

ADVOCACY

USING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

PRIMER

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
ONTARIO COUNCIL

CFUW Ontario Council is committed to:

The pursuit of knowledge

The promotion of education

The improvement of the status of women and girls

An active participation in public affairs in a spirit of cooperation and friendship



Introduction

This Primer is intended to answer some of your questions, give hands-on support and provide relevant sample materials to help you and your Club to become more involved in the political process.

Another source of information is our Ontario Council website – www.cfuwontcouncil.ca

This Advocacy Primer is a complement to the National CFUW's *Nuts and Bolts of Influencing Public Policy*, www.cfuw.org

ADVOCACY ACTION TIMETABLE FOR CLUBS

Fall

- ± Ontario Council September Standing Committee meeting: template for the annual letters for an Ontario-specific resolution that might have been passed at the spring AGM, and one for MPPs concerning the National resolutions for Ontario
- ± National Resolutions package: containing Action Plans and suggested annual letters for MPs (as well as information concerning proposing resolutions.)
- ± Send these annual letters to your MP(s) and MPP(s), as well as other interested community organizations.
- ± Offer to meet with the elected officials to talk about the Resolutions and other issues that you might have.
- ± Start your year with your Issues Committee. GOOD LUCK

Winter

- ± Throughout the year: Ontario Council and National CFUW will be asking your help on Action Alerts including briefs, letters, public hearings information. Please help when your Club feels it can.
- ± Ontario Council January Standing Committees meeting
- ± Receive, distribute and discuss this year's proposed Resolutions, from both the National CFUW and Ontario Council.

Spring

- ± Ontario Council March Standing Committees meeting
- ± Ontario Council AGM: speakers, workshops and Ontario-specific resolutions

Summer

- ± National AGM: speakers, workshops, resolutions. Resolutions as passed online after AGM – www.cfuw.org.

GETTING OUR MESSAGE ACROSS

Annually

1. Letter to MPPs and MPs

In September, template letters for MPs are sent to Clubs as part of the Action Plans for the National Resolutions, as well as one concerning the implications of the National Resolutions for Ontario will be available for MPPs from Ontario Council.

Also in September, template letters discussing any Ontario-specific resolution that has been passed at the spring Ontario Council AGM will be available.

2. Visit to MPPs and MPs

In your letter, offer to meet with your elected representatives to present the resolutions, as well as any other concerns you might have.

Don't be intimidated by the thought of meeting with them. They are your representatives.

Don't be concerned that you have limited knowledge about the resolutions or the brief(s). Choose to discuss the resolutions with which you are most familiar.

Some important tips:

- ± Discuss the purpose of the planned visit with your Club Executive and get their approval for the meeting.
- ± Phone the constituency office and ask to speak to the scheduler.
 - tell them who you represent;
 - what you would like to discuss at the meeting;
 - confirm the date, time of the meeting and those attending in writing;
 - mail or email resolutions and/or brief ahead of time.
- ± Learn about your representative, his/her work, position and interests. Use Google, if necessary.
- ± The President should lead the delegation of two to four members.
- ± Highlight CFUW, your Club, the resolution process, the Resolutions you want to discuss and any issues currently before government.
- ± Don't forget to take notes.
- ± Call and thank the assistant.

- ± Send a letter to your representative thanking them for their time and reinforcing the key points made at the meeting.
- ± Report back to your Executive and write a report of your meeting for the Club newsletter and your Regional Director.

Issues and Concerns Throughout the Year

During the year:

- ± you might receive a request from CFUW/Ontario Council asking for your Club's help on an issue, **OR**
- ± your Club and Issues Committee might wish to take some action on either a local or provincial concern :

As a member, discuss any action with your President.

As a President, discuss any action with your Executive.

1. **Before you act as a Club, check that CFUW has policy.** Go to www.cfuwontcouncil.ca and click on *Policy & Resolutions*, **OR** go to www.cfuw.org, and look for *CFUW Policy Book Online*.

If there is no policy, consider creating a study group to propose a Resolution. For more information concerning Ontario resolutions, see www.cfuwontcouncil.ca, click on *Policy & Resolutions*, then the paragraph *Resolution Guidelines and Forms*, or speak to a Standing Committee Chair. For a concern that you feel may be relevant across the country, check with your RD about the National resolution process, or the website, www.cfuw.org

If there is policy, follow the suggested procedures below.

2. **Determine your target audience:**

- ± Your Club members
- ± Elected officials
- ± The public

Your own membership – Make sure your members know about CFUW and CFUW Ontario Council policy and advocacy.

Elected officials make the decisions and are influenced by your Club's advocacy.

The public can be as important as communicating with the elected officials as they are the ultimate decision-maker, and can add their own pressure and concern on an issue.

3. Determine strategies:

Various strategies:

- ± writing letters and emails,
- ± meeting with politicians and policy makers,
- ± writing and presenting briefs,
- ± writing letters to the editor and/or opinion editorials (op-ed) for the local newspaper,
- ± organizing public meetings,
- ± taking part in community consultations, and
- ± most important of all, keeping the membership informed by articles in the newsletter or talks at the monthly meeting

4. Getting the Information:

The information that is included in any form of advocacy action must be **current, well-researched and valid.**

CFUW Sources:

- ± First the **CFUW Policy Book**: Go to www.cfuwontcouncil.ca and click on *Policy & Resolutions* for links to all CFUW, Ontario Council, and IFUW policy.
- ± Contact the **Ontario Council Standing Committee Chairs** who can direct you to knowledgeable CFUW members.
- ± **Ontario Council** prepares Briefs and statements for various Government departments and meetings which can be found on our website, www.cfuwontcouncil.ca
- ± The **Background, Bibliography and Action Plans** of National Resolutions can be found on their website www.cfuw.org and often contain additional resources.

Outside Sources:

- ± The **Ontario Legislature website**, www.ontla.on.ca, is an excellent resource for information concerning Bills and Committee hearings, as well as information about the legislative process in Ontario
- ± **Newspapers, journals, magazines, phone calls, etc.** are all invaluable secondary sources.
- ± **Contact others working on your issue**, e.g. other CFUW clubs, universities and NGOs. For assistance, contact your Regional Director.

- ± The Internet:
 - Remember to verify any information for accuracy and political orientation.
 - Keep hard copies as pages change very quickly.

5. Strategies:

Letters and Emails:

- ± **Writing effective letters and emails:**
 - î Email is particularly appropriate for time-sensitive situations, for example, just before a vote or an important discussion in caucus.
 - î Be careful of email. It is not private. It can be easily **forwarded** to others or misdirected accidentally. **Never** send emails in haste; always proofread.
 - î When you send an email to your elected official, always include your mailing address in your email.
 - î When writing, always use a subject line, e.g Re: Bill 43, Clean Water Act. If discussing a bill or an agenda item, identify it clearly. Refer to it by number and name.
 - î Know the party platform of the person to whom you are writing, and if the concern is federal and/or provincial.
 - î Keep the letter to one page if possible. Remember short paragraphs invite further reading.
 - î End your letter to politicians with a specific question that will require an answer from them.
 - î **Individual club members are encouraged to write to any politician on any issue. She may use information from CFUW sources, but she may not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use CFUW letterhead.**

Think of the letter as the culmination of your thought processes.
A good letter is succinct, states your position, and sticks to the issue.

± **A suggested format:**

On letterhead
Date
MPP or MP
Address
Re:..... (if a specific bill, note the number)
Dear...
State your concern.
Quote the policy that justifies your CFUW involvement.
Use 2-3 well researched points from current, valid sources to support your position.
Restate your concern and what action you want.
Conclude with your Club's Boilerplate.
Signed, President. CFUW...

± **Styles of address:**

When writing your letter, refer to your Ontario elected officials as follows:

- î MPPs who are in Cabinet should also be addressed using ***The Honourable*** and ***M.P.P.*** after their name, for example:

The Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, M.P.P.
Minister of Children and Youth Services

The salutation for the letter should be Dear Minister:

- î An M.P.P. not in Cabinet is addressed, for example, Ms. Susan Rhodes, M.P.P. The salutation would be Dear Ms. Rhodes

- î For more information concerning styles of address, check out www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/pe/address3_e.cfm

± **CFUW Ontario Council Boilerplate:**

The following is **suggested** for Clubs writing to their MPPs, any organization affiliated with the Ontario government and municipal bodies. It should be **amended as required** and shortened when advisable:

The Canadian Federation of University Women ***Club name*** is an organization of more than (number) women university graduates in (***name of town/city***). It is part of the Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University

Women, which is made up of over 5,700 members in 58 Clubs from all regions of Ontario.

We are self-funded, non-partisan and non-sectarian. We are affiliated with the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) with over 10,000 members across Canada and the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) both of which have special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Meeting with elected officials and policy makers:

Some reasons to contact your local representatives:

- ± To ask them to raise a question in the Legislature.
- ± To ask them to lobby their colleagues and the responsible Cabinet Minister.
- ± To request a response and a report on what action will be taken.
- ± To provide information on a particular issue. Most elected representatives are part of Committees where bills and policies are studied.

For suggestions about meeting with elected representatives, see the section *Visit to MPPs and MPs*, pg.3 in this booklet.

Writing and presenting briefs:

An excellent section on writing Briefs can be found in ***Nuts and Bolts of Influencing Public Policy***, www.cfuw.org found under *Advocacy*.

Writing articles for your Club's Newsletter:

Our first audience for advocacy should be our own members.

Tell them what you are doing; what CFUW is doing and what it is concerned about. Many of our members are working in areas where they can effect change. Let's give them the tools to do it and tell them our position.

Organizing meetings:

This can simply be a monthly meeting discussing an issue of concern to CFUW, or ten minutes at each meeting discussing a "Hot Topic"

It can involve a panel discussion, a debate, a forum, or a film. It will bring issues and our views to our own members and to the general public.

Taking part in community consultations:

With the downloading of services and the very fundamental changes that are occurring within municipalities, local clubs and members will want to use CFUW policies to get involved in the local decision-making.

Connecting with other organizations:

Other local organizations might have the same concerns. Creating a coalition can be a valuable strategy. Contact your Regional Director for rules associated with forming coalitions or partnering in CFUW.

Connecting with other CFUW Clubs:

Other Clubs might have the same concern, or they might have access to a Cabinet Minister or Committee member with whom you wish to speak. Check with your RD or a Standing Committee Chair for help with this.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters to the Editor are a quick and easy way of involving the public.

- ± Be specific and be brief.
- ± Use CFUW Advocacy Guidelines below.

Writing Opinion (Op-Ed) Pieces:

Wonderful if you can do it. If you are doing it for CFUW, discuss it first with your President and RD.

6. CFUW Advocacy Guidelines:

Three simple rules for Club Presidents and their members:

- ± When writing, or speaking, “on behalf of CFUW” and asking for some sort of action, this **must be based on policy** as found in the *CFUW Policy Book*.

The words “on behalf of CFUW” can then be used.

When there is no policy, letters may be written asking for information only –
“Our club is studying ...”

- ± **Local clubs write to their local MPs, MPPs**, and other local elected officials, but not to the Premier or the Prime Minister (unless he/she is the local MPP or MP).

Dealing with your own MPs and MPPs is what creates the momentum and hopefully adds to the pressure.

(Send blind copies to the CFUW President at the National Office, Vice President - Ontario, and your RD. Email addresses are available in the CFUW Directory.)

- ± **Letters must be sent out under the signature of the President.** The President must have the authorization of her executive.

The individual club member is encouraged to write to any politician on any issue about which she has a concern. She may use information from CFUW sources, but she may not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use CFUW letterhead.

CONTACT ADDRESSES

Sept. 11,2007

For Ontario:

Contact information for MPPs will be found at www.ontla.on.ca, click on *Members (MPPs)*.

To check which riding you require, use www.electionsontario.on.ca , click on *Find Your Electoral District*.

Municipal and Regional:

Most regions and municipalities have their own web pages.

Printed:

Most telephone books have the “Blue Pages” which include the lists of elected representatives and government offices.

For copies:

Ontario Council: cfuwontario@yahoo.ca

RDs' addresses: <http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/Clubs.html>