



New Direction for CAPE

Membership townhall
February 7, 2024

President Nate Prier



Outline

- Moving to an organizing model
- Defining social unionism



Potential key issues for members

- Inflation still incredibly high
- Ongoing housing crisis
- Work-life balance in crisis
- Election-bargaining timing – what role?



Potential key issues for members

Key considerations moving towards bargaining

- Potential new government just before bargaining
- Workforce adjustments impacting leverage
- AI impacting job classification and work – particularly for TRs
- Bargaining staging and pattern with other major federal public sector unions

Moving to an organizing model





What is organizing?



Lou Fantini
@LouFantini

how you picture workplace
organizing vs how workplace
organizing actually looks





"**[Organizing means]** waking up in the morning with an explicit plan to build the universe of people who are not yet part of your organizing, who are not in your social media feed, who you don't talk to, who might even think that they don't like you, who might even think that they're opposed to you— that's the work of organizers and organizing, going out to build unity, and solidarity, and expand the universe of people in our movement."

Jane McAlevey , No Shortcuts (2016)



Service model versus organizing model

- **Service model** – often reactive, formal representation within limited labour relations framework, closed negotiations by professionals...often staff and executive driven
- **Organizing model** – rank and file sets goals, determines correct strategy, and systematically gets a strong majority unified to take action to win...primarily rank and file driven (anybody can do it)



Advocacy vs. mobilizing vs. organizing

	Advocacy	Mobilizing	Organizing
Theory of change	Expertise, access, insider knowledge of key players	Optics, public relations, symbolic actions that sway public opinion	Size of organization, coordination among members in a structure
Who matters?	Paid specialists, staff, elected leaders	Elected leaders, activists, currently involved members	All members, organic leaders, and allies
Role of members	Minimal; transactional	On as-needed basis	Primary agents – planning and executing sustained strategic actions
Examples of action	Briefing standing committees; meeting with ministers	Photo-op for press, occasional rallies or public actions	Escalating tactics (majority petitions, disruptions of business) as part of long-term strategy



Ultimate goal of an organizing model

In a word: power

We are more able to assert ourselves when the rank and file takes full responsibility for their union.

Requires:

- Education
- Leaders
- Constantly expanding base
- Commitment to deep democracy



Key organizing model concepts

- Power structure analysis
- Workplace charting and list building
- Identifying organic leaders
- Structured organizing conversations
- Ladder of engagement
- Consistent review



STRUCTURE TESTS

REMEMBER:

ORGANIZING VS. MOBILIZING





Key considerations for organizing model

What it takes to win big:

- **Build a big base** of ordinary, active members
- **Put members in the driver's seat**, they must lead union in almost all aspects
- **Step outside the echo chamber**, reach out to those who disagree

Discussion





Business unionism versus social unionism

- **Business unionism:** narrow focus on quite narrow definition of “workplace” issues; often top-down and dependent on leadership to act; often accepts norms and rules of labour relations framework
- **Social unionism:** sees membership as part of larger political movement; “whole worker” approach to interests of members; at least in theory, aims for vibrant internal democracy; aims to use own power to creative ends



- These definitions are fuzzy and are not the point
- The key issues that matter in both “types” are:
 - Collective action framework and capacity
 - Strategic repertoire
 - Internal organizational practices



Key principles of social unionism

- Members are members of communities
- Strategic alliances outside workplace
- Work with ALL workers in a workplace to effect change
- Rank and file take responsibility for union affairs
- Confidently take positions on justice in our society
- Bargain for the common good



Why is this strategic?

- **Our employer is the government** – politicians with a lot of pressure points
- **Our union has chronically low engagement and visibility** – expanding our scope expands our points of contact in a virtuous cycle
- **Mass, cross-union workplace organizing** means we can have serious solidarity when it counts and increase pressure
- Telework, our least sectarian campaign issue, has many potential points of entry that can pivot public support



What should members do?

- **Sign up to be stewards** – training will now involve organizing training
- **Attend local strategy sessions** (independently and with the national office)
- **Join NEC subcommittees**
- **Join equity caucuses**
- **Attend strategic planning exercises** through the CAPE national office

Discussion





COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
for the common good