

Message from the Director, Lisa Kelly

Union education helps us develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to fight for our rights. It provides an opportunity to share our experiences and develop a critical analysis about what is going on in our workplace and society. Union education helps situate our struggles within the broader political and economic context and as part of a larger movement for social change. Union education informs and motivates and builds our capacity to fight back and win.

New Union Report, 2013

What an exciting time! For those interested in union education, forming a new union gives us the momentum and mandate to embark on new and innovative approaches while building on the rich traditions and commitments that both our founding unions have to activist-based worker education programs. We know that education will play a pivotal role in continuing to develop and support activism in our new union and that our programs will be a key site where leadership and rank-and-file of CEP and CAW get to know and learn from each other's experiences and struggles.

In the Education Department we are busy working to take the best of all the programs our unions offer and build a new roster of courses that will suit the needs of our members going forward. Our initial focus is to revise the programs that receive the highest enrollment and the most requests. Our plan is to work with Area Directors and local Unifor leadership to roll out a set of Unifor courses across the country early in the new year. Information will be sent out to locals and will be available on our website and facebook page.

We know education is key to creating safer, fairer workplaces – it's also key to building a strong union. It will take a commitment from all of us to build an education program that fully equips our members to take an active part in Unifor. I'm inviting you to read through this newsletter, check out our website, sign up for courses you haven't yet taken, encourage new members as well as activists and seasoned leaders to take courses, assist us in putting courses on in your local union / community, and work with us to promote activist-based worker education programs. If you've got questions or ideas about our union's education programs, please don't hesitate to

get in touch with me - together we'll build a mighty union.

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Unifor Education

Our programs are designed to challenge participants, build confidence, deepen analysis, develop and strengthen critical thinking skills and provide opportunities for learning through doing. Our new union offers one and three-day courses (in communities across the country), week-long programs and a family education program (at our Unifor Education Centre), as well as materials that are designed to help activists and leaders in the day-to-day running of our local unions. All of our programs seek to build political, economic and social literacy in addition to equipping our members with practical skills.

1-day and 3-day Programs



What kind of courses does Unifor offer?

We offer over twenty different courses! Courses range from Grievance Handling and Anti-Harassment, to Building Activism and Collective Bargaining. Course

descriptions can be found on our website at

www.unifor.org/education-en.

Where can I take a 1-day or 3-day course?

The Unifor Education Department offers courses in communities across the country. To find out what's being offered in your area, check the calendar on our website. A schedule is sent out to local unions twice a year.

How do I sign up for a course?

Contact your local to register. Locals forward registration forms to Bonnie Morgan in the Unifor Education Department at areacourses@unifor.org, or by fax (416) 495-6554.

Will the course cost me any money? Will I be paid for lost time?

There are no registration fees for any of our area courses.

One-day courses are mostly run outside of working time with an expectation that people will attend on their own time. Lunch is provided on-site (at no cost to you). A strong union is built through rank-and-file activism – contributing your time and interest will ensure we are an effective union. The National Union pays for the meeting room and lunch, and provides the materials and the Discussion Leader.

Three-day courses are generally run during working time or a combination (two days on working time, the third on a non-work day). For three-day courses the National Union provides the meeting room, lunch, materials and the Discussion Leader. The National and the Local Union(s) split the cost of participants' lost time, travel, and per diem as outlined in a set of guidelines that will be provided to the local. Accommodations that have been pre-authorized through the Education Department will also be split 50/50 with the local.

Can Locals also request courses outside of the regular schedule?

Yes. Locals who can guarantee the participation of at least 15 members can request any of our one or three-day courses. Please note that during this transition time in the new union, we prefer that Locals send participants to the courses that are already scheduled in their area. This will allow us to offer the greatest number of courses and will allow our members from our founding unions to get to know each other.

Paid Education Leave Program

The Paid Education Leave program (PEL) is a fund negotiated by the Union in collective bargaining with employers. A lump sum or cents-per-hour is negotiated with the employer. Locals use funds from their "PEL account" to send members to union-developed and union-delivered courses at the Unifor Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario. The fund was first negotiated by the CAW in 1977 at Rockwell International (an auto parts plant). From there it spread across the union into every sector and region. At our Unifor founding convention, delegates passed a resolution making bargaining PEL a priority.



What courses are offered at the Unifor Education Centre in Port Elgin?

Paid Education Courses are delivered at our Education Centre. Grievance Handling / Workplace Leadership, Collective Bargaining, Health and Safety and Human Rights may be our most popular courses, but our range of programs is extensive, with over thirty courses offered in rotation! These include programs developed for specific audiences, for example, our Members in the Middle (a course for team leaders), Local Union Executive Board Training, Women in Leadership, Pride Activist, Youth Activist, Aboriginal and Racialized Worker program, and Women Activist.

Most courses are one week in length. We also hold a four-week core program. A schedule is published twice a year. Course descriptions can be found on our website at: www.unifor.org/education-en. These courses are in addition to the courses offered in the areas.

Why would I go to the Unifor Education Centre?



This is an incredible facility on the shores of Lake Huron - comfortable classrooms, beautiful bedrooms, a fitness centre, bar, alcohol-free cafe, superb dining, and gorgeous

surroundings. Members from across the country come together at the Unifor Education Centre to discuss, debate and learn about issues that matter to workers, and to build skills for taking on employers and changing society.

Our Childcare Centre is open during the summer and periodically during the school year. Childcare subsidies are available (form must be approved by Local) for those participants who have additional childcare costs over and above what they would normally be paying while working.

How do I apply to attend courses?

Applications are made through your Local. Locals develop their own selection process for PEL programs. A sample process and application form can be found on our website. Remember that the deadline for application to your local will be earlier than the deadline in our schedule.

Where your local has not yet bargained Paid Education Leave, there is a 50/50 pilot program. The National Union will split the costs of a participant with a local. Ask your local for more information.

Where can I find out more information on courses offered?

There is information on Unifor courses on our website at www.unifor.org/education-en. A schedule for courses offered at the Unifor Education Centre will be published twice a year. For more information, please contact us at education@unifor.org.

What are Some Examples of Unifor Courses?

Collective Bargaining - Every local union needs a strong bargaining committee. Get the skills you need to be part of it! We have one-day, three-day and week-long

collective bargaining courses where members can strengthen their negotiation skills and learn more about the union's bargaining priorities. Our courses focus on the importance of contract language, preparation and research, negotiating wages, benefits and working conditions, ratifying an agreement, and maximizing bargaining power through a strategic approach to bargaining. The course calendar on our website provides details of when and where our bargaining courses are being offered.

Grievance Handling - Our grievance handling programs are designed to equip workplace leaders with the skills and tools needed to defend the rights of workers and to develop an understanding of the role of a workplace representative in building a strong membership and local union. We regularly offer one day and three day courses in communities across the country, as well as week-long courses at our Education Centre.

Getting to Know Your Union - This one-day course provides a basic introduction to Unifor for new union members, as well for those who are interested but haven't been involved. The course discusses who we are, what we do, what difference we make for workers, how our union fits into society in general, and how you can get involved in the union.

Health & Safety Training - Whether you're looking for a one-day course for all interested workers, or a week-long course for health and safety committee members, all of our health and safety programs are designed to equip us with tools we need to make our workplaces safer and healthier. Content ranges from the general (principles of hazard control, the right to know and the right to refuse) up the specific (e.g., exposure and threshold limit values; model contract language, job safety analysis, etc.). We also have specialized Health and Safety one-week programs, including: Toxic Substances in the Workplace, Stress: the Workplace Hazard, Introduction to Ergonomics and Women and Health & Safety. Check the website for full course descriptions and details.

Globalization and Solidarity course - *"I loved hearing from all the workers. Economics and social issues from a worker's perspective. Super."* In today's globalized world where the alphabet soup of trade deals has workers struggling to maintain their rights, solidarity is more

important than ever. This was the clear understanding of participants (former CEP and CAW) in our recently piloted course, *Globalization & Solidarity - in a World without Borders*, where they had an opportunity to look at how international finance is shaping Canadian and global economies and at how workers around the world are mobilizing for decent jobs and economic and social justice. This course will run again at our Education Centre from April 27th - May 2nd.

Women, Power and Political Action - Our new *Women, Power and Political Action* course was one of the courses running alongside other CLC programs in this year's only week long school. Holding one of our union courses as part of the CLC school provided a unique opportunity for women to network across unions. The after class conversations were full of shared experiences about how our unions work, the campaigns we are engaged in and how we can work together to encourage union women to become engaged and active in their unions. This course will run again at our Education Centre from March 9th - 14th.

Youth Activist - This course is designed specifically for members aged 35 and under, to further develop their skills and to ensure they can access the necessary tools to play an active role in the union. Through a mix of workshops, open forums and activities, participants have opportunities to discuss and share experiences about systemic challenges facing youth at work and in society, and discuss how we can use the union as a vehicle to bring about meaningful and progressive change. The course is designed with ample time to engage in rich discussions on current issues, struggles and campaigns. This program will run at our Education Centre May 4th - 9th.

For descriptions of all of our courses and our course calendar, check out our webpage: www.unifor.org/education.

Family Education Program

Imagine taking a week-long edu-vacation with your family on the shores of Lake Huron - lodging, meals and air transportation (where applicable) all provided. The Unifor Family Education Program gives families a vacation opportunity like no other. Adults, both members and their partners, combine learning and

recreational activities and come away from the program with a better understanding of how to integrate trade unionism and social activism in the life of the family and community. Through small group discussions, case studies, video presentations, guest speakers, theatre, art, music and other activities, participants draw from their own experiences and learn from each other about environmental, workplace, political, human rights, and social issues affecting all of us, our families, and working people around the world. Pre-teens participate in recreational programs while teenagers participate in a specially-designed program which recognizes their unique interests, but also incorporates the issues of social unionism in their curriculum. Both our pre-teen and our childcare programs are run by fully-trained childcare workers and counselors.

Past participants had this to say about the program: *"The staff took great care of my kids. It's an experience that they will never forget." "Our discussion leaders were amazing. I am 100% thankful for this experience." "The facility is amazing - from the moment we walked in we felt the positive vibes."*

In 2014, the Family Education Program will be in English and run the following weeks:

Session 1 - Sat., June 28th to Sat., July 5th

Session 2 - Sat., July 5th to Sat., July 12th

Session 3 - Sat., July 26th to Sat., August 2nd

Session 4 - Sat., August 2nd to Sat., August 9th

The French Family Education Program will run in 2015.

This Program is entirely funded by the National Office and we welcome all active members to apply if they have not previously attended. Applications must be made through your local union; if selected by the national union, the member agrees to give up his/her vacation time and the national union covers costs for meals and accommodations, and where required, air travel.

"I could have never provided my family with an opportunity like this. I thank my union for allowing us the chance to stay at this beautiful place, to learn together and to meet others from across the country."

Unifor-McMaster Labour Studies Certificate Program

The Unifor-McMaster University Labour Studies Certificate Program is a unique educational initiative that was formed through a partnership between the CAW and McMaster University in 1998. This program is designed and delivered with the specific needs of Unifor members in mind and is intended to meet the educational goals of those who want to pursue lifelong learning in a supportive and worker-friendly environment. Unifor-McMaster instructors are recognized experts in their field of study and are experienced adult educators. All courses are developed on principles of adult education that are respectful of a worker's prior education, workplace experiences, and activism. Courses cover a wide range of topics including the political economy, social issues, labour and the arts, and several tools courses for those wishing to pursue further study. Courses are offered in-class, by video-conference, and through self-paced online formats. They are currently delivered to Unifor members from Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors locals in a number of Unifor locations in Southern Ontario. To view the current Unifor-McMaster Labour Studies course schedule and for more information about how you can participate please visit www.labourstudies.mcmaster.ca

Education Committees

Local Union Education Committees play a key role in ensuring that our membership learn about the union's education programs and also work in conjunction with Area Directors and the national union to plan programs in their local area. Ideally Education Committees also plan and deliver educational opportunities in their local unions and communities - whether that is film nights, information pickets, guest speakers, workshops etc. Our new Constitution encourages locals to set up an Education Standing Committee if one is not already in place. We will be producing a **Unifor Education Committee Handbook** in the new year, which will set out helpful information and lots of ideas for establishing, reviving, or maintaining an active Local Union Education Committee.

Scholarships

Our union recognizes the importance of assisting working-class youth in their efforts to attend post-secondary education. In keeping with the tradition of both our founding unions, Unifor will continue to offer scholarships to children of our members. An announcement will be made in February, 2014 concerning the number, conditions and amounts of the new scholarships. Information on how to apply will be sent out to locals and will be available on our website.



Website/Facebook/Newsletter

Check out our Unifor Education webpage for details on all of our courses: you'll find course descriptions as well as a calendar of what's offered when and where, and information on how to apply / sign up.

We are also in the process of setting up our French and English Unifor Education Facebook page. These will assist in our outreach efforts and continue to promote our programs to membership.

Our Edu-action newsletter is another way we communicate with members and local union leaders, activists and discussion leaders. It's also the place we showcase local union education initiatives. Please send us descriptions of events you've recently held that might inform and inspire others! Submissions can be sent to educate@unifor.org or if you'd prefer to tell us about something you're up to and have us write it up, that's fine too, just send an email giving us your content info and a brief description and we'll follow up with you.

Pocket Guides and Handbooks

The Department has recently updated and revised the pocket guide for *Investigating and Resolving Workplace Harassment*, to bring it in line with the new Unifor policy on workplace harassment and to include updated laws

(e.g., Ontario's Bill 168) and current issues (e.g., cyber-bullying, harassment through social media). This work has been done in cooperation with the Women's and Human Rights Departments. The pocket guide is now in production and will be distributed by the end of the year to local unions and will once again be available for use in several of our courses.

The department is in the early stages of developing a *member/owner guide for Unifor*, along with an interactive session for use in many of our courses where "union structure" is introduced. Our *Pocket Guide for Workplace Representatives* (steward/committeeperson manual) will be available early in the new year. All of our pocket guides and handbooks are available on the Education Department webpage.

Popular Education

Unifor education programs are rooted in a kind of education called Popular Education, or *educación popular*, which means **education for the people**. In other words, a theory and practice of education that puts working people - their ideas, experiences and needs - at the centre of everything we do.

In Unifor education programs we focus on providing an opportunity for workers to share their experiences as workers in the workplace and more broadly in their communities. Those experiences become the basis of developing understanding and ultimately developing strategy on how to make our work lives, and in fact our world, a better place. No education is bias-free, so in the union we are transparent about our intention to develop programs and resources that make our collective action more effective in addressing exploitative conditions in the workplace and society more broadly.

Unifor Education Department

If we haven't already met in person, we hope to do so soon! Our Department is responsible for all the programs listed here (area schools, PEL programs, Family Education programs) as well as workplace training programs and the union-side of the Unifor-McMaster University Certificate Program. You can get in touch with us by calling 1-800-268-5763 or by emailing us at education@unifor.org and at areacourses@unifor.org.



Ce document est aussi disponible en français : www.unifor.org/education-fr