

CUPE 5791- Newsletter

May 2018 Issue

President's Message

Members of CUPE 5791

It has been a busy time for our union and we have heard your calls for improved communication. As part of a multifaceted effort at keeping members in the know, we have relaunched this union newsletter. In the coming months, we hope to use this as an added platform to answer your questions and concerns. In order to do that we will need our contributions in the form of questions and concerns. Please read to the end of the newsletter to find out how to contribute.

As a part of the monthly newsletter I, as president will be communicating what I am currently working on. As I hope you are all aware the U of R and CUPE 5791 have just reached a new collective agreement that will take us to the end of 2021. During the discussions of the new contract, there were a few concerns. The first was wording surrounding vacation time, the wording has been amended, and you can see it in this newsletter (it can also be viewed in the collective agreement). The second major concern voiced by members surrounded voting and time to vote. This month the Bylaws committee will be meeting to look at ways we can address the comments we received. We hope to have possible bylaw changes ready to be voted on at our June general meeting.

We are also working with APT/URFA regarding Return to Work accommodations and mental health language. We all hope to come to a memorandum of agreement with the University around these topics in the near future.

Though bargaining has concluded for the bulk of our members, we are still in negotiations with Chartwells Compass Group. Monetary issues are still on the table with more negotiation dates booked May 15/16. We also have one other agreement at First Nations University of Canada that will be expiring September of this year. We will be looking for negotiation dates with this employer in the coming months.

In an effort to stay informed and keep CUPE 5791 involved in the larger union community I attended the Broadbent Institute Progress Summit tour in Saskatoon on April 12 & 13. The theme this year was Inequality, and the speakers were amazing. Topics covered included: Connecting Urban and Rural Saskatchewan, Strategies and Tactics for building Grass-roots, facts on Carbon Pricing, and Indigenous Representation in Politics along with comments on the budget from the Leader of the Saskatchewan NDP, Ryan Mieli. In May I will also be attending Canadian Pension Risk Strategies conference in Toronto on behalf of the Non-Academic Benefits Committee.

The number of grievances we have outstanding with the University remains high. The issues are varied and include: harassment, dismissals, performance reviews, and failed competitions. If you have any questions about your rights or you want to file a grievance, I encourage you to contact me or a member of your executive team. Our contact information is listed at the end of this newsletter. Please remember we are here for you.

Vacation Language

Here is the revised language of our new agreement. The intent is not to change how our holidays are accumulated or awarded only to simplify the language.

CUPE members will accrue vacation each pay period in accordance with the annual rates listed below provided seniority is not broken:

- **less than six years of service – fifteen days per year**
- **six years of service or more but less than eighteen years of service – twenty days per year**
- **eighteen years of service or more but less than twenty-four years of service – twenty five days per year**
- **twenty-four years of service or more – thirty days per year**

Upon commencement and termination, the employee's vacation accrual shall be prorated based upon the days worked in the pay period.

If you are in one of the transition years (5 years, 17 years, 23 years) and are concerned that you have not been awarded your holidays correctly in May 2018

please contact your union executive and we can look at specific cases.

Flex Spending Account

As part of our bargaining in the new collective agreement, we gained not only money but a change to our health spending account. We now have the option of a flex spending account. In November of this year, you will have to decide how your \$800.00 dollars will be distributed. You can place it in your health spending account which is tax free but limited to medical expenses or you can put the money into your flex account. The money in your flex account will be taxable as income but allows you greater flexibility on what wellness services you can purchase.

We have approached HR to ask for some details of this new option. At this point, HR believes that our flex account will mirror the flex account that APT currently has, though we want to stress that nothing has been finalized so small changes may occur.

Below are some of the basics of the program and list that is an example though not exhaustive:

All receipts must be in your name. **Dependents are not eligible for benefits** under the Flex Account Expenses must be for the benefit of and used by the eligible member. However, claims for family memberships are acceptable if you are an active fitness centre member or a recreational member and provided the membership is in your name.

- Each calendar year, you will have the option to fund your Flex Account with credits from your flexible spending benefit.
- Allocations to the Flex Account must be in increments of \$10.
- If no allocation of your flexible spending benefit is made, your credits will default to your health spending account (HSA).

Flex Account Eligible Expenses

The list below is an example and not exhaustive. We will need to contact Sun Life directly if unsure of an eligible expense **WHEN THE BENEFIT IS FINALIZED.**

Athletic Footwear and Swim Wear

- Swim wear (suits and caps)

- Athletic footwear (ice skates, baseball cleats, roller blades, curling shoes, hiker shoes/boots, golf shoes/sandals, and specialized running shoes (not casual wear)).

Fitness (including related services) and sport activity memberships and fitness lessons

- Fitness centre memberships
- Registration fees for fitness-related programs or lessons, such as aerobics, yoga, dance lessons
- Sport team memberships and registration fees
- Annual memberships, such as golf
- Court fees, green fees, ski passes, lift tickets and race registration
- Personal trainers, fitness consultants, lifestyle consultants and exercise physiologists

Fitness/Sports Equipment

- Home fitness equipment such as treadmills, exercise bikes and universal gyms
- Bicycles, child bike trailers, tennis racquets, golf clubs, safety helmets
- Heart rate monitors, jogging/cycling strollers, skates, canoe/kayak, yoga mat
- Electronic tracking devices (i.e., Fitbit)

Health Support and Related Services

- Weight management programs (excluding food) including hypnosis seminars
- Smoking cessation programs
- Nutrition programs and counselling
- Maternity services (prenatal classes and mid-wife services)
- Services of the following alternative health practitioners; iridologist, herbalist, homeopath, athletic therapist, Chinese medical practitioner, Shiatsu therapist, osteopathic practitioner, sleep assessment
- Stress management programs
- Cholesterol and hypertension screening
- First aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training
- Personal allergy tests such as food intolerance testing, holistic allergy testing and allergy blood tests
- Vitamins and supplements, including herbal products
- Other alternative wellness services; Reiki, Ayurvedic medicine, touch therapy, rolfing, light therapy and hypnosis seminars

Recreation and Leisure

- Fishing rods/reels, camping tents, commercially produced ice fishing structures

Professional Services

- Services of professionals for estate planning, financial counselling, tax return preparation and will preparation

Exclusions:

- Services provided by family members
- Claims for family members, unless the claim is in the member's name and for a family membership at a fitness or recreational centre
- Services offered by health practitioners that could be payable under a provincial or private supplemental health plan or a Health Spending Account
- Sandals (other than golfing/hiking)
- Clothing, other than swimwear
- Maintenance of equipment
- Assembly, service or delivery fees
- Interest charges or maintenance fees
- Certain equipment or supplies for hobby activities (i.e. Weaponry and ammunition, camping equipment)
- Fees related to physical activity (e.g., lockers, books, exams)
- Exercise videos and electronic programs/games

Knowing your Benefit Rights

Did you know our benefits provide 80% coverage for a licensed:

- chiropodist/podiatrist,
- physiotherapist,
- reflexologist,
- psychologist,
- speech pathologist,
- osteopath,
- chiropractor,
- naturopath,
- acupuncturist and
- registered massage therapist

For the diagnosis or treatment, except when performed in a hospital, the maximum payable expense for each type of practitioner is \$300 per

person in a calendar year. *Coverage is limited to the rates typically charged by the providers in the regional area where the expense is incurred for the product or service being claimed.

Some of these benefits are not commonly offered under employment benefits, so coverage can be declined when we submit reimbursement claims. If this happens to you, you can contact SunLife directly to ask why it was declined, or you can call our HR contact for benefits and she will look into it for you. The Pension & Benefits Analyst for CUPE 5791 is Angela Rensby, and she can be reached by email at angela.rensby@uregina.ca or by phone at 585-4167.

We have seen uncommon expenses like reflexology declined regularly. The staff at SunLife easily miss that we have this coverage and it is declined, but reimbursed through Health Spending 100%. As we have this coverage you need to contact SunLife or our HR contact to have this corrected. Your HS account will be reimbursed 80% of the coverage and it will come out of your benefits.

Contacts and Ways to Contribute

Do you have questions about your rights? Do you think there are issues facing the union that is not widely known? Then we want to hear from you. This newsletter is your forum to ask questions and receive detailed answers for all members of CUPE 5791. If you have a question or issue please submit it to CUPE.5791@uregina.ca. We will ask the right people the question and get everyone the information. When it comes to most issues it is likely you are not the only one questioning it.

The union website is also a great source of information. This newsletter as well as information about upcoming events and educational opportunities can be found at

<https://5791.cupe.ca/welcome-to-cupe-999/>

We also want to remind you that your executive is here for you. We have one paid staff member, our president, but the rest of the executive is also available to help answer your questions or advise you.

Please take a look at the team and consider approaching the member at large for your area with your questions so that we can keep you in the know.

Your Executive Team:

Table Officers

President – Jamie Mellor
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Upcoming Meetings

General Meeting- May 9, 2018 (AH 527)

Executive Meeting- May 30, 2018

General Meeting- June 13, 2018 (AH 527)

Executive Meeting – June 27, 2018