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Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, CAUT and its member associations are confronting continuing and emerging challenges, from government funding shortfalls to rising inflation. Working with our academic staff associations, CAUT is building membership strength to put practical solutions front and centre.

This past year, the crisis at Laurentian University exposed years-long failures of leadership, subversion of shared governance, and the unnecessary invocation of an insolvency process that continues to be felt by those who lost their jobs, by the Sudbury and neighbouring communities, and by students who lost access to education – notably French-language and Indigenous-specific academic programs.

Through concerted government relations efforts, we are working to ensure that the Companies Creditors’ Arrangement Act (CCAA) is never again used by a public post-secondary institution to trump collectively bargained financial exigency processes. Moreover, CAUT is launching a revitalized national governance campaign to advance collegial governance standards across the country by working with member associations to develop organizing and bargaining capacity, celebrate victories, and identify models for success.

We are coming off a year that also saw a record number of strikes and entering one in which more than half of CAUT member associations will be in bargaining. Job action is normally rare in our sector, and when they do occur strikes are relatively short. But increasing intransigence by administrations, government interference in free and fair collective bargaining, and deteriorating terms and conditions have left members with no choice but to exercise their right to strike. A difficult year lies ahead, but the collective power and commitment of our members will be the strength that will see us through the challenges we face.

Peter McInnis
President

David Robinson
Executive Director
Campaigns and Advocacy

Tuition fees increasing faster than inflation

112%
That's the increase in average household spending for tuition fees from 1997 to 2009.

To Do List:
- National Pharmacare
- Federal mental health transfer
- Federal support for child care
- Sustainable, dedicated funding for post-secondary education

www.educationforall.ca/actions

Liste de choses à faire :
- Régime national d’assurance-médicaments
- Transfert canadien en matière de santé mentale
- Engagement fédéral dans la garde des jeunes enfants
- Financement durable et dédié à l’éducation postsecondaire

www.educpourtous.ca/laction
Working with Education for All coalition partners the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), CAUT continues to advocate for increased, dedicated, predictable federal funding through a dedicated post-secondary education transfer payment. With the Canada Social Transfer (CST) scheduled for review in 2024, the next two years present a unique opportunity to urge federal leadership on the issue of post-secondary education funding.

In addition, CAUT continued to meet with federal decision-makers to press for the expansion of the University and College Academic Staff System (UCASS) survey to include equity data, college staff, and contract academics. We also advocated for increased federal support to assist academic and trade union refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. CAUT pushed back against corporate publishing interests’ calls to see fair dealing protections removed for the dissemination of copyrighted works for educational purposes, and we lobbied for federal legislation to remove public post-secondary institutions from the Companies Creditors’ Arrangement Act (CCAA).

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The Rising Costs of Post-secondary Education

For decades, students and education advocates across Canada have been vocal about rising tuition fees and their impact on access to education and training. This analysis highlights how much tuition fees have increased in comparison to inflation and other household expenses. Throughout the 1990s, the cost of a university or college education increased at about the same pace as other goods—as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). However, Figure 1 shows that in the 2000s the cost of tuition fees started to grow significantly faster than the cost of everything else. This trend has continued for thirty years.

Looking specifically at the last ten years, the extraordinary growth of tuition fees has been even more pronounced. Between 2010 and 2020, average undergraduate tuition fees have increased by 98% and average graduate tuition fees have increased by 89%. Meanwhile, overall consumer prices have increased by just 46%. It is important to highlight that these increases in tuition fees, as illustrated in Figure 1, are indeed alongside CPI, and therefore the cost difference seen between these two indicators is in addition to any increases accounted for by average inflation. Students, like everyone else, are already paying more for food, housing, transportation, and all other expenses as prices inflate after year. It is on top of these increasing living expenses that students are financing skyrocketing tuition fees.

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Les coûts croissants de l’éducation postsecondaire

Le Canada a connu un fléau de l’augmentation des frais de scolarité et de l’expansion des coûts de scolarité, avec le coût d’un diplôme postsecondaire augmentant de plus de 50% en un cycle de 10 ans. Les frais de scolarité moyens des étudiants de première année ont augmenté de 60% en un cycle de 10 ans, ce qui représente une situation particulièrement critique pour les étudiants qui ont besoin de fonds pour poursuivre leurs études. Les augmentations de frais de scolarité ont impacté les effectifs de l’enseignement postsecondaire, ce qui a conduit à une diminution des investissements dans l’enseignement supérieur et à une baisse des effectifs. Les coûts de scolarité augmentant, les étudiants ont moins de chance d’obtenir un emploi après leur diplôme, ce qui réduit les capacités de formation nécessaire à un emploi haut-remunéré.
CAUT made several submissions to governments, including Quebec’s Bill 32, An Act respecting academic freedom in the university sector, the federal government’s proposed “online safety” (previously online harms) legislation, and the review of the Employment Equity Act.

CAUT is developing a national governance campaign to raise standards for collegial governance through local bargaining and campaigning efforts across the country. This campaign will be complemented by an online governance resource repository.

The 2021 Fair Employment Week took place between October 18 and 22 and involved a panel with academic staff organizing nationally and international on Contract Academic Staff (CAS) issues, a social media day of action, and a CAS social.
Advancing equity in post-secondary education and promoting social justice across Canada and around the globe is a major priority.

This year, CAUT launched its Equity Toolkit – an online repository of resources to help member associations address issues such as equitable compensation, access to equity data, bargaining to advance Indigenization, and the full inclusion of equity-deserving groups in the academy and in our associations.

In October 2021, CAUT hosted a virtual, interactive forum on Building Solidarity and Alliances: Indigenizing the Academy, an opportunity for all members of the academic community – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and explore concrete approaches to advancing and strengthening Indigenization of the academy. The forum included a keynote address by Dr. Lorna Wanosts’a7 Williams, panel discussions on collective bargaining wins, Indigenous self-identification, and recruitment and retention of Indigenous academic staff.

Internationally, CAUT supported academic and trade union refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine through our partner Education International. CAUT also joined government representatives, student groups, and other academic staff organizations at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference from May 18-20, 2022. CAUT’s participation is key to ensuring that statements such as the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel remain strong instruments with global influence.

Promoting social justice, international solidarity and equity
Building Capacity

COVID-19 and the Academic Workplace - Resources for Members

Overview
COVID-19 Pandemic
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities and colleges have been forced to take measures that have, amongst other things, affected the working conditions of academic and general staff, teachers and students. Below are some measures that have been initiated.

News
Re-opening colleges and universities
- Winter 2022 Semester Plan Draft
- Fall 2021 Semester Plans
- Checklist for assessing re-opening plans
- Temporary Mandatory Vaccination Policy

Almanac of Post-Secondary Education

The CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada is your source for the most current statistical information available on post-secondary education in Canada. The Almanac provides statistics on university and college finances, academic staff salaries and gender, student enrolment and graduation rates, student/teacher ratios, university research funding, and national, provincial, and international comparisons.

Almanac Archive
For previous editions of the Almanac, please click here.

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3. Academic Staff
4. Students
5. Research

Technical Notes
- Excel files
Building Capacity

Member education

Education and training are important for bolstering the capacity of associations to make gains for their members. This year CAUT continued to offer national online schools and workshops with members from across the country on organizing, campaigning, bargaining, and grievance handling. CAUT organized 8 online “schools” and 10 specialized training events. The national “schools” included two offerings of Organizing School 101, Climate Action, two Collective Bargaining Schools, two Grievance Handling schools, and the first ever Organizing School 201. In total, the education program reached 575 participants.

Health and Safety training was coordinated by CAUT staff and delivered remotely through the Workers’ Health and Safety Centre.
Building Capacity

Research

CAUT’s research team works to provide timely and relevant research to advance policy and bargaining objectives. CAUT publishes Facts & Figures detailing settlements negotiated by member associations. New this year was the release of a special pension report. New chapters of the CAUT Almanac, an online source for the most current statistics information available on post-secondary education in Canada, have also been updated.

Legal Services

CAUT’s legal team works closely with member associations to provide legal advice and representation in defending their members in cases of breaches of academic freedom, discrimination and interference with collegial governance. The legal team provided direct support to the Laurentian University Faculty Association throughout the conclusion of the CCAA process, provided legal analysis regarding Alberta’s anti-union Bill 32, and produced legal advisories and case summaries.

CAUT released a commissioned report, Restructuring Publicly-Funded Universities: A Report on the Laurentian Insolvency Proceeding with Issues and Options for the University Sector, by Simon Archer and Erin Sobat of Goldblatt Partners LLP and Virginia Torrie, associate professor at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Law. The report concluded that the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) is fundamentally “anti-worker”, displacing labour relations norms and processes. The report also recommends strengthening financial exigency provisions in collective agreements.

CAUT continued to provide updated resources on COVID-19 and the academic workplace, including a database on member campus re-opening plans in light of the Omicron variant spread. Updated Contract Academic Staff stipends tables and mil rate data was also supplied to members.
Defending Academic Freedom
Academic freedom includes the right of academics to freedom in teaching, research and publication, and expression on matters within their institution and on matters of public interest without institutional censorship or reprisal.

- In November 2021, after just six months, CAUT Council voted to remove the censure against the administration of the University of Toronto. Censure had been imposed as a result of the University’s decision to withdraw a job offer to Dr. Valentina Azorova following the intervention of a donor and tax court justice. To resolve the censure, the University agreed to re-offer the position to Dr. Azarova, amended its policy on donations, and extended academic freedom protections to academic administrators.

- Through its arbitration service, CAUT assisted the Mount Alison Faculty Association, the Brock University Faculty Association, the University of Toronto Faculty Association, the Association of Professors of Bishop’s University, and the Mount Royal Faculty Association with grievances involving academic freedom.

- In February, CAUT hosted the Harry Crowe Foundation Conference: *Academic Freedom and the Law* which explored the legal foundations of academic freedom, as well as the legal limits placed on it with a view to strengthening the protections for academic freedom in Canada.

- CAUT is developing an online resource repository and education materials to expand the understanding of the scope and meaning of academic freedom among our membership and the general public.
Upholding the Integrity of the Academic Job
Collective Bargaining

CAUT supports member associations in securing contract gains that protect and advance employment conditions and professional rights of academic staff.

Over 2021-22 some of the advances gained in bargaining include:

- Following its 11-day strike, the Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association (CUEFA) won a teaching load reduction from 4-4 to 4-3 in 2022-2023 to 3-3 in 2023-2024, as well as new language in an MOU protecting members’ intellectual property.

- The University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) made gains in the area of equity and evaluation, including improvements to Indigenous evaluation language, including the recognition of traditional knowledge and knowledge production, eliminating the use of student teaching evaluations to compare members’ teaching effectiveness, and an expansion to the definition and understanding of “service” to better recognize work often done by members of equity-deserving groups.

- The Algoma University Faculty Association (OPSEU Local 685, Part-Time) won a one-time wage increase to members’ instructional rates of 7% on January 1st, 2023, and new pay rates for marking and grading assistance.

- Negotiating in a post-Bill 124 context, l’Association des professeurs du Collège universitaire de Hearst negotiated 4%/3%/2% wage increases, a $3,000 bonus upon ratification, $1,500 per registered student for those offering tutoring courses, and $4,500 for professional development and teaching materials.

- Resulting from an arbitration decision, the Acadia University Faculty Association secured a 4% wage increase for contract academic staff, changes to discipline language, and negotiated cluster hires.
Upholding the Integrity of the Academic Job

Job Action

The 2021-2022 year saw a record number of job actions with six associations going on strike. CAUT provided communications, strike preparation, member engagement, legal, flying pickets and other support as members took to picket lines across the country.

To better prepare members for job action, the CAUT strike manual is presently undergoing review, and an online job action resource archive is being developed.
Amplifying our Collective Voice
Amplifying our Collective Voice

Communications

CAUT is the national voice of academic staff at universities and colleges across Canada. We amplify this voice through a robust communications program that includes a national and global media presence, the posting of timely CAUT research and policy guidance on our bilingual website, a strong presence on social media (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn), and the CAUT Bulletin, a magazine published 8 times a year.

Web news stories and releases covered topics ranging from Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association’s historic strike in Alberta, to CAUT’s calls for the resignation of senior Laurentian administrators, to COVID-19 protocols. Our work was highlighted in several media outlets, including CBC/Radio-Canada, University Affairs, the National Post, the Times Higher Education Supplement, and the Globe and Mail.

CAUT communications and organizing staff also provide digital campaigning advice and tools including microsites and digital assets to help members achieve their campaign objectives. This past year has also seen a record increase in the number of associations using the CAUT-supplied member database software Mobilis, customized for academic workplaces.
Founded in 1951, CAUT is the national voice for academic staff representing 72,000 teachers, librarians, researchers, general staff and other academic professionals at 125 universities and colleges across the country. CAUT is an outspoken defender of academic freedom and works actively in the public interest to improve the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education in Canada.

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