

From the President's Desk

Normally, I write to you with updates surrounding events and issues that have been occupying AESES and keeping our staff and committees busy working for you, our members. These regular messages are an opportunity for me to share with you the good work that AESES has been doing and the exciting events we're taking part in. This article, however, has been a very hard piece to write this time around. Life as we all know it has changed thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. Will it be temporary? How temporary? Will there be some lasting changes? Do I have a job when it is all said and done? What will it look like?

All of these are unknowns and very difficult to predict. All we can do is keep going one day at a time and follow the rules of physical distancing and self-isolation, as required.

AESES continues to work hard on behalf of our members, even though most are working remotely. Some of our members are still working on their University campus, where work has been determined to be essential or must continue but can't be performed remotely. We hope you will all stay healthy.

AESES, too, is working remotely for the most part. We are accepting emails (preferably) at [aaeses@aeses.ca](mailto:aeses@aeses.ca) and messages on our main phone line at (204) 949-5200.

We are continuing to communicate with both Universities surrounding COVID-19 matters. We have held one meeting with

Human Resources at the University of Manitoba on March 18th and have been continuing those communications when issues or questions arise. A remote meeting with Human Resources at The University of Winnipeg is scheduled for March 31st and we anticipate a better working relationship with them going forward.

The Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) has cancelled its May meeting, which was scheduled to be held in Prince George, British Columbia. While it is clear we are unable to meet in person, there may be a chance for some communication via email or online resources. And, in the midst of all the worrying news, here is a good news story on the CCU website: <http://www.ccu-csc.ca/a-motion-on-pharmacare-for-all-passed-in-the-house-of-commons-last-week-and-you-probably-missed-it/>

We may email the membership and, from time to time, post letters or updates to our website. At a time when some of our members may have questions or are feeling anxious, I encourage all of you to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or by visiting www.aeses.ca to get the latest information.

I wish each and every one of you the best. Remember that AESES is here for you and we will endeavour to support all of you in these unprecedented times.

In solidarity,



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HELP!!

AESES is here for you! Communicating during the pandemic

Can You Tell Me?

WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO ME DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK?

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, many people are experiencing frustration, anxiety, and confusion on how to handle things. These are unprecedented times and everyone is trying to find their way through this uncharted territory. AESES is here to help guide you to many different kinds of support that you might need during this time.

Economic Support

Thus far, the Government of Canada has extended a number of economic benefits, although individual eligibility may vary. These benefits include items such as:

- Increased Canada Child Benefit (for those who are eligible)
- Increased Goods and Services Tax Credit (for those who are eligible)
- Extra time for filing income taxes
- Mortgage Support
- Updated Canada Emergency Response Benefit
- Moratorium on repayment of Canada Student Loans
- Employment Insurance one week waiting period waived for Sick Leave benefits (for people who do not have sick leave available through work)

Some of these benefits have not taken effect yet. For example,

the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Child Benefit should become available in April and May, respectively.

For more information on the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, please refer to the website www.canada.ca.

Mental Health Support

Both Universities have mental health supports available to all staff. At The University of Winnipeg, support is available to eligible employees through Blue Cross' Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP). At the University of Manitoba, support is available through Shepell's Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP).

At UW, access MB Blue Cross EFAP via:

Phone: 1-800-590-5553

Website: www.mygoodhealth.ca

Mobile app: mybluecross mobile

At UM, access Shepell via:

Phone: 1-800-387-4765

Website: www.workhealthlife.com

Mobile app: My EAP

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Additionally, the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM) also has a support line available. When calling, you will be asked to leave your name and phone number, and a representative will contact you as soon as possible. The service is available at the following times on weekdays from 9 AM-9 PM and on weekends from 10 AM-4 PM. The number to call is 204-925-0040. You can also visit their webpage for more information at www.adam.mb.ca.

Community Support

Are you unable to leave your residence during this time to access everyday items such as groceries and prescriptions? Conversely, are you healthy and able to leave your residence to help others? Help Next Door MB is a way to get and give support. This service operates on the principle of “neighbours helping neighbours” and it offers to connect volunteers with people unable to leave their home due to self-isolation, sickness, and compromised immune systems. Visit www.helpnextdoormb.ca for more information on this free service.

Unemployment Support

Have you recently been laid off? The Community Unemployed Help Centre provides information, assistance, advice, and representation to individuals dealing with the federal government’s Employment Insurance. They can help those affected individuals navigate through the process of applying for Employment Insurance. The service is available free of charge and can be accessed via phone at 204-942-6556 or

email at cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca. Visit www.cuhc.mb.ca for more information.

Ongoing Informational Support

If you’re looking for more information on COVID-19, the Province of Manitoba government website provides informational updates and resources for Manitobans. Please visit www.gov.mb.ca for provincial government updates.

Additionally, both Universities have webpages dedicated to communicating updates on COVID-19, as it relates to each employer. At UW, visit www.uwinnipeg.ca/covid-19 for current information. At UM, visit www.umanitoba.ca/coronavirus for ongoing messaging from the University.

Finally, AESES is also committed to providing continuous updates to our members. Please bookmark our page www.aeses.ca/covid-19-info-updates to follow us for relevant information.

The AESES Business Office is currently closed in order to respect physical distancing recommendations set out by the government. That doesn’t mean we are unavailable! Although we are not meeting in-person to provide support to our members at the moment, the office remains operational via phone and email during normal business hours. If you have any questions at all during this time, please reach out to us via phone at 204-949-5200 to leave a message for a call back, or by email at aeeses@aeeses.ca.

COVID-19 Effects on AESES Activities

As a result of the COVID-19 virus and recommendations from the Province of Manitoba and Health Canada with regard to social distancing, AESES has undertaken a number of measures to ensure the well-being of our members and AESES Office staff.

AESES Office Closure

AESES Office staff will be observing remote working arrangements. Members can still reach the office and/or our labour relations staff with any questions or concerns they have as AESES staff will be monitoring phone and email messages regularly.

Scheduled AESES Events

The Spring education seminars have been cancelled. Registration fees are being returned in full. The Annual General Meeting, which was scheduled to take place on April 14th, will be postponed to a later date, which is yet to be determined. The annual Members’ Day Lunches, planned for early May, will not be taking place this year.

AESES Annual Report

Despite the AGM being postponed, members still have an opportunity to access and review our 2019 Annual Report online, via the secure Members’ Only area of the AESES website. If you have not yet signed up to access the Members’ Only section, click on the ‘Request an Account’ link in the right-hand column of our www.aeses.ca homepage. You will then be asked to fill in some contact details, as part of the registration process. Once verified, you can login to see this year’s report, as well as copies from previous years.



Reflecting on CCU's Executive Board Meeting

WRITTEN BY MELISSA BLONJEAUX, AESES BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

I would like to thank AESES for giving us all an opportunity to attend a Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) conference. What a great experience for new and more seasoned board members. I must say the flight there was quite the event – at the time there were large snowfall amounts in Newfoundland and delays across many Canadian airports. My flight was delayed as it was coming from Calgary, so it didn't connect with my Toronto flight. I was advised to book the 8 PM flight as the 6:30 PM flight was already full. So it ended up being a 5-6 hour wait in the Toronto airport before I connected to Halifax. Once I arrived in Halifax, I connected with others who were also coming in late to Halifax and we shared the taxi to the hotel.

The first day of the planned sessions for CCU occurred on the Saturday for labour school. I really enjoyed the labour school as it allowed us to work in groups around tables. The facilitator was enthusiastic and kept the audience engaged in the sessions. We were paired with someone at our table and asked to introduce them to the room. We also participated in group table exercises where we were asked questions about the challenges and questions we face when organizing union activities or when recruiting. It was fun because they gave us sticky notes to write on and there was quite a bit of similar comments throughout the various tables. I liked the ladder of engagement model and the snowflake model for building on team structure.

One of our participants, Shelby Kennedy, works in the beautiful Halifax central library, with its gorgeous building design. She gave us all a tour of the library. I enjoyed the walk there as weather was quite decent and sunny and I was quite impressed with what we all were able to see. The top floor has a beautiful restaurant and full top-to-bottom windows looking out on gorgeous views of Halifax. Outside the library, we noticed a man dressed in all yellow who jogged on the spot. Apparently he jogs there every Saturday and he told us he was training to run across Canada. He gave us all his business card and we talked to him for awhile.

On the Saturday evening we were invited to an exciting lacrosse game, with the Halifax Thunderbirds playing against

the San Diego Seals. This was my first time watching lacrosse. I loved it! I couldn't believe how aggressive these young men were. Halifax really came through at the end with a final score of 8 to 5.

On the Sunday we had our CCU Executive meeting. The CCU was thorough when we went through the minutes and we reviewed the document, page by page. I learned about the groups who attended. It was tragic to hear about the grievances, the shortage of workers, and the poor working conditions that they had to deal with. I heard some sad stories about the lumber and forestry industry in BC. For example, PPWC's mill is currently running at half capacity due to a severe shortage of wood chips. There are also some strikes happening and unpredictable wet weather conditions that are making for dire conditions. One thing that surprised me was that their membership meetings are so well attended and they have more committee members than we do. This made me think...how can we better involve our membership? How can we get more board reps attending these meetings. I don't know what the answer is right now, but I know I will keep engaging my members in my district to get involved. We need to find a way to break barriers and fears that people have about getting involved. Some are worried it will go against their Managers if they get involved in union matters. I hope that I can get more people involved in the Educational Seminars I help organize in the Spring and Fall each year. We have been keeping topics applicable to all interest groups and trying to keep costs reasonable. Maybe we can have more members attending our Members' Day lunches and our Children's Christmas Party, as well as other activities such as the Goldeyes baseball game and bingo bowling outing, which happen throughout the year.

Attending the CCU meeting was really valuable, because doing so allowed me to know what it's all about. I really liked the connections I made with the other groups of people who came from across Canada. I am now connected with some of them online.

Thank-you AESES for sending me. I had a wonderful time and I built some great relationships there.



New Faces and Hires

The most recent list of new AESES employees hired at both universities can be viewed online:

<http://aesess.ca/new-faces/>

AESES Bursaries

The AESES Scholarships for Dependents have been discontinued as of this year. In their stead, bursaries are being set up, with the goal of having them approved and on offer as of the upcoming fall term. Once in place, we will let our membership know of the application process and deadline. Stay tuned.

Event Recaps: Bowling & IWD Presentations

Prior to the effects of the COVID-19 situation being felt in how day-to-day activities are being run at AESES, we managed to pull off two great social members' events.

Firstly, we had a full house at our annual bingo bowling event, held at Billy Mosienko Lanes on February 11th. The first round was won by the team consisting of Tessa P., Frank L., Marie L., Niromi H., Shanaka K., and Gian P. They walked away with tickets to an upcoming Goldeyes baseball game. Sylvia B., Darryl B., Kevin F., Diana P., Doris O., and Denis O. played well and won gift cards to the movie theatre in the second round. The last round's prize consisted of AESES and CCU swag and was won by Lynne W., Michael W., Nancy L., Werner L., Karen D., and Michaelina V.



Round 1: Winning team



Round 2: Winning team



Round 3: Winning team

Secondly, an event celebrating International Women's Day was held on Sunday March 8th at Harrow United Church, at which our very own Leanne Shumka gave a strong and mighty talk about three influential women in the union movement, titled 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: Female Canadian Labour Organizers.' The small but mighty group in attendance learned even more than we already knew about Helen Armstrong, Annie Buller, and CCU co-founder Madeleine Parent. Thank you to Dianne Bulback, Heather Brownlee, Gloria Saindon, Karen Simpson, Laurie Morris, Lisa McKendry and the entire AESES Office for helping put this event on, and to Leanne Shumka for leading the presentation. We will see you all again next year on IWD, which is taking place on March 8, 2021!



IWD presenter Leanne Shumka



Board members Gloria Saindon and Karen Simpson



Leanne Shumka and AESES President Laurie Morris

UW Employee Spotlight

INTRODUCING YOU TO MEAGHAN MICHALUK...

Q1 How long have you been working at the University?

I have been working for the University of Winnipeg for almost 8 years.

Q2 What position do you currently work in?

I started as a Department Assistant in Indigenous Studies Department and then moved on to be the full-time Department Assistant for the Department of Kinesiology and Applied Health. I am currently on a term position as a Student Success Advisor.

Q3 What part of your job do you enjoy the most?

I love working with students. I love being able to ease their minds and help them out. They are always so appreciative of the help and often thank us for caring about them.

Q4 What has been your favourite project at the University?

I am currently working on helping students who are academically struggling at The University of Winnipeg. I see the difference we are starting to make and I hope to continue in the future.

Q5 If you could switch your job with anyone else at the University, whose job would you want?

I would love to be in any position that allows me to advocate and work with students to ensure they are successful and graduate from The University of Winnipeg.

Q6 What piece of advice would you give a new employee?

Get involved on campus! It is important to meet other employees. This will allow you to do your job better and you might even form some lifelong friendships.



Meaghan Michaluk

Q7 Any involvement with AESES through the years?

I have been on the board of representatives with our AESES union for the past two years and I sit on various committees. I recently went to the Canadian Confederation of Unions this past January in Halifax. It was an amazing experience and it has me excited about future work with our AESES Union.



In the June Issue

- Dedicated Service Award Recipient Profile
- Contract Admin Update
- Etcetera

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UW - Mail Room



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