a mic pointed out that the details of what this “alternate process” involves were unclear in the resolution—a reflection of a wider pattern where gaps in clear information often made it difficult to critically engage throughout the Convention. The alternate process will be supported by the new Safer Union Spaces Office. The [Safer Union Spaces Working Group also presented a final report](#) at the Convention that gave some (imperfect) hope for the development of more caring and restorative pathways to address issues like harassment and discrimination within union spaces.

Other notable resolutions that carried include Resolution 1, which committed to protecting and updating materials relating to Two Spirit, trans, and gender diverse workers, and Resolution 3, which is of particular relevance for CUPE 3903 research and graduate assistants. Resolution 3 will compel CUPE to create a toolkit demanding that provincial governments recognize that research is work, that student workers are employees, and that they have a constitutional right to form and join a union.

The Convention saw many commendations of the Air Canada workers' strike (commendations which could often ring hollow), and so fittingly, Emergency Resolution 802—submitted by the CUPE Airline Division—also carried. This Emergency Resolution mandates CUPE to lobby the Federal Government to change the Canada Labour Code to prevent the government from invoking Section 107 to deny federally regulated workers their right to strike. However, the language of this resolution did not go as far as Resolution 175 (submitted by 3903 and three other Locals) defending the right to strike on a broader scale.

Still, these were bright spots in what was overall a difficult experience for many of our delegates. It was challenging to witness the often toxic 2025 CUPE National Convention climate when it came to crucial issues of intersectional inclusion, equity, justice, and liberation. At the same time and despite disappointing defeats, CUPE 3903 delegates served an important role in loudly and determinedly resisting this oppressive climate—pushing for genuine change in our workplaces, our union spaces, and society as a whole.

**Delegates:**

Anna Lippman, Joseph Tohill, Keisha Bell, Mackenzie Edwards, Prateeksha Pathak, Sheema Khawar, Sof Chaudhry, Zoë Newman

**Convention Dates:**

Sunday, October 5 – Friday, October 10

**Events and Activities Delegates Participated In:**

Post-secondary Sector Council Meeting, October 5, 1–3 pm  
Drafting Emergency Resolution 804 (solidarity with Freedom Flotilla), Oct 6  
Black and Racialized Workers' Caucus, October 6 & 7, 8–9 am  
Disability Caucus Meeting, October 7  
International Solidarity Forum, October 8, 7–9 pm  
Migrant Workers' Solidarity Info session, October 9, 8–9 am  
Action Caucus Meeting, October 10  
Labour for Palestine tabling, strategy meetings, and flyering  
Overdose prevention training

**CUPE 3903 Constitutional Amendments & Resolutions Submitted:**

- **Constitutional Amendment C7**, Resolutions and/or constitutional amendments shall be considered on each day of Convention, with sufficient time allotted (*not debated*)
- **Resolution No. 113**, Support BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS against Israel (*defeated Oct 7–8*)
- **Resolution No. 175**, Increased support for the Right to Strike (*not debated*)
- **Emergency Resolution No. 804**, solidarity with the Freedom Flotilla that was intercepted trying to break Israel's illegal siege on Gaza (*not debated*) ([full text here](#))

[Full booklet of constitutional amendments and resolutions \(excepting emergencies\) here.](#)