



**COVID-19—  
Component Educator  
Representatives  
Videoconference**

October 27, 2020

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is a family of 11 Component and 3 affiliate unions. Taken together, we are one of the largest unions in Canada. Most of our 390,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. We also have a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses.

Larry Brown, President

Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer

**COVID-19—Component Educator Representatives Videoconference**  
**October 27, 2020**  
**11:00 am EDT**

## **PARTICIPANTS**

<b>HSAA/NUPGE</b>	Earl Victor
<b>MGEU/NUPGE</b>	Laurie Bleeks
<b>OPSEU/NUPGE</b>	Marty McFarlane
<b>NSGEU/NUPGE</b>	Lori Smith
<b>PEI UPSE/NUPGE</b>	Blair Weeks
<b>NAPE/NUPGE</b>	Kelly Roche
<b>NUPGE</b>	Larry Brown, President Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer Jeryn Daly, National Representative Diane Fowles, Administrative Representative

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Participants from 6 Components joined the call with 4 NUPGE staff.

Jeryn Daly introduced herself and thanked participants for joining the videoconference. Daly read NUPGE's land acknowledgment and then asked participants to introduce themselves. NUPGE President Larry Brown and Secretary-Treasurer Bert Blundon were both present for the videoconference.

Brown gave a Canada-wide report on the status of the provinces regarding COVID-19 and politics, and highlighted some of the work NUPGE is doing at the national level. Brown finished by asking participants to think about what role there is for NUPGE to play in senior-level education that Components can't do themselves. Blundon echoed Brown's statements and thanked participants for giving us insight into their work.

## 2. Roundtable on Component Activities

Daly asked participants to use the report template and give a brief overview of the impact of the pandemic on their ability to run educational sessions. Most Components ran very few online learning sessions prior to the pandemic. The majority of all in-person classes were canceled during the pandemic, though some Components have been able to do a few in-person classes by reducing class size and following physical-distancing regulations.

Most Components have launched, or are in the process of launching, online learning. Some in-person courses have been adapted to be taught online, and some Components have also created new online courses. *Microsoft Teams*, *Zoom*, *Adobe Connect*, and *Thinkific* were listed as platforms the Components are using to facilitate online learning.

The participants cited technological literacy and access to technology as the biggest challenges in switching to online learning. Members need to learn how to use the system and have the correct device and access to reliable internet before they can access any kind of webinar or self-directed learning modules. Trying to replicate conversational face-to-face learning, meeting member needs, and building solidarity online were also discussed as major challenges.

## 3. Updating the Inventory (NUPGE Component Courses)

Given the unknowable nature of the pandemic and how Component education may be in a state of flux for the foreseeable future, Daly asked participants to send her their Component's pre-COVID-19 course lists, as well as any new online courses that have the potential to be used after the pandemic ends. This information will be

used to update the NUPGE Component Courses Inventory. The goals of the Inventory are to be a complete guide to all Component education offerings and to facilitate sharing among Components who may be able to aid each other in creating new offerings.

#### 4. Questions and Wrap-up

A question was asked about where to send recommendations with respect to Brown's earlier comment regarding NUPGE senior-level education. Daly responded that she will collect all feedback and make sure it gets passed on to the officers.

Participants also expressed a desire to be part of a network of educators. Being able to collaborate like this would have been useful when Components were choosing software to host their online offerings.

Daly reminded participants to send a copy of their report to [jdaly@nupge.ca](mailto:jdaly@nupge.ca), as well as their updated course offerings. She thanked the participants once again for coming and adjourned the meeting.

#### Follow-ups

Tasks	Responsibility	Completed
Send Component reports and course offering information to Jeryn ( <a href="mailto:jdaly@nupge.ca">jdaly@nupge.ca</a> ).	Participants	
Compile notes and other materials and circulate.	NUPGE	

# APPENDIX 1

## Component Reports

**Component name:** PEI UPSE

**Approximate number of members:** 4.900

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 40%

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 60%

### **What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

Welcome to PEI UPSE (foundation course)

Steward Level 1

Steward Level 2

Advanced Steward (presented by NBU presenters)

Violence in the Workplace

Stress in the Workplace

Mental Health in the Workplace

Harmony and Understanding in the Multi-Generational Workplace

Voting Delegates for Annual Convention

Stewards Conference (presented by Pink Larkin law firm)

Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic? None

### **Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?**

No. But we are planning to run Welcome to UPSE and Steward Level 1 following revisions.

### **How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

Since March we have postponed all our courses due to limited capacity, social distancing requirements and a shutdown of our training facility to staff only.

Requirements have eased and we are working toward having course as soon as we are ready. Shooting for before Christmas.

**What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

Technological match-up with members

Have not done so yet, would be inventing the wheel.

**Component name:** Health Sciences Association of Alberta

**Approximate number of members:** 28, 000

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 70 percent

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 30 percent

**What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

We offered our regular in-person lunch n learns, workshops and conferences.

Steward Learning Series Levels 1-4

Local Unit Executive Training Levels 1-4

Pension and Retirement Planning

The Working Mind

Truth and Reconciliation

Understanding your Collective Agreement

See it, Name it, Check it ( Domestic Violence)

Duty to Accommodate

Workplace Health and Safety Training

**Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic?**

no

**Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?**

Started in September 2020. Participation is limited to 15 attendees and 2 facilitators. We may now further limit participant to 13 attendees given the new health order to limit social gatherings to 15 persons.

**How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

At the start of the pandemic we had to cancel all in-person workshops, lunch and learns, conferences.



We have had to research and implement an online learning platform, called Thinkific. We have developed new 30-minute modules on topics such as pensions, economics 101, what's the benefit of joining HSAA, collective bargaining, essential services and job action. These modules are available to all members.

We have also created specific modules available to our Local Unit chairs. Modules include Understanding Local Unit Finance, Communication Strategies for Local Units, Roles and Responsibilities of Local Unit Executives etc.

We have also created a Stewards virtual classroom within Thinkific. All stewards who attend Steward training will submit and have their assignments graded virtually.

We have had to limit the number of in-person workshops that we offer and also the number of attendees per workshop.

Our annual Chairs and Stewards conferences and Labour Relations conferences had to be moved virtually via Zoom platform.

The fourth component of our Local Unit Executive Training had to be cancelled, since it is usually done over a 4 day period and involves lots of travel and staying at hotel accommodations.

### **What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

All of our short modules on Thinkific are self-paced learning. Hence, we are not certain of knowing what percentage of our membership actually take these modules.

We struggle with the idea of converting a 7 hour in-person workshop on line. How do we maintain the importance of popular education, building solidarity and engagement etc

We had no expert advise in choosing the online platform, Thinkific. We are not certain this is the most effective platform for online learning.

**Component name:** NAPE

**Approximate number of members:** 25000

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 65

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 35

**What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

Labour School- approximately 100 members every year, 4-5 courses offered

Woman's Conference- approximately 100 members every year

Shop Steward, Advanced Shop Steward, Local Officers Training

**Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic?**

No

**Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?**

No

**How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

Absolutely

**What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

Not being able to get together/travel

Trying to develop webinars/technology

**Component name:** OPSEU/SEFPO

**Approximate number of members:** 170,000

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 80

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 20

**What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

- In person synchronous 1 1/2 day sessions usually held on a weekend
- Short courses
- Education attached to conferences
- Sector specific courses
- Leadership schools
- Local President Orientations
- Train the Trainer

**Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic?**

No

Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?

No

**How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

All in person training has stopped. Current online offerings; Bargaining Team Training, DTA, Stewards One, Self-study 15 minutes sessions (see New Online Resources document)

**What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

- Meeting member needs (fielding ad hoc requests)

- Keeping a popular education focus
- Technology, internet availability, technological literacy

**Component name:** Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)

**Approximate number of members:** 32,000

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 48% in Winnipeg

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 52% outside Winnipeg

**What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

- You and Your Union Information Sessions for general membership
- Steward training, both introductory and issues-based courses (18)
- Safety and Health training (7)

**Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic?**

No, but we were moving in that direction as an additional delivery method.

**Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?**

We have been trying to offer small classes and abiding by all public health recommendations. However, Public Health has limited the number of participants gathering (to more than 10 and then 5 people) so have had to cancel. Our registration is way down and our cancellations are up so obviously our members do not feel safe attending in-person courses. Organizationally, we are about to decide whether or not it's worth cancelling all in-person and moving everything online.

**How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

We have cancelled in-person courses for hundreds of members. In addition, moving online is a huge barrier for many as they don't have the technology or are uncomfortable participating online.

On a positive note, we have moved 4 courses to an online format and hope to do more once we feel "master" these ones.

## **What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

### Learning curve for education staff

- Trying to determine which software to use
- Learning how to use it effectively
- Taking courses and modifying them using the technology

### Technology

- Many places in Manitoba do not have stable wifi
- Many members do not have a personal computer, or a computer with a mic, camera and speakers, and many do not have the confidence participating online

### Applying Adult Learning Principles

- We want to replicate our in-person courses and not create a long lecture-style meeting since we have to work with a 7 hour day
- Figuring out how to engage and encourage interaction, discussion, solidarity, and networking using technology

**Component name:** NSGEU

**Approximate number of members:** 32,000

**Approximate percentage of members living in urban areas:** 65%

**Approximate percentage of members living in rural areas:** 35%

**What types of educational sessions did you run for members prior to the pandemic?**

The same courses as currently provided but NSGEU 101 was in person, now it is online.

**Did you run any educational sessions online prior to the pandemic?**

No, only video resources online

**Is your Component currently running any in-person educational sessions?**

Yes

**How has the pandemic impacted your ability to deliver educational programs to your members?**

After several months with no programs, we are now able to provide the courses with distancing protocols.

**What is your greatest challenge in trying to deliver educational sessions online?**

Technological challenges, ensuring the online content is interactive and interesting enough to maintain interest.



## NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of Public Services International.

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