

STEWARDS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 10, 2015
5:30 – 7:30 pm
Somerville House 2355

1. Approvals

a. Stewards Meeting Minutes November 27, 2014

Approved unanimously

b. Agenda

#100: Be it resolved to ratify the members of my committees - to be added as motion 4 and 5

Dave: Status update from the EHP 7.5

Amended agenda approved

2. Report from the President

#18 Point of information: can we identify the Activism Chair?

Activism Chair writes email on board

#55: When are we leaving on Friday?

Dave: Probably around 9am

Carries unanimously

3. Report from the Communications Chair

#99: Question about should be included in the Steward Solidarity Event report.

The issues that members talk to you about when they attend the social, such as work place issues, what they want the bargaining team to bring to the table, etc. If the members aren't identifying any issues, then remind them of their benefits – that is helpful as well.

How training is done, how TAships are awards, etc. all important info

#18: I cannot stress enough that the day to day activities is not universal. We have been pleasantly/unpleasantly surprised about the benign features. Any info you can give us on your day to day operations, in addition to the larger stuff, is useful.

Carries unanimously

4. Report from the Administration Chair

Additions to report:

- Will not be attending convention due to eligibility according to PSAC, not our bylaws
- Attended strike picket line for York University and University of Toronto. Would be great if we could get together and network and organize as a team. We're there for them, and they'll do the same for us. Please do join the committees. It's an extremely interesting and dynamic time to be part of the student labour movement right now.

Carries unanimously

5. Report from the Activism Chair

Carries unanimously

6. Report from the Chief Steward, Arts & Humanities

Carries unanimously

7. Report from the Chief Steward, Social Sciences

Carries unanimously

7.5. Status update of the EHP

We dipped into our reserves to support the benefit last academic year, about one quarter of existing reserves.

We'll see what happens in bargaining and we hope there will be an increase, if not we will have to make changes in the future.

If you have any questions please email ehp@psac610.ca

8. Report from the Negotiating Committee

#18: What are we covering this week in case people want to come to the meeting?

Going through more specific language changes

Next week we'll be going over the data from the surveys and prioritizing the bigger issues: training, increase in benefit, etc.

We'll send out updates through the newsletter

We may be spending one meeting discussing the benefit programs - members can attend and send suggestions.

Carries unanimously

Food break

9. Report from the Bylaws Committee

#100 moved #18 seconded

Amendment: Add the following to all officer and chief steward positions:

1.1.1 Have the following duties related to General, Stewards' and/or Executive meetings:

1.1.1.1 Prepare a written report for distribution one week prior to any General or Stewards' meeting, to be presented at that meeting;

#2 speak in support. Clarify: do Chief Stewards need to send a report per department?

Only for general and stewards meetings; send a report as officer.

Carried unanimously

#54: 16.1 – Finance Committee recommends the returning executive officer should not be paid during training, but if in a new position, should be paid

amendment:

16.1.10.1 Executive Officers who are re-elected or acclaimed for another consecutive term of office *for the same position* are not entitled to receive the officer-elect stipend in addition to their regular officer stipend.

#54: If I run for the same position, I need not to train myself, but if I run for a new position, there is an overlap from previous position and new position.

#59: Agreed, further clarifies the bylaws

#54 moved #59 seconded

Carries unanimously

#20: Amendments to Bylaws:

I've put my suggested edits in ***bolded italics***.

#59: Point of Information – Find this confusing – Bylaws Committee showed the old bylaws with the new changes and was easier to read, this presentation we don't see the old and new, based on that is it possible to send it back to the Bylaws Committee for consideration? Then make these changes for the AGM?

#100: No, according to the bylaws, they must be passed at the stewards meeting before it can go to the AGM.

Proposal to deal with each of these amendments separately

#20 moved #55 seconded

Carries Unanimously

- 1.2. The authority of these Bylaws derives from the Constitution of the University of Western Ontario ***Postdoctoral and*** Graduate Teaching Assistant's Union.
#20 moved #13 seconded
Adopted
- ***Move the original 3.6.1.3 to fall under the communications chair.***
#18: Object because should take into consideration Communications Chair is internal and Activism Chair is external. Tasks were delineated along these lines and we should keep with these lines.
#100: This change affects a different portfolio and the committee would want to discuss it at length.
#207: It brings synergy, Communications Chair can add a total view of what is happening which helps the organization to have a focused view.
#20: To specify that all the paragraph suggests is purely maintaining a list.
#55: Confused? Do not have to communicate with media, just provide a list?
#20: Yes
Dave reads original: "3.6.1.3 maintain contacts with the media, subject to approval by the President (3.2.1), and excepting those duties belonging to the Chief Returning Officer (4.5.2);"
Amendment defeated (3 in favour)
- 4.4.1.1. This selection/election process ***is not governed by these bylaws***, but shall be administered at the departmental level, in accordance with departmental practice.
#20 moved #9 seconded
Adopted
- ***7.3.8.1. strike/delete***
#100: We can schedule a special general meeting instead
#20 Withdraws amendment
- ***8.1.2. Strike/delete*** (why on earth should the president sit on all committees? Seems very heavy-handed and invests way too much power in the president).
#100: President sitting on the committee – not a requirement, never interpreted it along those ridged lines
#20 Withdraws amendment
- 8.1.3 Determine membership based on applications ***to the appropriate chair and/or committee, to be ratified at the next Steward's meeting***
#20 Withdraws amendment
- 8.1.3.1. Applicants approved by the ***chair/committee*** immediately begin serving as acting committee members with full voting and speaking rights pending formal ratification ***as per***

8.1.3

#20 moved #6 seconded

#20: "as per 8.1.3" – is the only change

#18: Point of information - please read original

Dave reads: "8.1.3.1 applicants approved by the Executive immediately begin serving as acting committee members with full voting a speaking rights, pending formal ratification of membership at the next Stewards' or General Meeting;"

Adopted

- 8.1.5.3 Together with the community chair be responsible for recruiting members to the committee in order to ensure its proper functioning

#20 moved #55 seconded

#59: Point of information - please read the original bylaw

Dave reads: "8.1.5.3 be responsible for recruiting members to the committee in order to ensure its proper functioning;"

#59: Which chair?

#20: All chairs

#100: Sounds like it makes it more cumbersome because a) necessity, b) go through Community Chair to recruit members.

#20 withdraws amendment

- 8.1.7 Have members who serve **on an ongoing basis**

#20: Members serve on committees for a year only, change to leave it more open

#20 moved #55 seconded

#18: This would become a long list of members because members would never withdraw their name. It would become impossible to get quorum and chairs of the committee could loose track of members resulting in a malfunctioning committee. This is borrowed from SOGS and brought to the union. At the end of the year, they drop off, can rejoin; but as a housekeeping issue, keep the list current. Agree with spirit, no need in our bylaws, though.

#20: This is an issue because members need to be ratified so committee chairs continually have to present names.

#18: This might cause an interpretation challenge, if it is a separate clause then it could be interpreted separately and cause frustration.

2 in favour

Amendment defeated

- 18.1
- proposed changes to these Bylaws shall take the form of a written submission to the **Bylaws committee** or the Local's President.

#20 Withdraws amendment

- **Mobilization Committee**

Change all BMA into MC, all mentions of the Bargaining Mobilization Assembly into Mobilization Committee for consistency (that was intended during the last round of Bylaws changes).

#20 moved #56 seconded

Adopted

Concludes #20 amendments

#100: If we vote in favour, the bylaw changes will be presented at the AGM, if against, reconvene and bring it up at a later stewards meeting.

#18: In favour – primarily house keepings changes, the big changes such as exec pay: should not be compensated as richly as we are. Base pay is 32.50, not included the lumpsum. We've earned it, but to be leaders by example, we should cap our pay. In favour and appreciate the amendment.

#59: Question about former members?

#100: Left it open, good members but no longer members in good standing

Dave read the current bylaws definition of "former member":

"2.10 A "Former Member" shall be any person who is no longer a Member and who has been employed within the past academic year (Sept-Aug) as a GTA or PDA, and who is eligible for local benefits at the discretion of the Stewards and the Executive Committee."

#18 POR can we assume carries unanimously unless there is objection

#18 moved #20 seconded

Adopted unanimously

10. Report from the Finance Committee

Chris to take the speaker for the duration of the Finance Report

Steve to present budget

2 main goals: increase service and assistance to members, mitigate dependence on draws from general reserve funds

Reduces draw from reserves from 65000\$ to 28000\$

Fahad to presents proposed budget

Finance Committee moved #20 seconded

#100: Increase in the scholarship budget? I have chaired the Scholarship Committee for 3 years, and it's the worst value for money. Basically handing out 11,700\$ to 24 people. For PostDocs there are only 2 scholarships and it would require a complete overhaul of the application and process. We would need different standards for PostDocs that would benefit a tiny fraction of our membership and does not benefit our members. Continuously receive complaints about scholarship results. I have come to the conclusion that scholarships are divisive and doing more harm than good. That is a large chunk of the budget for 24-26 members. Doesn't seem to be something membership are interested in, judging by the amount of applications, nor something the union should focus their attention on. I would not recommend that chunk of money for little distribution. Also, other locals do not have such a benefit.

#55: A lot of our members found it a lot of work for such a little amount

#100: Yes, and sometimes the applications are so close it is hard to evaluate

#55: Not equitable

Chris caps discussion

#5 Proposes a number of amendments to the draft budget. This is not saying the Finance Committee have done a lot of work on the proposed budget, just recently come aware of some changes:

Proposed Amendments to Draft Budget 2015-16

Income

Increase budget line for PSAC Dues from \$120000 to \$130000 (to reflect actual dues income from 2013-14 and projected dues income in 2014-15 and 2015-16)

-To reflect our actual income in dues

Reduce Draw from Reserves to \$17000

- Reduce income from reserves

Expense

Reduce budget line for Stationary from \$1500 to \$1000

- Actual year-to-date spending

Reduce budget line for Election Reception from \$1500 to \$750

- Actual amount we spend on receptions

Reduce budget line for Special Events - Other from \$1500 to \$1250

- Actual spending over last couple years

Increase budget line for EHP Administrator from \$14625 to \$24000 (\$28/hour @ 15 hours/week, also includes vacation pay)

- Increase EHP/RESEARCH to 15hrs including 4% vacation pay

Reduce Payroll Expenses from \$20000 to \$10000 (to reflect actual CPP and EI contributions and elimination of vacation pay for executives and office manager)

- Actually spending ~10000

Reduce Member Driven Programming from \$15000 to \$10000 (based on \$15/person for 25% of our membership, with a little wiggle room)

- Both to reflect our actual spending, and the proposal to the change of solidarity events, budget based on # of attendees not #of members in total

This would leave us with: Income of \$232,000.00 and Expense of \$249,000.00, thus the draw from reserves would be \$17,000.00 (this is smaller than the draw from reserves in the Finance Committee's draft budget).

-Less draw

#5 moved #59 seconded

#100: In favour. This was a drastic cut to staff, considering the amount of work they put into the local. Need all the skills and value the EHP Administrator brings. There were some errors and EHP Administrator cleared it up for us.

#59: Accurately reflects how the local spends the money

Adopted

These amendments would be incorporate in the Financial Committee's report

Amendments can still be changed

#20: Financial Assistance Committee budget can decrease to 250\$. It does not need this much money and has not used that amount in the past

#20: The foodbank can stay at 750\$ to reflect what we actually spend money.

Adopted

#100: Communication committee should be struck – no longer a standing committee according to our bylaws.

#20 seconded

Adopted

#100: Scholarship budget should add more funds for community involvement scholarship withdrawn

#207: Perhaps have scholarships as a 5th year funding?

#100: Will take that point under advisement.

#207: This would put pressure on the university.

#59: CUPE has a professional development fund for conference and field research.

#100 abstained
Carried

Solidarity Event Budget

#55: Very much supposed to be by attendees not total numbers

#59 seconded

2 opposed

Carried

#20 moved #25 seconded – to adopt report

Carried

11. Report from the Scholarships Committee

Carried unanimously

Motions

#1 Chief Returning Officer

#5 exec #59 seconded

Carried unanimously

#2 Solidarity with CUPE 3902 and CUPE 3903

#5 moved #20 seconded

Carried unanimously

#3 Prisoners' Justice Film Festival

#exec #59 seconded

#20: Few good activist projects in London. This is a film festival that brings together a majority of activist groups in London. Well received. Points out the horrible conditions of prisoners, but also minorities.

#59: In favour, it's free, accessible, and an important organization to support

Carried Unanimously

#4 BIRT PSAC Local 610 ratify Adrienne Borrie and Anastasia Pasche as members of the Bylaws Committee.

#5 BIRT PSAC Local 610 ratify Steven Matson, Anastasia Pasche, and Nafiz Shuva as members of the Scholarships Committee.

Both motions 4 and 5: #100 moved #20 seconded

Both motions 4 and 5: Carried unanimously

Meeting Adjourned 7:56pm

Report from the President

This is the last year of our current Collective Agreement, which expires at the end of August 2015. As a result, we will be going into bargaining beginning in the summer. Our bargaining proposals need to be submitted to PSAC by May 1st. The Local's Negotiating Committee has been meeting weekly for the past month and a half, and a report from the Committee is included in this agenda.

I have continued to respond to questions from members about the Collective Agreement as they arise. I have also continued to advise and assist members in resolving workplace issues through the grievance process outlined in the Collective Agreement. This, of course, could not be done without the diligent and dedicated work of the Chief Stewards.

Our Collective Agreement is only as strong as its enforcement. If a member in your department encounters a workplace issue s/he suspects is a violation of the Collective Agreement, act on it, inform an executive member and help maintain the strength of our collectively bargained rights.

This year I have sat on both the Finance Committee and the Bylaws Committee. The draft budget and proposed bylaw amendments are the product of thoughtful deliberation and discussion. However, it is the responsibility of the Stewards to establish the policy of the Local, and I encourage full discussion and debate of the committees' proposals.

As many of you will have seen, CUPE 3902 (Unit 1), representing Teaching Assistants and other academic workers at the University of Toronto, resoundingly rejected a tentative agreement recommended by their bargaining team on Friday, February 27. They began a strike immediately, and set up picket lines on Monday, March 2. CUPE 3902 are bargaining for improved wages and funding, job security, fairer hiring processes and adequate health benefits.

Furthermore, on Monday March 2, members of CUPE 3903, representing Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants and Contract Faculty at York University, resoundingly rejected the final offer proposed by the employer and are now on strike as well. CUPE 3903 are bargaining for more training, improved job security, and international graduate student funding, among others.

The Executive Committee at Local 610 voted on Monday, March 2 to donate \$1000 to each of CUPE 3902 and 3903, recognizing that the importance of the strikes at the University of Toronto and York University for academic workers across Ontario. We are also organizing a day of solidarity with the workers of CUPE Locals 3902 and 3903 and hope that many of our colleagues at Western will join us in support of our comrades at Toronto and York.

It continues to be my privilege to serve the members of Local 610. This task has been made infinitely easier by the hard work and dedication of the entire Executive committee and our office staff, Conan and Dylan. Thank you!

Our Local is only as strong as our membership is mobilized. Please encourage members in your department to get involved in the Local in any way they can.

In solidarity,

Dave Blocker

Report from the Communications Chair

Hello Stewards,

There are three key points that I want to emphasize in my report: 1) Encouraging members to complete the Local's online bargaining survey; 2) Improving the Local's monthly online newsletter; and 3) Solidarity social reports.

Bargaining Survey

A link to the Local's online bargaining survey was distributed to all members via email. Members who complete the survey by March 10th, are eligible to win a number of draw prizes including an iPad Air and gift certificates to the Book Store and Grad Club. It is very important that the Local receive as much information as possible from members that identifies the issues, concerns, and demands they would like the Bargaining Committee to bring to the table with the Employer when it sits down to negotiate for a new TA contract this summer. This information will help the Bargaining Team to determine what issues to prioritize when it begins negotiations. If you have not done so already, I ask that you strongly encourage the members in your department to complete the survey. Here is a link to the online survey that you can provide to members who have yet to complete it and who no longer have a copy of it in their email.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PSAC610ContractNegotiations>

Monthly Newsletter

Over the past nine months there has been little-to-no growth in the number of members who read the Local's monthly online newsletter. I ask that you send me any feedback that you may have for improving the newsletter that I may implement over the next few months that may generate increased readership. The newsletter is one of the key means through which the Local communicates with and engages members; the more members read the newsletter the better informed they will be about all union-related matters, including their workplace rights, bargaining updates, and our benefit programs.

Solidarity Socials

Many Stewards across all Divisions have been hosting solidarity socials over the past two months. If you have yet to host an event and are still interested in doing so, please contact your Chief Steward to find out how to organize an event for the members in your department. For those of you who have already hosted an event, I kindly ask that you provide the Local with a report about your event that tells us about the issues and concerns members in your department may be facing, as well as any demands members would like the Local to prioritize in its upcoming negotiations with the Employer. These reports are very important to the Local because they provide another tool through which we can gauge the issues and demands that the Bargaining Team should focus on when negotiating for a new contract this summer.

If you have any questions about my report, I encourage you to contact me at communications@psac610.ca.

In Solidarity,
Amanda Vyce

Report from the Administration Chair

Dear members,

I consider it a great privilege to serve as your Administration Chair and I continue to do my best to promote the smooth administrative functioning of the Local. There is yet more work to be done before we reach the end of this academic term and as we approach bargaining, but for now here is an update on some of my activities to date.

Committees

Scholarships Committee

The Scholarships Committee convened last April to adjudicate applications and to award scholarships to many of our deserving members. The committee wishes to commend all applicants for their impressive academic performance and offers congratulations to the scholarship recipients. I have submitted a report on the committee's activities.

The terms of reference for the committee have been revised this year in order to clarify the adjudication procedure for applications generally and also to define and manage any potential conflict of interest situations between committee members and applicants.

The Scholarships Committee is still welcoming new members. Please contact me at administration@psac610.ca to express interest. The committee will begin adjudicating applications after March, so committee members must be available for meetings in early to mid-April.

Scholarship applications are still being accepted until the March 31, 2015 deadline. Applications are available in the Local's office (Somerville House 1313) and online at <http://www.psa610.ca/documents/Scholarship.pdf> . Please submit your completed applications to psac610@psac610.ca or in person at the office.

Bylaws Committee

The Bylaws Committee has been hard at work updating and amending the Local's Bylaws this year. A full report is included in this meeting package.

Labour Library

The Labour Library was initiated several years ago by past Information Chair, Eileen Wennekers in co-operation with the Progressive Librarians Guild. It has long been my goal to revive and renew this project in order to have the collection available for members of collective bargaining units at Western who would like to read about issues related to labour history, neo-liberalism, radical politics, and political activism. As we are currently actively preparing for bargaining, it seems to be an especially appropriate time to have these resources at our disposal.

I have had a series of meetings with the London chapter of the Progressive Librarians Guild in order to move forward with the Local's Labour Library. I have updated the constitution and policy document for this project in order to have an organized framework as we move forward. The PLG is currently working on cataloguing items and making new acquisitions. If there are any books that you would like to see us acquire, please send me an email with your recommendations.

PSAC Events and Labour Activism

Along with other members of the current executive, I will be attending the PSAC National Convention in late April. We will continue to make sure that our interests as an academic local are represented within the PSAC.

At the level of the London and Western Communities, I have attended meetings of the London Area Council of PSAC and have also participated in many events and demonstrations that attempted to engage Western's administration in acknowledging their accountability to students and workers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the members of PSAC Local 610, my fellow officers on the Executive Committee and our truly exceptional and hard-working office staff, Conan and Dylan. I would also like to thank our stewards and dedicated committee members for giving their time and energy so generously. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you in solidarity as we gear up for bargaining.

Mary Deminion,

Administration Chair for PSAC Local 610

Report from Activism Chair on the Food Bank Committee and Financial Assistance Committee

Food Bank Committee (FBC)

At the previous stewards' meeting, I noted that the food bank committee had spent less than a third of its budget (in actual fact, less than a fifth of the budget as I had erroneously stated that the total budget was \$6,000 rather than \$10,000). After investigating the issue we found that part of the reason for the low amount spent was that a concerning number of applicants had been rejected. From the end of October until late January nearly half of all applicants were rejected. The reason for this concerned the policy of eligibility, which stated that members had to demonstrate emergency need in order to receive support from the food bank. Those that were rejected demonstrated only a chronic need. After reviewing all applications from September 1st (2014) till February 28 (2015) we found that almost all applicants were in chronic need, but only those that also demonstrated an emergency had been approved. The committee recognized that both the policy and adjudication of applications had been too strict. The food bank therefore decided to change the policy to better reflect the economic situation of the Local's membership.

- The previous policy on eligibility read: "The Food Bank Fund is intended to aid members who are experiencing unexpected financial need or an emergency that diverts income from their food budget. With only \$6000 a year for over 2000 members, the fund is not sufficient to address chronic need. Given these limited resources, not everyone will be approved."
- The new policy on eligibility is: "The Food Bank Fund is intended to aid members who are experiencing chronic or unexpected financial need or an emergency that diverts income from

their food budget. The food bank has an annual budget of \$6000 for 2000 members. Given these limited resources, not everyone will be approved.

The committee decided in addition to retroactively approve all past applications that had been rejected, but that demonstrated chronic need (13 in total). Part of the justification for retroactively approving applications first of all was to alleviate member need, but also because the Food Bank had spent less than a third of its budget.

As per March 1st, the Food Bank has so far purchased gift cards \$4.000 out of a budget of \$10.000. This is still a very low amount, so we urge you stewards to publicise the food bank in your departments.

The term of the sitting committee members will end by April 30th. Hence, the Food Bank is currently recruiting new members and will do a call out for members in April. If you would like to sit on the committee or have questions about the food bank, please contact the activism chair.

Financial Assistance Committee (FAC)

The FAC is running smoothly thanks to the work of our old and new committee members. As reported at the previous stewards’ meeting, the FAC intends to spend the entirety of the budget before the fiscal year ends. This is to give our negotiating committee a few more bargaining chips when they sit down with the employer. Out of a budget of \$50.000, we have currently spent \$35.000. This is slightly lower compared to the previous year, in part because of fewer applicants. We therefore urge stewards to make members aware that they can apply to the FAC to receive some financial alleviation.

2014-15 (up until Feb 28)	2013-14 To end of February
Total asked for: \$137,686.74	Total asked for: \$97,709.07
Total given out: \$34,885.11	Total given out: \$44,749.05
Total applications: 139	Total applications: 146
Total successful applications: 99	Total successful applications: 115
Given out for academic: \$5,662.55	Given out for academic: \$8,317.15
Given out for childcare: \$1,000.00	Given out for childcare: \$1,670.99
Given out for medical: \$24,119.40	Given out for medical: \$25,514.55
Given out for personal: \$4,103.16	Given out for personal: \$9,246.36

As requested by the Labour Management Committee (LMC), the FAC is working on creating a list to be included in the policy/guidelines that explicitly say “will not be funded” in addition to the “unlikely to be funded”. We will also create clearer criteria for who and what will be funded for academic expenses, and work out a clearer policy for child care support.

Activism Chair

Chairing and managing the FBC and FAC has been the main activity of the activism chair since the last stewards’ meeting. Together with SOGS, I took part in organizing the subvertisement campaign against Stephen Poloz’s recent lecture. In addition, the activism chair was contacted by the London Prison Justice Film Festival to assist in printing posters and paying for some of their cost. The Executive Committee have made a motion to support the Festival with \$200 and ask the stewards’ meeting to grant an additional \$300. I urge stewards to vote yes on this motion as the film festival is perhaps the most successful activist/organizing project currently operating in the wider London community.

Sincerely,

Atle Mikkola Kjosén

Report from the Chief Steward, Arts & Humanities

Dear colleagues:

In my position of Chief Steward for Arts and Humanities, I have had the pleasure and honour to attend many Solidarity Events. So far we have had TAs gatherings in the following departments: English, French, Music, Visual Arts, Modern Languages and Literatures. There are also upcoming events for FIMS and Theory and Criticism. For those departments that have not yet had a Solidarity, I encourage you to organize as soon as possible. These events are very useful to get know members in your area and to hear feedback and concerns related to the workplace and the Union itself.

I also attend Executive Committee meetings where I have had the opportunity to get to know how the Local works within and outside the university. This is very useful as I plan to sit on the Negotiating Committee in preparation for the bargaining process about to start in the summer of this year.

Remarkably, I have found a great sense of solidarity among colleagues. Everyone wants to help everyone. We are all workers and we are in this together. It is very important to keep the momentum as we prepare to bargain a better Collective Agreement. I thank you all the Stewards for being there in the front line passing and maintaining the word of camaraderie and, of course, for making sure that all of our members know their rights and benefits as part of the PSAC 610.

In Solidarity,

Jaime R. Brenes Reyes

Chief Steward – Arts and Humanities

Report from the Chief Steward, Social Science

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The past year has been a trying one at times, but also very rewarding. At the outset of my tenure as the Chief Steward for this division, I said I would be a strong advocate for our Members' rights. I believe that has happened, and that with diligence and hard work we can accomplish a great deal together. The following are highlights of the past year:

1. Achieved a major victory in advocating against the arbitrary reduction of funding for all Psychology Members. We were able to achieve a strong sense of unity in the department, rallying around this issue, and the result was the department reimbursing our Members in full, to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars.
2. I have worked in close partnership with the President and the very dedicated members of the Bargaining Committee to draft a members' survey, plan aware activities, and generally familiarize ourselves with the Collective Agreement. This puts us in an excellent position to table our demands in the Spring.

3. I researched the origins of Western's so-called "10-Hour Rule," which states that students may not work on- or off-campus for an average of more than ten hours per week. Queries to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities showed that there is no such rule, in spite of Western's claim on their website that there is. Provided students are able to progress, as required by their programs, they may work as many hours as they like.

All of these matters require constant attention and vigilance. What we have learned is that some departments, individuals or faculties simply don't consult properly when making decisions that have major impacts on student life at Western. Our Members, similarly, don't always understand their rights. By asking the right questions we can learn a great deal about how decisions are made, what their impact is, and how we can respond to them. We can be a vital source of information against a bewildering set of rules and regulations, but there is always much more to be done. As I complete my term, I still have two major projects on the go:

1. Continuing to investigate and possibly pursue a grievance related to the use of GSAs (Graduate Student Assistants) as replacements for GTAs. It would appear that students are being hired to do teaching-related work, but owing to very minor alterations in their contracts, they are being paid significantly less than their colleagues.
2. Continuing to assist with Bargaining preparation. This is a major undertaking, and as the only member of the Executive with experience from the last round of negotiations, I will continue to assist until my term is complete.

In Solidarity,

Christopher Schultz

PhD Candidate, History

Negotiating Committee Report

The Local has formed a Negotiating Committee to review the Collective Agreement, solicit feedback from members, and identify the key issues and priorities ahead of bargaining this summer.

Thus far, the Committee has:

- 1) Met once a week on Thursdays at 10:00 AM in the Local office (1313 Somerville House). We will continue to meet at this time and encourage members to join us to participate in the discussion of our bargaining priorities.
- 2) Developed the online survey that was sent out on February 18 and will remain open until March 10. This survey is our primary method of receiving feedback from the membership about the issues they face and what we can do to negotiate a better Collective Agreement. Although we've had a terrific response to the survey thus far, exceeding the number of responses from 2012, we'd like more – a lot more! Please encourage members in your department to respond to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=OA2Zj55WipGdEv1SWC912A_3d_3d

When they do they'll be entered to win some great prizes, including an iPad Air.

3) Reviewed the Collective Agreement, article by article. We have in particular sought to identify sections of the CA which have been problematic for our members over the last three years.

Members of the Negotiating Committee will be tabling at the Grad Club on Tuesday, March 3 (7-8pm) and Friday, March 6 (3-6pm) to encourage people to complete the bargaining survey and to tell us about the issues that matter to them.

We are hard at work to make improvements to our wages, benefits and working conditions through the bargaining process, but we can't do it alone! The active participation of the members is essential to achieving the best possible deal. Please encourage your departmental colleagues to fill out the online survey, come to a negotiation committee meeting, or let us know what they think needs to be improved in our next Collective Agreement. Any comments or suggestions can be sent to president@psac610.ca.

Bylaws Committee Report

This report summarizes the changes the 2014-2015 Bylaws Committee has proposed to update the Local's Bylaws. These revisions continue to build upon the foundations set by the crucial work of the 2012-2013 Bylaws Committee. We wish to acknowledge and thank past and present committee members, as well as those members of the Local who participated in the process by submitting proposed amendments to the Bylaws Committee for review.

The basic structure and intent of the Local's Bylaws will remain largely unaltered by the current proposed amendments. At all times the committee aimed to strengthen the internal consistency, clarity, accessibility, and inclusiveness of the Bylaws. The committee also sought to identify and correct inconsistencies of language, formatting, and content. Some modest amendments involving changes to officer responsibilities or to the functioning of the Local were made to better reflect established practice and to promote efficiency and transparency in all aspects of the Local's operations. The committee does not endorse any significant changes to the basic structure and operation of the Local's meetings (including, but not limited to, the calculation of quorum and the timely distribution of meeting packages and past minutes), as the committee has determined that the current rules continue to promote efficacy and efficiency in the Local's operations.

The proposed amendments endorsed by the committee include:

General Housekeeping

- Typographical and formatting errors corrected throughout document
- Omissions (e.g. Communications Chair absent from elections table) have been corrected
- Policy documents and Committee Terms of Reference all updated to reflect latest versions in the appendices
- Numbering/lettering changed to reflect addition or removal of clauses, as needed
- Addition of page numbers to the document

Governance

- Officers may only occupy one position at a time
- Pay structure changed based upon recommendations from the Finance Committee – pay based on TA **base** pay, not **gross** pay
- Returning Officers will no longer be eligible for Officer-Elect stipend in addition to their regular pay
- Expenses exceeding \$1,000 that are not pre-approved in the budget cannot be approved by the Executive Committee, must instead be introduced as a motion and voted on at a Stewards' Meeting
- conflict of interest for hiring now defined as anyone with whom one has close relationship

Officers

- Name of Activism Chair changed to “Community Chair” to better reflect actual duties
- Workshop duties removed from Community Chair portfolio
- Communications Chair duties now include attendance at SOGS meetings as Local’s delegate, oversight of Labour Library (duties already established in Labour Library Policy, but now clear in Bylaws), chair of Scholarships Committee
- Duties of supervising and directing office staff now shared between Administration Chair and President
- Administration Chair will attend and take minutes at Labour-Management Committee meetings
- Administration Chair’s financial reports will be limited to any relevant office expenditures, and only as necessary (this recommendation follows from a member’s written submission)

Committees

- Hiring Committee and Communications Committee transferred from standing committees to ad hoc committees to better reflect actual practice
- Ratification process for committee members made less cumbersome and time-consuming – now the committee chair, rather than Executive Committee, may approve committee members
- Former members in good standing are now eligible to join, or remain on, a committee

The updated Bylaws, with the proposed changes highlighted, are included as Appendix C of this agenda. Please note that approval of the Bylaws Committee report represents approval of the amendments to the Bylaws as proposed by the Committee. The Stewards' Meeting may accept, reject, or amend the Bylaws Committee Report. However, once done, the Bylaws Committee Report as approved by the Stewards' Meeting will go to the Annual General Meeting in April where no amendments are permitted and where a two-thirds majority is required to pass the proposed amendments.

Finance Committee Report

Officer and staff salaries:

Issue: As the Local’s annual expenditure is more than its annual revenue, it draws money from reserve to run its day to day operation. The local reserve fund is finite. Moreover, it is not justifiable to use reserve for Local’s day to day operation.

Cause: Local spends almost all of its revenue to cover officer and staff salaries. Currently local is spending approximately 95% of its revenue as the salaries forcing to draw money from the reserve to run its activities.

Solution: Local can collect more dues from the membership to cover the deficit. However, there was not a deficit in the Local’s budget in just 2 years ago. The actual fact is that local’s expenditure as salaries is unrealistic compared to its total revenue. In this regard, the motion passed in the last steward meeting as follows:

“Whereas each year Local’s General Budget is drawing money from a finite reserve to cover the deficit between its expenditure and income;

Whereas about 90% of Local’s income spend to cover the salaries for officers and staffs;

Be It Resolved That Local will reduce its expenditure related to the salaries for officers and staffs such that it can propose a sustainable budget for the next year without drawing money from the reserve.”

Table: Officer and staff salaries in the last few years

Year	Officers (\$)	Staff (\$)	Payroll (\$)	Total Salary (\$)
14-15	108784	67930	20000	196714
13-14	107900	44680		152580
12-13	71172	36000		107172
11-12	64364	26280		90644

UWOSA Salaries: <http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/docandform/docs/salary/uwosasalary.pdf>

The Finance Committee has proposed the following changes to the Bylaws, in accordance with their proposed changes to the general budget for 2015-16.

Article 16.1 Officer Compensation

For all the officer positions, replace “gross” with “base”. This means that the lump sum will no longer be included in Officer pay. (thus, for example, 16.1.1 will read "the President shall receive a stipend equivalent to the base pay of three (3) GTA")

16.1.10

Change to read “The Administration Chair-Elect, Finance Chair-Elect, Communications Chair-Elect and

Activism Chair-Elect shall each receive a stipend equivalent to the base pay of a one-twentieth (1/20) GTA”

Add 16.1.11 “The Divisional Chief Stewards shall receive a stipend equivalent to the base pay of a one-fortieth (1/40) GTA”

The Finance Committee also recommends two changes to the Steward Solidarity Event policy, changes which I think are best proposed at the Stewards Meeting:

- 1) change the budget to \$15/person
- 2) change the language so that this budget only applies to the number of union members in your department that attend the event. Given the current language in the document, this has been interpreted as meaning you have a budget of \$20/member, not per member that attends.

Finance Committee also recommend the following-

- The office manager and Executive officers should not receive the vacation pay from the next fiscal year.
- The returning officer elects for the different positions for the consecutive years should receive the officer elect stipends. It is recommended the Finance chair inform the bylaws committee for necessary changes.

The proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 is attached to this agenda as Appendix D. Please note that approval of the Finance Committee Report indicates acceptance of the recommendations contained herein. Thus, approval of the Finance Committee Report entails the approval of:

- a) The Draft Budget for 2015-16 (Appendix D)***
- b) Proposed changes to the Steward Solidarity Event policy***

Scholarships Committee Report

PSAC Local 610 awards multiple scholarships once per year to members in good standing who demonstrate outstanding achievement in their academic performance, research contribution, or their dedication to community involvement. The academic achievement scholarship is valued at \$500 and is awarded to a total of sixteen members: four for each of the four academic divisions (Arts & Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences). Within each division the scholarships are offered to two Masters and two Doctoral students. Four scholarships valued at \$400 dollars are awarded to two Masters students and two Doctoral students who have distinguished themselves through their scholarly research (including, but not limited to, published articles, conference presentations and workshops). Four scholarships of \$400 are also awarded to two Masters students and two Doctoral students who demonstrate a high level of involvement in activities that benefit the community, for example through volunteer work done on behalf of non-profit organizations.

For the 2013-2014 academic year, the scholarship committee of PSAC Local 610 received 59 scholarship applications by the deadline of March 31. The total numbers from each division were as follows:

Arts & Humanities: 10 (6 Doctoral, 4 Masters)

Biological Sciences: 24 (16 Doctoral, 8 Masters)

Physical Sciences: 15 (10 Doctoral, 5 Masters)

Social Sciences: 9 (5 Doctoral, 4 Masters)

All applications underwent blind review; any identifying information was blacked out by the Local's office manager prior to adjudication by the committee. All of the committee's decisions were reached unanimously.

In addition to adjudicating scholarship applications from members, the committee discussed a number of recommendations for future meetings. They are as follows:

-- The committee recognizes the need for increased advertisement of the scholarships offered by the Local ahead of the deadline for the submission of applications. Certain divisions were particularly under-represented among submissions and it would be advisable for the committee to work with head stewards to promote awareness of the scholarships offered by the Local.

Mary Deminion

Chair, Scholarships Committee

Motions

Motion #1

BIRT the Stewards ratify Jamison Giangrande, as nominated by the Executive Committee, as the Chief Returning Officer in accordance with Bylaw 4.5.11

Moved by the Executive Committee

Motion #2

Whereas CUPE 3902 (Unit 1), representing Teaching Assistants and other academic workers at the University of Toronto, and CUPE 3903, representing Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants and Contract Faculty at York University, are on strike as of March 3, 2015 in an effort to win improved wages and funding, job security, better training, fairer hiring practices and adequate health benefits;

BIRT the Stewards of PSAC Local 610 express their solidarity with the striking members of CUPE Locals 3902 and 3903 in their struggle for a fair resolution to the strikes at the University of Toronto and York University;

BIFRT the Stewards of PSAC Local 610 instruct the Executive Committee to support the efforts of CUPE Locals 3902 and 3903 to win a better deal at the bargaining table.

Moved by the President

Motion #3

Whereas the annual Prisoners' Justice Film Festival requested a donation from PSAC Local 610 of \$1000;

Whereas the Executive Committee of PSAC Local 610 has voted to support the annual Prisoners' Justice Film Festival with a \$200 donation, representing the maximum donation (General Donations) available to the Executive according to the Local's donation policy;

BIRT that PSAC Local 610 support the annual Prisoners' Justice Film Festival with a further \$300 donation with the funds to be taken from the General Donations budget line item.

Moved by the Executive Committee