

AUPE 069

AUPE LOCAL 069 NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2023



Meeting with President Alex Clark and Provost & VP Academic Matthew Prineas

Your Local 069 executive met with President Alex Clark and Provost and VP Academic Matthew Prineas on Monday Feb. 27th, a mere weekend after the president's first town hall with AU staff.

We used the one-hour meeting to address critical concerns brought forward by members: workload issues resulting from delays in recruitment and hiring; instability of systems used by many of us daily, and concerns re: IT's capacity to respond to student and staff needs; extended disruptions to workflow stemming from secondments, and growing unease with the status of major projects; staff morale and the need to restore trust and cohesiveness within the AU community.

The president heard us, he acknowledges the concerns you've shared, and we're assured of quarterly labour meetings moving forward. It might be noted that the previous president invited zero meetings with Local 069 over the past year.

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Is there a question or concern you would put to President Clark? Send your message directly (aclark@athabasca.ca) or through your Local 069 executive via aupeocal69@gmail.com.

AND YOU ARE? MAEGHAN JERRY, AU COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER



While our paths don't cross in breakrooms and office spaces as often as they used to, we still have many member coworkers across the province! In this edition, we're (re)introducing you to a colleague in Calgary.

When you started with AU: September of 2018

Have you ever taken an AU course as a student?: Sociology of Deviance (SOC1365) was my favorite, and also the first course I took with AU- way back in 2013.

What's your go-to beverage while you work: Black tea - caffeinated in the morning and decaf in the afternoon.

Meeting background preference - your real background, the blurred effect, or a specific image?: I'm a real background sort of gal.

Where is the farthest from Athabasca you have ever been?: I lived in Istanbul, Turkey for just shy of a year in 2008/2009.

Best AUPE discount: I haven't used any, but I have my eye on the Jubilations Dinner Theatre discount for a show coming up in Calgary later this year.

CONNECTING WITH AUFA AND CUPE 3911

Monthly tri-union meetings initiated by our CUPE 3911 colleagues beginning last year have provided opportunities to share information and find common ground.

These meetings have also involved AUSU and AUGSA participation, and the message from students is stark: rising tuition and frequent disruptions to learner experience are paired with growing competition in online offerings from other colleges and universities.

Our students demand better. We know it can be better, and we need to be heard. What is the single most important improvement you'd make for AU? Send us your idea!: aupeocal69@gmail.com.

AUPE COURSES AND MORE - IN PERSON AND ONLINE!

Training courses through AUPE are available year-round, both in person and online. Start with an [Introduction to Your Union](#), or join a [pension education session](#) to start planning your retirement.

Thanks to Rhiannon Rutherford, AUFA president, for including our members in a global training initiative: [Organizing for Power's Core Fundamentals](#). Sessions involve thousands of workers from hundreds of countries, with sametime translations in 9 languages.

Let us know if you are interested in future training opportunities: aupeocal69@gmail.com.



REPORT FROM LOCAL 069 CHAIR WENDY JEWELL

Good day brothers and sisters! It is with mixed emotions that I bid you adieu.

I will no longer let my name stand for a position on our AUPE Local 69 executive. It is time for some new energized members to get involved. I am providing a little history of myself and AUPE Local 69.

I have been part of the AUPE executive since the union came to fruition in 1985. I am familiar with the many duties involved, having sat on the Executive for many years. Positions that I have filled range from Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-chair, and Chair, and I sat on numerous bargaining contract settlements. I enjoyed the learning curve that came with these positions, taking courses to enhance my knowledge to serve our membership better.



I represented our Local on the organizing committee with other AUPE members from other post-secondary institutions around the province, planning the Education Sector Conference (picture included). In October 2011, we held the conference in Canmore with the theme "Sustaining Education". The line of focus was "What are the challenges that students, employees, universities and government were facing in education?"

We appear to face the same challenges today, and I am disappointed that this conference is no longer being held. It was a great venue to meet members and discuss common issues we face in post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

I have seen many changes at AU over the years e.g., furlough days, buyouts, and one-day lay-offs for the university to meet their budget savings, always at the cost of the employee.

We faced many challenges at AU in 2013-2014, still fresh in my memory, is the October 15 layoff. A fundraiser was held, and it was a successful event. Gift cards were distributed to members due to the layoff.

People banded together to stop the cuts.

Thank you to AUFA, AUPE and CUPE members for marching to the Legislature to protest the AUPE layoffs.

Although voluntary leave without pay was not ideal, it was the best option presented for all involved. It was about choices. It was hoped that the voluntary program would achieve the university's cost containment goal. Alone, it did not, but combined with student enrolment growth AU did meet budget requirements that year.

On July 1, 2015, we did an awesome job of showing our solidarity with our Float in the Canada Day parade in Athabasca! What a colorful group!



REPORT FROM LOCAL 069 CHAIR WENDY JEWELL

In August 2015, I posted a letter to the Editor of the Athabasca Advocate, calling for political leaders and elected officials to stand up for the Athabasca economy and quality post-secondary education in response to comments about the possible insolvency of the university and its failing commitment to the community of Athabasca. Below is an excerpt, but you can read the full letter in my extended report on the [Local 69 AUPE page](#).

“There have been gloomy predictions of AU’s insolvency and the argument that AU can’t find qualified people to work in Athabasca. What does this say about AU’s commitment to the community? If they can’t find and retain competent staff to work at AU, what does it say about the staff they already have? I think anyone working at AU in Athabasca should find that comment alarming, as well as the community as a whole.”

On November 26, 2015, a petition was presented to the Minister of Advanced Education Lori Sigurdson by AUPE, AUFA and CUPE. More than 800 signatures were on the petition asking the government to keep AU permanently in the town of Athabasca. Today, February 15, 2023, this fight continues.

Wendy, we appreciate your tireless hours supporting your Local 069 coworkers, colleagues, and friends! Thank you!

Elections will take place at our AGM in May 2023. It is of utmost importance that we save our Local at AU, if not, we will lose our voice within the institution. Please give this some serious thought. Your participation is vital to the survival of our union local. Over the past years, we have had long-standing executive members that have moved on. We are looking for an open mind and new ideas. A different set of eyes brings new perspectives.

I trust that there will be interest in one of you to come forward to assist in leading and supporting our membership at AU. Our members need this representation to keep our Local active and strong. It is through your Local that your voices will be heard.

Membership engagement is needed. We need to work together to win good contracts. AUPE members need a strong team at the table, bringing important issues to the table. In doing so, we promote our own solidarity and equality. We continue to meet with our sister unions and with the AUPE union organizer Scott Drake to work on engaging members. Much progress has been made with respect to members becoming engaged.

In Solidarity!
Wendy Jewell, Chair, AUPE Local 69

