

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

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### **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](mailto:postsecondary@cupe.ca). To download and print, visit [www.cupe.ca/ourtimetoact](http://www.cupe.ca/ourtimetoact).

## Conversation Guide

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"> <li>• Governments have significantly cut funding while tuition has increased.</li> <li>• Student debt is increasing.</li> <li>• Precarious work on campus is increasing.</li> <li>• Corporate control is increasing.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• In Norway, 96% of funding comes from public sources. In Germany, 86% does. In Canada, only 52% does.</li> <li>• In more than twenty countries around the world, citizens receive free post-secondary education. This includes countries like Brazil, Germany, and Sweden.</li> <li>• Even in Canada, things were once different. The Canadian government provided free tuition to veterans returning from the Second World War.</li> <li>• The federal government also provided 50% of the funding for post-secondary education in Canada at one time.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• Adopt a Post-Secondary Education Act with clear conditions and accountability measures for federal funding;</li> <li>• Create a dedicated Post-Secondary Transfer;</li> <li>• Increase transfer funding by 40% to restore the level of per-student post-secondary funding that was provided in the 1980s;</li> <li>• Work with the provinces to reduce and eventually eliminate tuition fees for post-secondary education.</li> </ul>	
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"> <li>• Write, call, or email your MP and let them know this issue will be determining your vote.</li> <li>• Write your candidates during the campaign – or ask them questions about post-secondary education when they knock on your door.</li> <li>• Compare party platforms and support candidates who are ready to invest in post-secondary education.</li> <li>• Have conversations with family and friends.</li> </ul> <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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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A petition</li> <li>• A postcard to the Prime Minister</li> <li>• A back pocket card with Key Messages to use in conversation with family and friends</li> <li>• A booklet with more information on post-secondary education</li> <li>• Backgrounders and myth busters on themes such as federal funding, tuition, and corporatization</li> <li>• An Advocacy Toolkit to help people engage in conversations with elected officials and candidates about post-secondary education</li> <li>• Social media resources</li> </ul> <p>Invite participants to host their own structured conversation with colleagues, family, and friends.</p> <p>Take a group photo and share it (with participants' permission) on Twitter and Facebook, using the hashtag #ourtimetoact.</p>	<p>workplace or their community to get signed and sent to the Prime Minister.</p>
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