



# REPORT

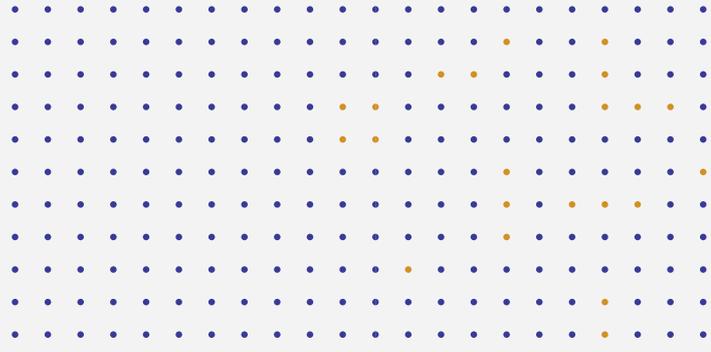
PLANNING WORKSHOP 2019

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC)

April 11-12, 2019

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**STRENGTH IN UNITY  
IS CAPE'S THEME FOR 2019.**

## SUMMARY

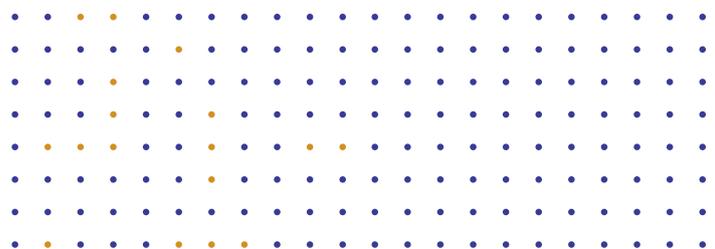
In February 2019, the National Executive Committee (NEC) identified the need to undertake an in-depth analysis of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) to identify a direction for the organization and prioritize next steps. CAPE quickly acted and organized a two-day workshop, which was held on April 11-12 in Mont-Tremblant, Québec. A total of four employees and 16 NEC members participated in the workshop.

Moderated by expert facilitator Marc Valois of Intersol Group, the fundamental structure of the workshop revolved around the development of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis. The workshop was held as an interactive forum to effectively draw upon diverse perspectives.

During the workshop, participants worked in small groups examining CAPE's internal strengths and weaknesses and generating ideas to help build a healthy, stable and resilient association. In addition, the group identified external threats and opportunities to take advantage of as an organization.

The participants also had the opportunity to listen to a presentation on the concept of "conflict of interest". And participants discussed what would need to be done in order to empower locals.

This report delineates emerging themes and observations raised during plenary and breakout sessions, and captures ideas and knowledge exchanged throughout the workshop. It also sets out short-term priorities and recommendations.





# 1. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the workshop was to **identify the most urgent matters to address in the near to mid-term and to formulate action items accordingly.**

The first order of business was for participants to reaffirm the main objective and expand on overall desired outcomes. These desired outcomes, in no particular order, were to:

- Become better acquainted with each other;
- Gain a better understanding of the future pathway/direction;
- Identify issues to resolve;
- Develop a strategic plan and formulate a vision for NEC members to adopt over the next year and a half;
- Work in unison towards a common goal and adequately serve all members;
- Become a more effective and thriving NEC;
- Promote the value of EC and TR and LoP members;
- Ensure the NEC is being heard;
- Receive feedback from the NEC on areas that will lead to a longer-term strategy;
- Promote member engagement and solidify the relationship with the union;
- Identify measures to cultivate positive leadership; and
- Strengthen relationships.

## 2. RATIONALE

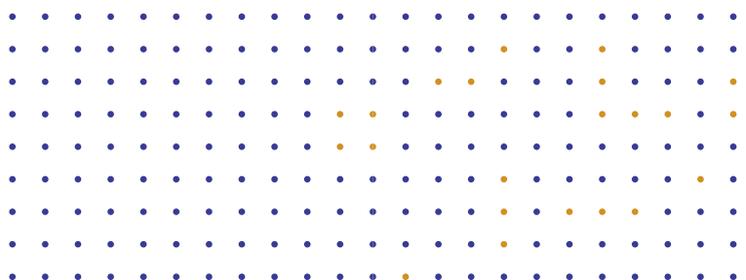
### *Why are we doing this? Who are we doing this for?*

Before diving into the SWOT analysis and looking to the future, participants reiterated the critical importance of keeping members' best interest front and centre. With that in mind, participants listed mutual expectations of CAPE, which were collectively identified by the group:

CAPE should:

- Be a transparent and accountable organization;
- Be in a state of readiness to tackle an array of subjects;
- Be effective at bargaining, representation and advocacy;
- Improve members' working conditions and always defend their rights;
- Be carefully managed and ensure union dues are also well-managed;
- Be available, knowledgeable and work "small miracles";
- Provide members with timely responses;
- Proactively provide continuous, expeditious information useful to members;
- Take a public position on causes and/or issues important to members;
- Remain professional and diplomatic when dealing with the government;
- Clearly communicate challenges surrounding the implementation of the Collective Agreement to better service and meet members' expectations;
- Provide a constant flow of communication and maintain efforts to engage members;
- Build upon its successes while simultaneously dealing with issues that must be addressed;
- Create a healthy work environment for its own staff to lead by example.

Meanwhile, members of the NEC agreed that they should be respectful towards each other and refrain from disparagement and disrespect. All agree that their guiding principles for constructive and robust debate should be solidarity, teamwork and collaboration.



### 3. SWOT ANALYSIS



Part of the SWOT analysis was to identify and examine the interrelation between external opportunities and threats while looking at CAPE’s internal strengths and weaknesses. This framework will help develop strategies to build on those strengths, leverage opportunities, minimize weaknesses and protect against threats through foresight and planning.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** Strength was characterized as a positive asset that provides CAPE with a competitive advantage relative to other unions, whereas weakness was defined as an area of improvement or vulnerability in the ability to effectively meet its mandate.

**Opportunities and Threats:** Opportunities are favourable situations CAPE should seize to increase productivity and to better position itself within the federal public sector union space. Threats were construed as barriers or external factors that may potentially be considered a risk or harmful to CAPE and the members, and that must be avoided, neutralized or mitigated.

Notwithstanding uncontrollable factors, the SWOT analysis illustrate key areas requiring immediate action.

## Summary of the SWOT analysis:

INTERNAL	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association led by a dynamic, dedicated, diverse, experienced and professional leadership team and membership</li> <li>• Strong community of dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers</li> <li>• High calibre of leadership with significant involvement</li> <li>• Significant internal cooperation between NEC members and management team</li> <li>• Renewed commitment to operating in both official languages</li> <li>• Active engagement of the NEC and increased engagement of members as a result of enhanced communications (e.g. newsletters, online articles, etc.)</li> <li>• Strong financial management</li> <li>• Fiscally responsible NEC and management delivering professional services on a budget supported by the lowest union dues in the federal public service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website and information products insufficient to promote and detail CAPE's services</li> <li>• CAPE reputation weakened by recent political infighting</li> <li>• Members have reported glitches in service delivery and support to members (i.e. speed of reaction, quality of response and access to stewards)</li> <li>• Outdated internal systems and processes</li> <li>• Workforce planning has to better catch up with growth and change</li> <li>• Workspace is limited and an immediate problem in a context of growth</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of new, affordable technology to improve CAPE operations and productivity and to facilitate interaction between members and headquarters</li> <li>• Vacuum of certain types of training, a chance for CAPE to step in to add value for members</li> <li>• Most unions want to work with CAPE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic uncertainties could impact membership (i.e. inflation, marketplace fluctuation, federal debt increase, impact on percentage of job increase, aging workforce)</li> <li>• Federal elections could impact membership and relationship with unions</li> <li>• Rapidly evolving technology and potential reckless expeditious adoption by the government (i.e. AI and automation, a repeat of Phoenix)</li> <li>• Cyber security is often one step behind hackers (i.e. vulnerability of member data)</li> <li>• Political paralysis from in-fighting</li> <li>• Pending lawsuits</li> </ul>



## 4. VISION STATEMENT

In this exercise, the group brainstormed the interpretation of CAPE's vision and were requested to complete the following sentence:

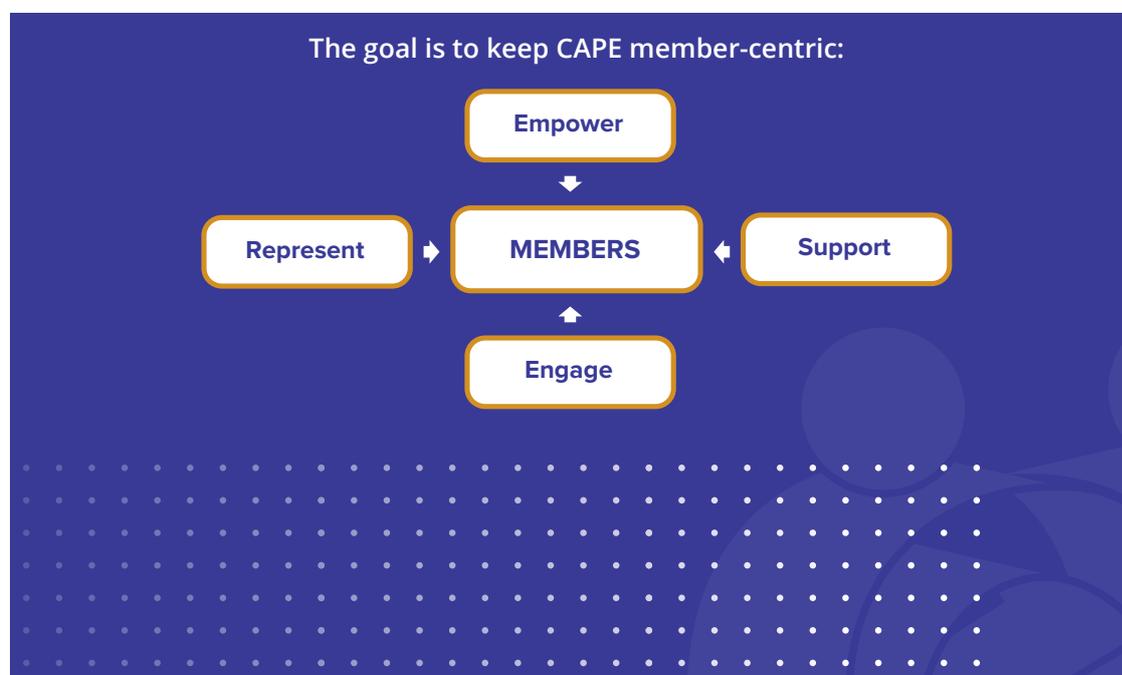
**“CAPE exist to** (what’s the value proposition that enables the delivery of core services), **in ways which** (values and principles), **as measured by** (how to scale success/what are the metrics used)”.

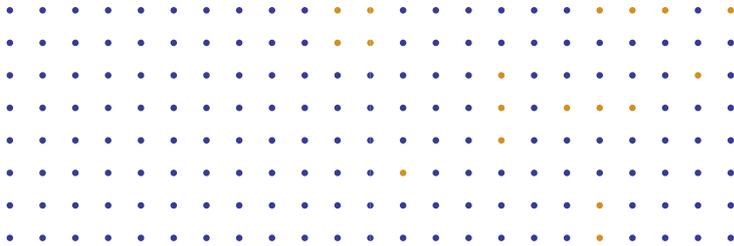
Individual statements were shared among the teams at different tables and condensed into one statement to formulate a congruent vision. Proposed statements revealed commonalities.

Ultimately, participants unanimously agreed on the following statement with a number of critical key words:

*“CAPE exists to effectively represent and advocate on behalf of all members at the bargaining tables on labour relations, employment and workplace related matters, and any other issues affecting the membership in order to support, protect and advance the interests and rights of all members in a way that is effective and accountable, serves the needs of all the members, that is fair, timely, confidential and complete, proactive and in a reactive manner, professional and carried with integrity to meet and exceeds members’ expectations, and as measured by the level of member satisfaction, engagement, participation and support, along with the absence of complaints.”*

The next step would consist in boiling the statement down to a more concise value proposition that captures its essence. While the word “empower” does not appear in the statement, it is nonetheless implied and would need to be considered as part of CAPE’s revised vision statement.





## 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST



A high-level briefing on conflict of interest was presented by a legal counsel from Mr. Peter Engelmann of Goldblatt Partners LLP. The presentation covered information related to fiduciary duties, the definition of conflict of interest, and ways to respond to and resolve conflicts, an overview of the Solemn Declaration, and when to declare a conflict and recuse oneself.

Various scenarios were described to highlight when a conflict of interest exists, along with ramifications as a result of a violation of the conflict of interest rule. A draft copy of another public service union's Conflict of Interest Policy was circulated for review, which can potentially serve as a framework to emulate, should CAPE decide to initiate its own.

During the Q&A period, participants had the opportunity to seek further clarification on fiduciary duties (to CAPE members, CAPE as an institution, and/or to the NEC). Although a subtle difference, it was asserted that decisions made by the NEC must not be undermined by NEC members and should be adhered to.

Formal training on conflict of interest was recommended for all members of the NEC. While CAPE applies an informal system to manage conflict of interest, which can be maintained, if self-regulation and recusal are matters of concern, further consideration should be given to either formalizing it into a policy or amending the Solemn Declaration as examples.

## 6. FRAMEWORK FOR LOCALS

CAPE President Greg Phillips touched upon the recent initiative that enabled all NEC members to attend regional Annual General Meetings (AGM) as observers. Their presence was highly appreciated and deemed valuable by members. It was recommended to establish their participation as standard practice to improve oversight, transparency and to build members' trust and confidence.

Meanwhile, concern was communicated over the lack of structure exhibited by certain locals. It was noted that a few are operating without a steward or an executive committee. In other cases, elections or AGMs are not held and communication is done through external emails, which could be perceived as unprofessional. Furthermore, translation services are often performed in-house with disappointing results. Another area of concern is the handling of locals' membership lists, which does not always follow strict data protection procedures and could lead to a breach of confidentiality for which CAPE could be held responsible.

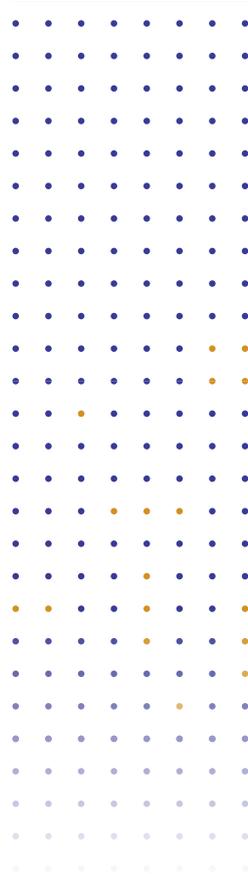
Ongoing attempts have been made to improve the situation by discussing these issues during local leaders' meetings. Participants were invited to consider the production of a governance document for locals, which would outline basic requirements to create a consistent structure and ensure management and procedures are consistent across all locals.

The following observations and recommendations emerged:

- To minimize any resistance to this new process, locals should be given the opportunity to provide input towards the content of the document;
- A systematic process bylaw framework requiring locals to submit bylaw amendments for review by the Constitutions Bylaws Committee was previously established, and merits further attention;
- Address the conundrum of locals failing to sign the Privacy Policy, yet eager to acquire their membership lists;
- While there is overall support for the new practice of NEC members attending regional AGMs, any formalization of this concept should be delayed until results can be assessed and improvement identified prior to this initiative being standardized;
- As the representatives at the Employer level, it is incumbent upon locals to convene AGMs for their members to remain well-informed;
- Consider offering a stipend or benefits for volunteers as a means of increasing participation despite a possible increase in costs, which should be viewed as a long-term, beneficial investment in the membership;
- Minimum standards to follow must be clearly communicated at the local level;
- Organize a full-day session or awareness campaign to clarify understanding of the role of locals;
- Develop a standard locals' package;
- Invite a local to the National Capital Region to take part in a NEC meeting;
- Institute mandatory training for newly elected local presidents

A draft bylaw framework was circulated for review and consideration. It was

well received and the direction was to go forward with its adoption and present recommendations at the NEC table.



## 7. DESIRED FUTURE

### *What is the outlook for the next 1.5 years?*

As a member-driven organization, the group concurred that the desired future state of the organization must include a stronger emphasis on:

- Improving working conditions for members;
- Creating synergies;
- Engaging in concerted efforts to resolve membership issues and promote workplace concerns (e.g. bargaining, labour relations);
- Maintaining the momentum of good governance and accountability;
- Working towards the development of a risk management framework to recognize external threats;
- Addressing conflicts more informally and based on mutual respect and open lines of communication;
- A management team that can focus on the work it is expected to do; and
- A functional union.

The participants then attempted to identify key enablers to drive change and help transition to the desired state, as well as the impediments and barriers that could jeopardize CAPE's ability to execute its mandate. Strategies to remove roadblocks were also explored.

<b>ENABLERS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED FUTURE STATE</b>	<b>BARRIERS TO REALIZE DESIRED FUTURE STATE</b>	<b>STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH CHALLENGES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize/sequence goals</li> <li>• Establish procedures and processes to avoid re-occurrence</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• The NEC (building on existing strengths)</li> <li>• Strong leadership</li> <li>• New organizational chart</li> <li>• Qualified CAPE staff</li> <li>• Change in processes to boost efficiency</li> <li>• Regular bylaw updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complacency</li> <li>• Time and resources</li> <li>• Lack of continuity in the direction taken by the organization's leadership</li> <li>• Unrealistic expectations</li> <li>• Competing priorities and unforeseen emergencies</li> <li>• Not enough funds towards leadership training and development</li> <li>• Inability to build consensus</li> <li>• Inability to move beyond political differences in order to move forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make resources available</li> <li>• Stay focussed on the task at hand</li> <li>• Maintain a positive attitude</li> <li>• Engage members with different views of CAPE in a constructive dialogue</li> <li>• Accept and uphold decisions made by the NEC</li> <li>• Gain a clearer understanding of the roles of CAPE's employees</li> <li>• Take an uncompromising stand against unacceptable behaviour including abusive behaviour</li> <li>• Less talk, more action!</li> </ul>

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants formulated actionable priorities towards the achievement of the desired end-goal, at which time a number of recommendations were introduced, including:

- Developing a practical process to deal with the backlog of unresolved complaints;
- Concentrating on good governance and seeking further guidance from legal counsel on best practices to adopt;
- In conjunction with the Fee Report and Jelly Report, referring to the Institute on Governance (IOG) report and extracting action items identified for implementation;
- Establishing internal control systems and measurements to identify weakness and areas of improvement;
- Exploring the possibility of hiring a full time Vice-President;
- Determining the most effective mechanisms to communicate with members on their rights, and placing greater emphasis on member engagement efforts;
- Receiving a list from CAPE's Director of Communications of how the NEC can assist to further support the communications' division.

The group was reminded that most of the above suggestions have been raised in the past and have either been addressed or are in the process of being addressed.

Several items fall within the scope of the work of the Director of Communications who is also currently managing the revival of the Communications Advisory Committee.

The aspiration is to reach a gold standard; but it is essential to remain pragmatic given certain limitations (e.g. lack of office space, fixed budget). Additionally, there are complexities in realizing many of the recommendations referenced in the IOG report. However, this validates the actions of management and demonstrates consensus on these issues. These items necessitate a systematic approach, flexible schedule and attention must be focussed on impactful endeavours that will yield positive outcomes for CAPE and the membership, as a whole.

There was unanimous agreement to pursue with the review of the three reports and the suggestion was made to either convene a special national executive committee meeting or curtail the NEC agenda as additional time must be allocated to review and determine what actions to take at this juncture.



## 9. NEXT STEPS

Reflecting on the above recommendations, participants agreed on the following next steps:

1. Claude Vezina, CAPE's Executive Director, will lead the review of the reports, which will entail a three-step process: discussion at the management level, followed by discussions with the human resources sub-committee, and then presenting recommendations to the NEC. It was suggested to strike a sub-committee of two or three individuals from the management team and/or the NEC to assist in the governance review of the reports. Once established, all three reports will be disseminated to outline key areas for the NEC to consider. Interested volunteers can put their names forward at the next NEC meeting.
2. Katia Theriault, CAPE's Director of Communications, will oversee the development of the planning workshop report.
3. Katia also to identify in writing necessary support mechanisms vital to her role. She however confirmed that as those needs arise, the NEC will be notified through the monthly reports.

Subsequent steps will be communicated at the NEC meeting on April 26, 2019.

## 10. KEY TAKEAWAYS

Discussion topics and comments raised during the two-day retreat galvanized several key takeaways, including:

- Through a participatory process, the group prioritized main areas of focus;
- NEC members emerged feeling more engaged and committed to refining the process of delivering the best product and service to all the members;
- The membership will benefit from a steady deployment of ongoing improvements;
- A report will be produced for NEC members to review;
- A result matrix capturing recommendations put forth will be developed and closely monitored;
- The membership is led by a diligent, competent and committed NEC as evidenced by this off-site planning workshop;
- CAPE is on the mend and moving towards a new and positive trajectory.



# 11. CONCLUSION

On balance, the NEC planning workshop contributed to gaining a better understanding of CAPE’s challenges requiring imminent attention and reaffirmed the importance of aligning priorities towards matters affecting the members in order to serve their best interest.

The NEC members concluded that an effective member engagement strategy supported by streamlined communication is paramount to leverage and promote the advocacy agenda. By converging into teams on a rotating basis, participants had the chance to collectively exchange views, resulting in the compilation of key recommendations and deliverables.

The SWOT analysis provided an actual portrayal of CAPE’s current position relative to weaknesses and potential threats to avoid by harnessing the organization’s strengths and targeting available opportunities to improve the effective delivery of services to all members.

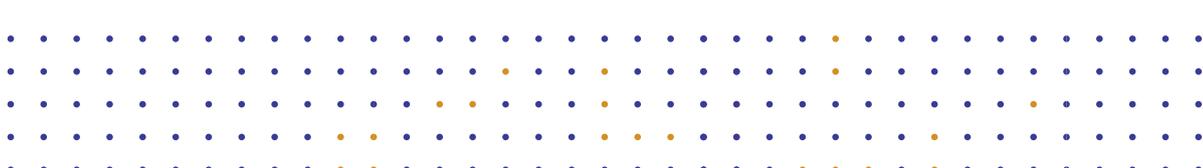
Amid adversities and in the spirit of Strength in Unity, CAPE will continue to strive to make a cumulative impact on the organization while serving the members’ best interest, and creating a safe, fair and equitable work environment. With an ever-increasing focus on improving member engagement, progress on the implementation of the recommendations will hinge upon collaboration and a commitment from the NEC, the National Office, elected officials and at the local level.

A satisfaction survey assessing the retreat was sent out in both official language and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

# 12. PARKING LOT ITEMS

Below are outstanding issues that were raised during the workshop and that warrant further discussion:

- Visioning exercise for the communications department.
- There was interest in beginning some forward planning to ensure an informed decision is reached regarding the office building/lease agreement. This will determine whether to proceed with renovations, convert storage space to offices, or whether at some point in the future, the offices should be relocated to a new building altogether.
- Open a discussion among members of the future purpose of the defense fund.
- Maximize the use of the investment portfolio.
- Conduct a holistic review of the constitution.
- Develop a code of conduct or rules of engagement encompassing a culture-setting list of commitments and values to be embraced and fostered.
- It was suggested the management team considers establishing a permanent translator position at the National Office.
- The group strongly endorsed the development and adoption of a formal Conflict of Interest Policy. It was also reminded that it is the NEC’s duty to ensure elected members sitting on different committees are well-informed on potential conflicts and clearly understand what constitutes as conflict. It was requested to add this item for discussion on the next agenda.



## 12. PARKING LOT ITEMS (CONTINUED)

- During the SWOT exercise, several other weaknesses and threats were deemed “important”, including: social media, Phoenix-related issues, service delivery and internal union issues (e.g. politics, reputation vulnerability resulting in member poaching, reserve funds could be targeted, potential change in the benefit package etc.). As for weaknesses, CAPE’s mission being ineffectively articulated and the need to improve mobilization of members were recognized. With respect to communications, though substantial work and progress have been made thus far, it was categorized as a weakness due to its vast potential for improvement.
- In the spirit of reconciliation and as an ongoing practice, it was strongly recommended that prior to any CAPE meetings or events acknowledgment be made that it takes place on the unceded Algonquin Territory.
- It was requested using this report as a purposeful document/roadmap to track and measure progress and outcomes of the workshop.
- It was agreed to strike a sub-committee of the NEC to perform a governance review of the three reports discussed and put forth recommendations. The approval of volunteers to sit on the sub-committee will occur at the next NEC meeting.
- The Harassment Policy was not read out loud and this oversight should serve as an aide-mémoire for its inclusion at future meetings.



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