

Shelley Hovey for EC Director

Supporting a progressive platform for CAPE

Our union, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, has been moving towards a stronger, more active and democratic model of unionism. Under the current leadership of President Emmanuelle Tremblay, as well as a number of members of the national executive and many local leaders, CAPE has achieved great progress towards having more engaged locals, broader membership consultation and working towards broader social justice instead of limiting ourselves to our own self-interest.



CAPE members have also been better informed and consulted on many issues including job action preparedness at a time when we were forced down the conciliation\strike path, a member-led initiative on introducing a progressive dues structure and a more meaningful consultation on bargaining priorities after the election of the Liberal government. There is still progress to be made and one of the key aspects of this work will be done in the context of a participatory process to review our Constitution and Bylaws.

I have been a local leader for six years and I have witnessed the limitations imposed by a business union model whereby the Association does not seek to engage its members and local leaders, does not participate meaningfully in labour-management consultation and has no visible presence in the workplace. While there is clear value having professional labour relations officers representing individual members, empowered members and local leaders are also key players in a vibrant union. More active and empowered locals are amongst the most visible changes brought about by the current leadership and I want to see this continue to grow.

The membership of today and tomorrow is not the same as the membership of the past – different labour market, different needs, and different demographics. An inclusive and participatory union model recognizes that people want a more active say in the union and not the old-school paternalistic way: ‘we’ll take care of things and let you know if you need to show up’.

Members expect to be consulted on issues, and be provided with reliable, succinct and usable information for decision-making in an increasingly information rich environment. They expect to be able to engage in a variety of ways. They don’t expect to face the same bureaucracy from their union, as they do in the workplace. That is why local representatives should be able to demonstrate good judgement, treat people respectfully, and help create inclusive and problem solving cultures to address workplace challenges.

Recently, this progressive project has been threatened by regressive forces in the union that have attempted to use online bully tactics, lies and misinformation, to damage the association, the President's reputation, and to derail the progressive agenda. This behavior has to stop. What this has done is to create and amplify the crisis at CAPE at a critical time in the Association’s collective bargaining with the employer.

I want CAPE to focus on the pro-member agenda that the current NEC priorities underline. If you elect me, I will work collaboratively with the NEC members for the continued betterment of CAPE instead of continuing with in-fighting and mud-slinging.

For more details on the project that I intend to contribute to, please visit capestandup-acepdebout.ca

You can also contact me via acepcapereprogress@gmail.com