

CUPE COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

For Immediate Release

August 28, 2023

Administrative and Support Staff at Cape Breton University Vote in Favour of a Strike

(SYDNEY) Administrative and Support Staff at Cape Breton University (CBU), represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike on August 21st, 2023, with 93.5% of the entire membership voting to authorize a strike.

CUPE Local 3131 represents approximately 90 members who work in administrative and support roles in departments that are pivotal to the running of CBU, including but not limited to, IT, Finance, the Office of the Registrar, Student Services, the Library, and Recruitment. Without these workers, CBU would not be able to provide quality education or services to their students or other employees.

Due to COVID, CUPE 3131 extended their collective agreement which originally ended March 31st, 2019, to March 31st, 2023. Since then, they have been in negotiations with the CBU but have been unable to reach an agreement in that time. They are fighting to receive the same treatment as other employees at CBU, as well as the same benefits and incentives such as vacation leave, sick time, overtime meal allowances, and stand by pay.

“CBU told us that what we’re asking for doesn’t matter,” said Allana Serroul, Local 3131 president, “but they matter to us. These small things, as they say, are the things that make an employee feel valued and appreciated. Which makes me wonder, if they don’t matter, why aren’t they giving them to us?”

In addition, CUPE 3131 members are asking for a living wage for all members. According to a survey done by CUPE, nearly 50% of the membership struggles to pay their monthly bills and must hold off on necessary spending in order to make ends meet while working full time at CBU. In comparison, upper management of CBU has seen a cumulative salary increase of 177% between 2010 and 2020.

“We’re facing record inflation, a housing crisis, and natural disaster after natural disaster and the wages we’re being paid just aren’t going to cut it anymore,” said Serroul. “We’re present in every department that the CBU has—it’s time our wages reflected how important we are, and this vote has shown that our members are willing to fight for just that.”

For more information contact:

Allana Serroul, Local 3131 President
allana_serroul@cupe3131.ca

Taylor Johnston, CUPE Atlantic Communications Representative
tjohnston@cupe.ca