

Vice-President Candidate Shelley Reuter's answer to written questions.

1. Question

"Last year you received some criticism about the fact that you did not consult the union membership prior to voting at the CAUT Fall Council. Can you please clarify your view of a CUFA delegate at these meetings?"

Sent by Csaba Nikolenyi

Answer by Shelley Z. Reuter

Although CAUT resolutions are not binding on local Associations, some delegates receive voting instructions—with flexibility—from their unions. Others are entrusted to vote in members' best interests. This is CUFA's longstanding practise and is consistent with Robert's Rules: Members of deliberative assemblies "are ordinarily free to act...according to their own judgment" (12th ed., Ch. 1, page 1).

Some considerations:

- Strict voting mandates risk undermining deliberations. During debate, motions are amended, procedural questions arise, and new information emerges. Excessive rigidity limits delegates' ability to respond thoughtfully in the room, to their members' detriment.
- As in negotiations—where Council sets objectives and the negotiating team exercises discretion—delegates apply informed, good-faith judgment. The same principle guides other representative bodies (Faculty Council, Senate, BoG).
- Our [Constitution](#) grants the Executive latitude to represent CUFA externally and make necessary decisions between Council meetings (Article 9).

Ultimately, I share the goal of representing all our members well, including the silent ones. I vote with a view to inclusion, in support of outcomes best serving CUFA. Time-permitting, consultation with Council will guide my approach whenever possible, but it must be coupled with the autonomy needed as a delegate to exercise independent judgment in the moment.

2. Question

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

Sent by Miranda Crowdus

Answer by Shelley Z. Reuter

A faculty association's core responsibility is to represent all its members, honouring the full diversity of members' views and experiences. In recent years, relationships within and across CUFA have been strained, making it increasingly difficult for CUFA to meet that standard. A combative culture has at times impeded the work members rightly expect of the Executive and Council.

During the current mandate, I have seen how deeply divisions run. We must acknowledge the reality that a subset of members remains unwilling to collaborate or support any Executive initiatives. CUFA now finds itself at an inflection point and at this critical juncture, our ability to function as a truly representative, inclusive, and effective faculty union is under real threat.

In response, and in a spirit of openness and good faith, my focus moving forward will be on reaching the reachable: re-engaging the broad majority of CUFA members who still value a functional, respectful, and productive faculty union. By fostering constructive engagement, widening participation, and emphasizing shared objectives among those who want to move forward together, we can begin to rebuild and restore a culture of collegiality that supports our diversity and collective purpose.

3. Question

“There has been talk that the CUFA executive set a political neutrality policy. Is this true and, if so, why would the Executive do this?”

Sent by Amy Swiffen

Answer by Shelley Z. Reuter

Here’s what happened and why it matters: Under [Article 9.1](#) of the [Constitution](#), the Executive administers CUFA’s affairs—including passing motions to protect members. The Executive adopted one such [motion](#) on November 28; members present at the December 3 GM—roughly 11% of the membership—[rejected](#) it.

Three points:

- The motion says nothing about “political neutrality.” It affirms CUFA’s legal duty of fair representation (QC Labour Code, [Article 47.2](#)): Basically, we must defend every member’s rights equally.
- Keeping CUFA’s political actions focused on issues that shape our work, the university, and academia strengthens our legitimacy, reduces internal division, and sharpens our bargaining power. We have always been political in that sense.
- It is also essential to distinguish between the policy term “shall” and the advisory term “should.” This motion does not set policy; it articulates a principled recommendation (“should”) consistent with [Article 2’s](#) mandate to study, safeguard, and promote members’ interests. It asks us to model an inclusive culture where all members feel respected, whatever their views on issues beyond CUFA’s remit. That is how we build solidarity behind the mission that affects our jobs.

Framing this as a “political neutrality policy” misrepresents what the motion *actually* says.