

CUPE National Campaign – Post-Secondary Education: Our Time to Act Structured Conversation Guide

Length:

1 hour (This guide can easily be adapted to a 90 minute or 2 hour session by allowing more time for discussion).

Objectives:

- To share experiences relating to post-secondary education in Canada and identify the need for change;
- To inspire a belief that it does not have to be this way and a sense of hope that change is possible;
- To build support for post-secondary education as an important election issue.

Process/Preparation:

A group of 8 to 10 people are invited to a discussion by the host(s). These gatherings could be in conjunction existing events or as stand-alone events. They can take place at the worksite, at a community location, or in your own home. If the gathering is larger than 10 people, it is recommended that the group break into smaller groups to hold their discussions.

Resources for hosts:

- CUPE pamphlet Post-Secondary Education: Our Time to Act
- Optional: Flip chart and markers
- Optional: CUPE campaign materials

To order copies of CUPE's pamphlet or other campaign materials, contact postsecondary@cupe.ca. To download and print, visit www.cupe.ca/ourtimetoact.

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Time	Activity/ Purpose	Steps	Materials
5 min	Welcome	<p>Welcome the participants and explain that this discussion is part of a CUPE National campaign.</p> <p>As we move into a federal election, we want people talking about why post-secondary education is important and what we need from the next federal government in order to ensure high quality, accessible, publicly funded post-secondary education.</p> <p>Discussions like the one we are holding today are taking place in communities across the country.</p> <p>We hope people who participate will become comfortable talking about post-secondary education and will consider voting on this issue in the federal election in 2019!</p>	
10 min	Introductions	<p>Ask participants to introduce themselves and briefly talk about one way that post-secondary education has affected them (as a student, as a graduate, as a worker, as a family member, or as a community member).</p>	
10 min	Look for patterns	<p>Ask participants to point out any patterns they may have noticed in what was shared. What experiences are common? What experiences differ? What does this tell us about the post-secondary education system in Canada right now?</p> <p>(Optional: record responses on a flip chart.)</p>	Flip chart and markers
10 min	Understanding how we got here	<p>Distribute the Post-Secondary Education: Our Time to Act pamphlet. Note some of the key facts:</p>	Copies of CUPE pamphlet Post-Secondary Education: Our Time to Act.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments have significantly cut funding while tuition has increased. • Student debt is increasing. • Precarious work on campus is increasing. • Corporate control is increasing. <p>Ask participants: How are these facts related? How do they relate to the patterns we just identified?</p> <p>(Optional: record responses on a flip chart.)</p>	<p>Flip chart and markers</p>
<p>5 min</p>	<p>Build hope</p>	<p>Other choices are possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Norway, 96% of funding comes from public sources. In Germany, 86% does. In Canada, only 52% does. • In more than twenty countries around the world, citizens receive free post-secondary education. This includes countries like Brazil, Germany, and Sweden. • Even in Canada, things were once different. The Canadian government provided free tuition to veterans returning from the Second World War. • The federal government also provided 50% of the funding for post-secondary education in Canada at one time. <p>How can we return to that vision of high quality, accessible, publicly funded post-secondary education in Canada?</p> <p>We need the federal government to be a real partner in post-secondary education again. We need the federal government to:</p>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a Post-Secondary Education Act with clear conditions and accountability measures for federal funding; • Create a dedicated Post-Secondary Transfer; • Increase transfer funding by 40% to restore the level of per-student post-secondary funding that was provided in the 1980s; • Work with the provinces to reduce and eventually eliminate tuition fees for post-secondary education. 	
15 min	Identify opportunities	<p>Ask participants: What ideas do we have in the room to help move the issue forward?</p> <p>Let participants identify their own ideas, but here are some suggestions to use as prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write, call, or email your MP and let them know this issue will be determining your vote. • Write your candidates during the campaign – or ask them questions about post-secondary education when they knock on your door. • Compare party platforms and support candidates who are ready to invest in post-secondary education. • Have conversations with family and friends. <p>(Optional: record responses on a flip chart.)</p>	Flip chart and markers
5 min	Closing	<p>Thank people for participating and encourage them to stay involved on this issue.</p> <p>Let participants know about the resources available through CUPE National and on CUPE’s website, including:</p>	<p>Optional: Copies of CUPE campaign materials to show the group</p> <p>Postcards for participants to take back with them to their</p>

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- A petition
- A postcard to the Prime Minister
- A back pocket card with Key Messages to use in conversation with family and friends
- A booklet with more information on post-secondary education
- Backgrounders and myth busters on themes such as federal funding, tuition, and corporatization
- An Advocacy Toolkit to help people engage in conversations with elected officials and candidates about post-secondary education
- Social media resources

Invite participants to host their own structured conversation with colleagues, family, and friends.

Take a group photo and share it (with participants' permission) on Twitter and Facebook, using the hashtag #ourtimetoact.

workplace or their community to get signed and sent to the Prime Minister.