

## Member-at-Large Candidate Danielle Bobker answer to member questions

### 1. Question

*“Given that Concordia's administration has already unilaterally restructured teaching conditions through LTA non-renewals, sabbatical deferrals, and a hiring freeze, what is your strategy for negotiating a new collective agreement that meaningfully protects faculty working conditions, and how will you ensure CUFA does not simply ratify an austerity agenda under the guise of financial necessity?”*

By Sent Gabriel Vigliensoni

Answer by Danielle Bobker

Our recent extension agreement sold out LTAs. It eroded the conditions of research and teaching while linking pay raises to University revenues. Whereas Article 45.04-09 of the 2023-2026 Collective Agreement outlines a model for real fiscal accountability, the current executive accepted a much weaker “budget liaison committee.” It’s not surprising that most CUFA members - 58% - either voted against the extension or didn’t vote at all.

Pushing back against the employer’s austerity agenda in our next negotiation will be an uphill battle. But CUFA members do the work that is the heart of the University’s academic mission. The employer is nothing without us.

I look forward to working hard with the executive to ensure the best possible deal for CUFA members by (1) consulting with [FQPPU](#) and [CAUT](#) to develop a mobilization plan as soon as possible; (2) educating members about our rights and responsibilities, including how the CAQ’s [Bill 3](#) is trying to change them; (3) implementing a media strategy to help Montrealers and other Canadians understand the multiple threats to Concordia and CUFA and how they can support us; and (4) collaborating with administrators, students, and other unions to lobby political candidates ahead of the upcoming election.

### 2. Question

*“Our next collective agreement negotiations may involve strike action. However, the impact of a strike is inequitable. Financial strain falls hardest on sole providers, renters, and mortgage holders—a pressure even more acute for new Canadians and permanent residents. How can we ensure the burden of collective action doesn't disproportionately harm our most precarious members?”*

Sent by Katja Neves

Answer by Danielle Bobker

CUFA should do everything possible to avoid having to strike and everything possible to use a strike vote as a pressure tactic while bargaining. Paradoxically, the more prepared we are to strike, the less likely it is that a strike will be necessary while we’re negotiating our next collective agreement.

To prepare, CUFA needs first of all to establish that pay for striking members would be on par with their regular pay. We should be able to do that because CUFA's has sufficient funds - over 8 million dollars - in its "war chest."

The [CAUT Defense Fund](#) would kick in during an extended strike. Should we reach that stage, the executive would need to commit to distributing strike pay equitably to ensure that our most precarious colleagues' needs are considered first.

We must also learn about work equity from Concordia's professional staff union ([SEPUC/CUPEU](#)). During their staff strike in 2025, members with child-care needs and medical appointments could make up their four-hour daily shifts on alternate days. Some disabled and ill members contributed by inputting data from home and sit-down jobs like tracking attendance on site were reserved for elderly and disabled members.

### 3. Question

*"How do you propose to address the division in our membership while supporting diversity and inclusion?"*

Sent by Miranda Crowdus

Answer by Danielle Bobker

1012 CUFA members work in four faculties and three libraries, research in dozens of disciplines, and deliver over 500 academic programs. Our nationalities, ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds are also incredibly diverse. Our political views cross the spectrum. If some members are especially frustrated by our differences right now, that is above all a reflection of stress caused by the CAQ's attacks on our University and rising authoritarianism and violence around the world.

A "neutrality" statement issued by the current executive tries to stop CUFA taking positions on "political" issues citing concern over marginalizing some members. This statement is counterproductive (at best) because we have a robust defense of academic freedom in Article 6 of the Collective Agreement.

Democracy is agreeing to disagree, then making decisions by majority vote. The way forward is to recommit to democratic procedures in CUFA's existing governance documents and build on them. Council meetings, AGMs, townhalls, and even end-of-semester luncheons are all opportunities to help new and inexperienced members get comfortable participating in union democracy.

CUFA must also redress system inequities unevenly affecting members' working conditions. I will contribute to the Joint Equity Committee and reestablish CUFA's EDI Committee's advocacy for members facing workplace discrimination.