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Remix: Lessons Learned from Public & Private Sector Bargaining Tables

Cindy Oliver
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators

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Presentation to the NCSCBHEP Conference on Collective Bargaining

By Cindy Oliver, President
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators
April, 2015
Access to Bargaining Rights

Labour Law-Labour Codes: Rules of Engagement

BC Labour Code: From Card Check to Mandatory Votes
Delay in Access to Unionization
Opportunity for Employer Interference

New Rules Give Employer Interference More Strength
The Rise of More Precarious Employment

Shift in Employment from Large Employers to Small
Small workplaces harder to organize

Out-Sourcing & Off-Shoring Destabilizing Impact
Employment Security, Job Tenure at Risk

Technological Change
Rapid Shifts have Destabilizing Effect
Full-Employment’s Demise

Core Economic Policies Rely See Jobs as a Bi-Product of Growth

Job creation no longer the primary focus

Legacy of Reaganomics is Alive & Well

Tax cuts seen as cure-all

Globalization & Trade Agreements Exaggerate Problems

Overcoming local/national politics just the first step
The Union Challenge

History of the Labour Movement is a history of struggle
Fighting for gains, fighting concessions

Union narrative is not the mainstream narrative
In our narrative, being strategic is essential
FPSE’s Experience

Our structure has helped position our strategy
Creating mechanisms for pooling resources
Shared Defense Fund support bargaining goals
Recognize the limits and benefits of Local autonomy
Shared Resources help when issues are critical
Examples: Court challenges, organizing
FPSE’s Experience

Influencing the public’s perception of our work
Build support for better funding
Form alliances with students and communities
Current campaign: Open the Doors
Focus on access and affordability
Use our members as advocates for our institutions
Lessons for the Bargaining Table

Foreclose options on the employer

Organizing is part of our effort to raise the floor
Needs to be done in tandem with bargaining
Demonstrates our commitment to more than ourselves
Ensures that the community sees us as an asset
Lessons for the Bargaining Table

Shared Resources Critical to Success

Unions have limited resources

Resources we do have need to be used wisely

Targeted efforts that build capacity

Requires disciplined approach when facing challenges
Lessons for the Bargaining Table

Negotiating on multiple fronts
- Bringing the public on-side
- Make our narrative compelling
- Keep membership engaged in connecting with public
- Align expectations with mobilizing efforts