



Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

## CAUT Collective Bargaining and Organizing Forum

Friday, March 21 – Saturday, March 22, 2025

9:00 am – 5:00 pm (Eastern Time)

Hilton Garden Inn Ottawa Downtown

### Forum Overview

The CAUT Collective Bargaining and Organizing Forum brings together member association negotiators and organizers from across the country, providing opportunities to meet peers from other associations, share high level discussion and build networks of contacts and support.

## Agenda

### Friday, March 21

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| 08:00 – 09:00 | <b>Registration</b>  |
| 09:00 – 09:15 | <b>Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement, and Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Peter McInnis, CAUT President</li><li>■ Michael Shaw, Chair, CAUT Collective Bargaining and Organizing Committee</li></ul>   |
| 09:15 – 10:30 | <b>Strategic Lessons on Organizing for Bargaining</b> <p>Presenters will share how their academic staff association organized to build and maintain a base of members willing and ready to take collective action in the lead up to a strike vote, during job action and at the table.</p>   |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | <b>Refreshment Break</b>   |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | <b>Breakout Groups: Building a Bargaining Mandate</b> <p>The process of building the bargaining mandate is an opportunity to grow the association's power through internal organizing. Yet challenges - such as low engagement among specific constituencies, divisions and competing interests - can become roadblocks to building a strong and united membership that strengthens negotiating power at the table. Participants will be given a scenario and discuss key steps and challenges when building a bargaining mandate.</p> |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | <b>Lunch</b> ( <i>Tulip Restaurant</i> )   |
| 13:30 – 14:00 | <b>Report Back from Breakout Groups</b>  |

- 14:00 – 15:00     **Cross-Country Bargaining Check-Up**  
Representatives of associations in bargaining or who have recently concluded bargaining will lead a discussion on strategies, trends and outcomes.
- 15:00 – 15:30     **Refreshment Break**
- 15:30 – 17:00     **They Hired a Lawyer**  
In this session, a union-side labour lawyer will discuss strategies for countering the tactics used by employer-side law firms in negotiations.
- 17:00 – 18:30     **Reception** (*Tulip Restaurant*)

## Saturday, March 22

- 09:00 – 10:30     **Panel Discussion: Bargaining in a Time of Financial Retrenchment**  
In the wake of the federal government cap on international student visas and insufficient provincial and federal funding, colleges and universities are experiencing strains on their budgets. Program closures, suspensions of enrolment and layoffs are taking place across the country. Presenters will discuss how their institutions have been affected by financial shortfalls and share strategies on how to fight back and bargain in these difficult times.
- 10:30 – 11:00     **Refreshment Break**
- 11:00 – 12:30     **Breakout Groups Part 1: Maintaining Solidarity on the Picket Line**  
Participants will be divided into working groups to consider a scenario of an association entering the fourth week of job action. In Part 1, groups will be asked to develop strategies to maintain energy and solidarity on the picket line.
- 12:00 – 13:30     **Lunch** (*Tulip Restaurant*)
- 13:30 – 14:30     **Breakout Groups Part 2: Building Your Strategy at the Table**  
In Part 2 of the working session, groups will discuss how to manage four outstanding issues in negotiations.
- 14:30 – 15:00     **Report Backs**
- 15:00 – 15:30     **Refreshment Break**
- 15:30 – 16:30     **Panel: Using Collective Agreements to Fight Against Attacks on EDI**  
Collective bargaining is a key tool available to associations for advancing equity in the workplace. In past years, equity issues have been a top bargaining priority for our associations. Now, in the context of hostility and backlash to equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenization (EDI), this session will look at how associations and bargaining teams can protect past gains and continue to strengthen EDI in collective agreements and on our campuses.
- 16:30 – 17:00     **Closing Remarks**