

## **PSAC Local 610 Stewards' Meeting**

Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 4:30pm, SEB 2100

Chair: Dave Blocker

Meeting Called to Order: 4:32pm

Minutes: Administration and Internal Communications Chair

### **Approvals**

- 1- Agenda: **Approved Unanimously**
- 2- Minutes for Stewards' Meeting of March 23, 2016  
(<http://www.pvac610.ca/documents/StewardsMinutes23032016.pdf>):  
**Approved Unanimously**
- 3- Announcements

President: The names and email addresses of the elected, non-executive officers (Health and Safety, Ombudsperson, and CRO) are written on the board. Please take note of them.

### **Executive Reports**

- 1- Report from the President

President: 2016 is a very special year because it is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Local! The day of commemoration for these 20 years will be Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. We are going to have a lunch with some special guests for a fundraising initiative, the Thesis Completion Fund. There will also be a fiesta at the grad club in the evening. The purpose is to help former members who are experiencing financial difficulties. 2016 is also exciting because we will have over 300 new members: the Postdoctoral Fellows, who are currently in bargaining. In January of 2017, we are going to start getting ready for the Teaching Assistants' next round of bargaining. We need all the stewards to keep eyes and ears open for concerns from members. Join us after at the Grad Club.

#### **Report accepted unanimously**

- 2- Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair

Admin Chair: Thank you all for being here and thank you for volunteering as stewards this year! I don't want to repeat everything that's in my written report, so I'll just focus on a few key points. Everything's going well with the Financial Assistance Committee. The Food Support and Resources Committee, which used to be called the Food Bank Committee, is looking to expand its mandate to include producing educational resources on food-

related issues. If you or anyone you know is passionate about food security, let me know. We'd love to have you aboard!

The Local has a Women's Committee again, and we have an exciting event coming up. Throughout the month of November, we'll be collecting items for the Zhaawanong Native Women and Children's Shelter, and there will be a prize for the department that donates the most items. We're looking for things like toiletries, diapers, toilet paper, and bus tickets. Members can bring donations to the union office or the SOGS office, and just make sure you label which department the donation is from. You can also have a donation bin in your department if you want to. The women's committee will also be hosting a women's safe space in the union office from 2-5 on the first Wednesday of every month, so any past, present, and future women are welcome to join us.

And finally, thank you to our Office Manager Conan and our EHP Administrator Dylan for the fine work they do.

### **Report approved unanimously**

#### 3- Report from the External Communications Chair

Communications: Thank you for being here. I'd like to report some of my activities from the past month (See Written Report: Training Activities, Orientation, Swag, Community Outreach, Social Media, Newsletter, Scholarship Committee, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ad Hoc Committee). Thank you to all the other executive members and thank you to the staff.

Finance Chair: Why was the number of scholarship applications so low compared to our total membership?

Communications: Maybe the word didn't get out fully enough. Some members didn't know about the deadline. I'll try to get the word out more this year.

### **Report approved unanimously**

#### 4- Report from the Finance Chair

Finance Chair: Good afternoon, thank you all for coming. I want to focus on two things from my report: the yearly audit and the formation of the finance committee. The audit reports are in the PSAC Local 610 office and you can view them if you like. I am recruiting members for the finance committee; let me know if you are interested.

Postdoc Chief: Are we not going to have the audit report available online?

Finance Chair: Yes, we could to that.

Finance Chair: One problem that happened last year was that some members deposited a cheque twice (cell phone picture and in the bank).

Report approved unanimously

#### 5- Report from the Postdoctoral Chief Steward

Postdoc Chief: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to let the TA stewards know about the postdocs at Western. There are two kinds: Postdoctoral Associates and Postdoctoral Fellows, who will be our newest members after their Collective Agreement is ratified. Currently, the two groups of postdocs are bargaining together. We have had to move quickly to mobilize the Postdoctoral Fellows because their case appeared before the Ontario Labour Board very recently. If you have any Postdoctoral Fellows in your lab, please talk to them and ask them to contact me ([postdocchief@psac610.ca](mailto:postdocchief@psac610.ca)). The Postdocs Mobilization Committee is working on outreach, and we are hoping to have at least one member from each Faculty/Department/Large Group.

Finance Chair: What is the Difference between Postdoctoral Associates and Postdoctoral Fellows?

Postdoc Chief: Postdoctoral Associates are unionized and are treated as employees, whereas Postdoctoral Fellows are treated as independent contractors.

A steward: How many are there at Western?

Postdoc Chief: At Western, we have over 300. About 15 are PDAs. All PDFs who receive more than 90% of their funding from the university will be unionized now.

**Report approved unanimously**

#### **Motions**

***Terms of Reference: Administration and Internal Communications Chair's Committees (Moved by Admin Chair, Seconded by Arts Chief)***

*WHEREAS the Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee, the Food Support and Resources Committee, and the Women's Committee required updating,*

*WHEREAS the respective committees have met and discussed the proposed changes,*

*BIRT the revised Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee, the Food Support and Resources Committee, and the Women's Committee be accepted.*

Admin: I've updated the terms of reference for three of my committees. You should have received them in the package, so I won't go through absolutely everything, but

I'll just hit the key points.

Throughout, I've replaced "Community Chair" with "Administration and Internal Communications Chair" because when we reshuffled the executive portfolios last year, we moved around who has which committee and the terms of reference should reflect that.

I've made some changes to the Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee to bring them in line with the way the committee has been operating since it was reviewed last year. We've added a limit to the number of times we can fund the same member for the same expense, and we've stated that we can't accept receipts that are more than a year old.

Moving on to the Food Support and Resources Committee, formerly the Food Bank Committee, last year's committee decided to change the name and to look into expanding the mandate of the committee. I've updated the Terms of Reference to reflect this. We want to expand into creating food-related educational resources in addition to reviewing applications to the support program, and the name change is to bring the committee more in line with its new mandate.

Regarding the Women's Committee, I've updated the language to be more inclusive. We've replaced "women" with "past/present/future women" to show that the committee is not just for cis women. I've also updated some of the membership requirements to be a suggestion rather than a strict requirement.

Arts: Mary Blake knows what she's doing, and these are non-controversial things.

Postdoc: I have a question about the FAC Terms of Reference. A member can get \$500 per term for medical and \$500 per term for personal emergencies. Last year, we spent heavily. Theoretically, one member could get \$3800. Should we add an overall cap?

Admin: We are open to doing that. However, I think that decision is best made by the committee.

Postdoc: We overspent last year, and some people apply for financial assistance again and again. We should add a cap of \$1000 per member per year so that we do not overspend again.

Admin: Thank you to the Postdoctoral Chief Steward for your concern. However, I do not think that this is the time or the place to be making such a change. The members of the FAC know what they are doing, and I want them to be involved in the discussion. I would also remind the Postdoctoral Chief Steward that the Financial Assistance program is in fact under budget for this fiscal year.

Communications: Last year we overspent. Can we propose a cap right now?

Dave: Are you proposing an amendment?

Communications: I want to hear her [the Admin Chair's] input before I propose an update.

Admin: The committee does good work; I don't think we should propose a cap right

now. The FAC has very carefully divided up our yearly budget for Personal/Medical and for Academic/Childcare. We divided the yearly budget by 12 to get our monthly budget and we do not exceed our monthly allowance. We have talked about the idea of imposing a cap, but as we have not made a final decision, I do not want to impose one right now.

President: Point of order—this is not the time for the Executive to be discussing this. The EC has already endorsed these changes. If any of the stewards want to speak to the motion, we'd like to hear them.

Arts Chief: Everyone remember that the current discussion is about the changes to the terms of reference; we're not doing a full review of the committee's activities.

Postdoc: The EC hasn't officially endorsed this.

***Amendment (moved by Postdoc, seconded by Communications):***

*BIRFT in the Terms of Reference of the FAC, we will add a clause that says that the cap per member is \$1000 per academic year.*

Postdoc: To motivate, I will say that we shouldn't be giving too much money to any one member. There was a per-member cap before and we should have one now.

Communications Chair: As seconder, I would add that we had a budget problem last year.

Admin Chair: I would like to speak against the amendment. I thank the Postdoctoral Chief Steward and the External Communications Chair for their concern, but this is a decision that should be made by the Financial Assistance Committee. The committee members see the applications first-hand, so they are the most qualified to make this decision. I would also remind everyone that the Financial Assistance program is under budget for this fiscal year.

A Steward: Who is on the FAC? Should they be making this decision alone?

Admin Chair: There are eight committee members. They all volunteered to be on the committee, and some have been on it for quite some time. Anyone else interested in joining the committee can feel free to contact me or the chair, Chandell Gosse.

A Steward: When is the committee meeting?

Admin Chair: Our next meeting is this Thursday. We can have a conversation about imposing a cap then. If the committee agrees that it is a good idea, we can formalize it at the Winter Stewards' Meeting.

Tristan: This amendment is completely against the spirit and purpose of the original motion.

Desaree: I agree that the Financial Assistance Committee knows what they're doing, so they should make this decision.

Postdoc Chief: The Winter Stewards' Meeting will be too late to make this change.

President: We can call a general meeting if we need to.

Marcello: Would it make it easier for the committee if you had a cap in place? Would there be fewer repeat applications to deal with?

Admin Chair: What we're doing is working. We do get repeat applications, but not so many that they're a burden.

Intias: What if I apply at the end of the year and there is no money left?

Admin: That will not be an issue this year. At the beginning of the fiscal year, we divided our yearly budget by 12 to get our monthly budget, so we will still have money in the last month just like we did in the first month.

*Motion to call the question (Moved by Arts Chief, seconded by Martin Lefebvre):*  
**Passed (Postdoc Chief abstained)**

*Vote on the amendment proposed by the Postdoc Chief: **Amendment fails.***

*Motion to call the question on the original motion (Moved by Martin Lefebvre, seconded by Arts Chief): **Motion passes***

***Thesis Completion Fund (Moved by President, Seconded by Arts Chief)***

*WHEREAS graduate students who do not have university funding often find themselves in a very precarious situation,*

*WHEREAS it is within the mandate of PSAC Local 610, as a labour union, to work toward ending such precarity,*

*BIRT PSAC Local 610 donate \$5000 to the Thesis Completion Fund.*

President: The Thesis Completion Fund is an initiative we have to raise money for graduate students. In many programs, 4 years is not enough to complete a PhD. After the 4 years of funding run out, students find themselves in the precarious situation of "Year X." We hear heart breaking stories from students in Year X. We are organizing this initiative to help them in any way we can.

Arts Chief: I would add that this will be a very useful thing to have in our pocket for bargaining next year because it will show that the university is underfunding graduate students and that we are trying to help.

Finance: I have four questions. First, what would be the probably maximum cap for this one?

President: It will depend on how much money we have at the end of the fundraising.

Finance: What would be the number of recipients for money from this program? Would it be divided evenly between the faculties? If we are planning to donate \$5000 again next year (and in coming years), what will be the source of that?

President: We will decide the recipients in coordination with SOGS. The current motion is only about this year; I can't say what will happen in future years.

Finance: I would have preferred that you include more information with the motion.

Physical Sci: Point of information, regarding the second clause of the motion. Do recipients have to do research related to labour activism?

Arts Chief: No, that clause just means that as a union, we should be helping the community.

Navraj: Where exactly is this \$5000 coming from?

President: It can come from a variety of sources. We should also note that PSAC National is donating \$2000.

Communications: That is not correct. This \$5000 is coming from the reserve. The \$2000 from PSAC National is for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Navraj: So we are taking it from the reserves? Won't we have another deficit budget if we do that? Can't we ask PSAC to give more money?

President: Another source of money could be my own salary. I promised to cut it in half in the election, and I am committed to keeping that promise. The money could come from that line item.

Steven Janisse: I thought I would let everyone know that the SOGS Finance Committee has recommended that SOGS contribute \$8500 to the Thesis Completion Fund and \$1500 for the fundraising event.

*Arts Chief Moves to Call the Question (Seconded by Martin Lefebvre): **Passes***

**Motion passes (Martin Lefebvre Abstains)**

***EHP Cap (Moved by Communications, Seconded by Finance)***

*WHEREAS based on the EHP report on September 28th, the EHP budget shows \$69117.81 surplus,*

*WHEREAS during the last election, increasing the cap of the EHP was one of the main membership concerns,*

*BIRT the Stewards approve the cap of EHP as 499\$ for Sep.2016-Aug2017 EHP period."*

Communications: By way of motivation, I would like to give a brief presentation. As was shown in a report given by the EHP Administrator, we have a surplus in our EHP account. It was also shown that a high number of members applied for the maximum amount, or close to it. Next year is the bargaining year. Having a surplus in our EHP account might put our program at risk; the employer won't give us money if we have money. Increasing the EHP cap was one of the main membership concerns in the last round of Executive elections. I want to make it clear that by adding \$99 to the cap, assuming relatively constant number and distribution of applications, we expect to spend \$37,620, so there will still be a surplus in our account. This motion was passed by the EC on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Finance: Shirzad explained it very well. I have nothing more to say.

Tom: Point of information, how was the \$499 figure arrived at?

Finance: The answer is from the viewpoint of tax. If we pay someone below \$500, we don't have to issue a T4A. Once it is \$500, there is a tax issue.

Arts Chief: I want to speak in support of this motion. We're a union. It's within our mandate to help our members. We have a surplus, so we should spend it.

**Motion passes (President and Admin Chair abstain)**

**Bonus Announcement**

Arts Chief: We're going to be hosting CGEU next year! I think I'm the chair of the organizing committee. If you're interested in participating, please let me know ([artschief@psac610.ca](mailto:artschief@psac610.ca)). Any questions?

A steward: When?

Arts Chief: Second weekend of August!

Meeting adjourned, 6:00pm

**Appendix: Agenda (See Below)**

## **Agenda for Stewards Meeting**

Thursday, October 25, 2016, 4:30pm – Spencer Engineering Building Room #2100

### **Approvals**

- 1- Agenda
- 2- Minutes for Stewards Meeting of March 23, 2016  
(<http://www.psac610.ca/documents/StewardsMinutes23032016.pdf>)
- 3- Announcements

### **Executive Reports**

- 1- Report from the President
- 2- Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair
- 3- Report from the External Communications Chair
- 4- Report from the Finance Chair
- 5- Report from the Postdoctoral Chief Steward

### **Motions**

- 1- Terms of Reference: Administration and Internal Communications Chair's Committees
- 2- Thesis Completion Fund

### **Appendices**

- 1- Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee
- 2- Terms of Reference for the Food Support and Resources Committee
- 3- Terms of Reference for the Women's Committee

## **Report from the President**

Dear Stewards,

It is, indeed, extraordinary to stand in front as the President of PSAC Local 610. This year is special as we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Union. Many people have, throughout the years, been working very hard to maintain what we have gained and accomplished. I stand here as one more of those, ready to listen to your proposals, suggestions, motions, and arguments for the improvement of the Union.

Thus far, I have been working on different projects to commemorate our victories. One important project, which you will be hearing more about when we discuss the motions, is the Thesis Completion Fund. We know that in many cases four years are not enough to finish a doctorate and members face financial difficulties because of it. We want to change it, and, thus, we are launching a fundraising campaign to raise awareness about this issue and to help, financially and emotionally, those people facing precarity.

This year is also important because our Postdoctoral Researchers are currently bargaining with the University for a new Collective Agreement. And this brings me to one of the best news of the year: new members are joining our Union! Postdoctoral Fellows are now unionized and bargaining along with the Postdoctoral Associates.

Bargaining will restart soon for the Graduate Teaching Assistants in 2017. We need to assure a good and solid Negotiation Team as well as a Mobilization Committee. We have the power and force to demonstrate how important our work is at this University.

Please feel free at any point to get in touch with me, be it via email, in the Union office, or anywhere on campus.

In Solidarity,

Jaime R. Brenes Reyes  
president@psac610.ca

## **Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair**

Thank You, Stewards! Thank you all for volunteering to be stewards for the 2016–17 academic year. I look forward to working with all of you and I'm sure your efforts will make a valuable contribution to the Local.

My Portfolio: As Administration and Internal Communications Chair, I oversee the administration of the Local. Our two valued staff members report to me, I sign cheques, and I take minutes at all of our meetings. In addition, I am responsible for the Food Support and Resources Committee and the Financial Assistance Committee, and will be chairing the Bylaws Committee when we do our annual bylaws review in the winter. I am also the Local's principal liaison with the Society of Graduate Students, and I attend monthly SOGS council meetings to report on our activities and to speak on behalf of the Local. I attend meetings of the Labour/Management Committee along with our President, and assist the External Communications Chair with our monthly newsletter. In addition to these responsibilities, I have taken it upon myself to reinstate the Local's Women's Committee in order to help past, present, and future women on campus and in the London community have a voice. Here are some more detailed descriptions of what I've been doing thus far:

Financial Assistance Committee: The Financial Assistance Committee meets monthly to review applications to the Financial Assistance Fund. We work hard to meet the needs of our members and to fund as many applications as possible within the strict confines of our budget. This is not an easy process, but the committee members are a dedicated group, and I thank all of them for their hard work.

Food Support and Resources: The Food Support and Resources Committee reviews applications to the Food Support Fund, formerly the Food Bank. I thank the members for the good work they do in adjudicating applications. This year, we are looking to expand our mandate to include producing educational resources on nutrition, food security, and eating on a budget. We could use a few more committee members to help with this, so if you're interested in food issues or know anyone who is, please get in touch with me. We'd love to have you aboard!

Women's Committee: After several years of hiatus, the PSAC Local 610 Women's Committee has been reborn! Thank you to all my sisters who have joined the committee! We are excited for our first major project: a donation drive that we will be hosting in conjunction with SOGS. Throughout the month of November, we will be collecting items for the Zhaawanong Native Women and Children's Shelter. High-demand items include shampoo and other toiletries, diapers, and bus tickets. There will be a prize for the department that donates the most items. In addition, we are hosting "Bread and Roses: Snacks and Self-Care," a drop-in safe space for all past, present, and future women on the first Wednesday of every month. Stay tuned for details about the November safe space!

SOGS: PSAC Local 610 has two exciting collaborations with SOGS coming up. The first is the aforementioned donation drive for the Zhaawanong Women and Children's Shelter.

The second is a fundraising initiative to create the Thesis Completion Fund, which will benefit graduate students who are working to complete a thesis beyond their funding period. Stay tuned for updates on how you can get involved!

Staff: Finally, I would be remiss in writing a report without thanking our staff members, Office Manager Conan Masterson and EHP Administrator Dylan Gault. Conan and Dylan do excellent work for the Local and I thank them for their dedication!

In solidarity,  
Mary Blake Bonn  
Administration and Internal Communications Chair  
administration@psac610.ca

## Report from the External Communications Chair

Dear Stewards, thank you all for volunteering your time, energy and talent to serve your fellow TAs as members of your Union. As external communications chair, I am responsible for handling social media, conducting and preparing presentations and promotions items for events such as orientations and trainings, forming and working with scholarship committee, communications committee and social justice committee. Being said that, I would like to report some of my activities to fulfill my duties to serve our Union in last couple of months:

- Between May to June 2016, *to be trained and prepared, I :*
  - 1- had three training sessions with last communications chair
  - 2- participated a 3-days training conference out of London provided by PSAC Ontario
  - 3- participated a 2-days training meeting off-campus provided by PSAC London
  
- *For orientations, training and events, I:*
  - 1- designed labels and ordered Union special swag (travel mug) and swags for pride parade.
  - 2- prepared presentations and material for orientation events (33 departmental orientation events), booths (3 on-campus booths), Stewards training (2 sessions).
  - 3- prepared and ordered TA handbooks and Steward Handbooks.
  - 4- on behalf of our Union, participated in London community events such as Labor day, Make It Fair campaign, Indigenous community anniversary and LGBT community event.
  
- *To keep our members informed on social media, I:*
  - 1- do my best to update our members about our Union's activities such as forming committees (Women committee, Financial Assistance Committee, Food Support Committee), our different trainings and conferences such as CGEU conference, joining new postdoc members to our Union and their first bargaining and orientation booths through Union's Facebook and Twitter page.
  - 2- continually inform our members about events and social justice movements such as Pride parade, Make It Fair campaign, Postdoc bargaining in Queen's University and some PSAC gatherings and campaigns throughout Facebook and Twitter.
  - 3- I have issued our newsletter on October 13<sup>th</sup> for all members through their emails.
  
- For the Scholarship Committee:
  - 1- We formed and set three meetings to review 84 application forms for 2015 scholarships.
  - 2- After hours of committee members volunteer works, we distributed 24 scholarships worth 11,200 \$ totally.

I have also handled some ongoing and completed projects such as designing and ordering business cards for Executive Members and new banner for the Union during last couple of months.

I am currently involved in organizing our Union's 20th year anniversary event and "thesis completion" fund raising week with other Union's and SOGS's executives.

Considering that next year would be our TA collective agreement bargaining year, I plan to form "communication committee" to raise our members' awareness about the whole bargaining process and demands on new collective agreement. I invite all members to join our communication committee to do this together.

To keep our connection with London communities, we also need to form our "Social Justice Committee" as soon as possible. Please join us to form this committee as well.

Finally, I would like to let you know that I always feel the responsibility and trust all members dedicated to me as an elected executive member and do my best to serve our members in future. I also would like to appreciate other executive members, chief stewards and office staff who kindly help me doing my tasks and responsibilities.

In Solidarity,  
Shirzad Mohajerani  
PSAC610 External Communications Chair

## Report from the Finance Chair

### 1. Auditing

All three accounts of PSAC Local 610 will be audited soon for the fiscal year 2015-2016. Hopefully, we can present the completed audit report in the meeting. All these accounts will be audited by our accountant Michael King. Audit reports will be kept in PSAC Local 610's office and will be available to any member of the PSAC Local 610.

### 2. Finance Committee

We will be forming the finance committee soon. I would expect active participation of the interested members. Please, send me an email ([finance@psac610.ca](mailto:finance@psac610.ca)) if you are interested to join the finance committee.

I would like to thank all the EC members and office staffs for their help and support. A brief expense report containing our up to date expenses for major line items according to the budget is attached with the report.

In Solidarity

Md Imran Khan

Finance Chair

2016-2017

Year to Date Expense Summary (As of October 13, 2016)		
Item	Budget (CAD)	Expense as of October 13,2016
Total committee expenses	6500	865.78
Total donations	3000	691.16
Education and Training	4000	3608.48
Member driven program	13000	761
Postage	500	280.28
Printing and Copying	3000	542.08
Promotion and Ads	6200	5279.14
Uncategorized Expenses	1500	791
Utilities	5600	835.42

## **Report from the Postdoctoral Chief Steward**

### **Postdoctoral Bargaining**

Fellows (PDFs) are bargaining for their very first collective together with the Postdoctoral Associates (PDAs). Postdoctoral Associates (PDAs) collective agreement was expired on Sep 30th of this year. On the other hand, PSAC secured unionization certificate for PDFs at the end of the August this year.

The first bargaining meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> Oct and the second meeting is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> November.

### **PDA Negotiation Committee:**

In preparation of the PDA bargaining, the PDA negotiation committee started working from March this year. We made every possible attempt to reach out all the PDAs including solidarity events and one-to-one coffee meetings. The committee reviewed our existing CA and other Canadian postdoctoral CAs.

### **PDA Pre-bargaining Survey:**

The negotiation committee prepared a comprehensive PDA survey to gather information regarding the members' needs and concerns. 14 out of 15 PDAs participated in the survey. A solidarity event was organized in June to communicate the survey outcomes and to prioritize the bargaining demands.

### **Postdocs Mobilization Committee:**

During the bargaining with the employer, postdocs mobilization committee will be working to reach out the members, other working groups at Western and broader community. The committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct to set a plan to make sure active participation of the members in the process.

### **Orientation Sessions:**

I attended the postdoctoral orientation sessions in May and Sep 2016. I also attended the National Postdoc Appreciation Week events organized at Western to network with the members.

In Solidarity,  
Jahirul Mazumder  
postdocchief@psac610.ca

## **Motions**

### ***Terms of Reference: Admin Chair's Committees***

WHEREAS the Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee, the Food Support and Resources Committee, and the Women's Committee required updating,

WHEREAS the respective committees have met and discussed the proposed changes,

BIRT the revised Terms of Reference for the Financial Assistance Committee, the Food Support and Resources Committee, and the Women's Committee be accepted.

### ***Thesis Completion Fund***

WHEREAS graduate students who do not have university funding often find themselves in a very precarious situation,

WHEREAS it is within the mandate of PSAC Local 610, as a labour union, to work toward ending such precarity,

WHEREAS the Local's Executive Committee has recommended donating \$5000 to the Thesis Completion Fund,

BIRT PSAC Local 610 donate \$5000 to the Thesis Completion Fund.

## Financial Assistance Committee Terms of Reference

### Name

The Financial Assistance Committee

### Term of the Committee

Applications for financial assistance will be accepted throughout the year to be adjudicated by the committee during regular (monthly) meetings starting in June and ending in ~~April~~May. The applications are accepted throughout the year; however, application periods are divided by each calendar month (1st to 31st), and members can only apply once per term. The committee will adjudicate applications on the second full week of each month.

### Budgetary Details

The terms of the Collective Agreement provide for the social welfare programming of the Local; these monies are known as "The Financial Aid Fund." The employer provides this funding. The total amount available for the Financial Assistance Committee to distribute per year is as follows: \$34,500 for medical/personal and \$11,500 for academic/childcare.~~under the current agreement, we receive the fund as two payments: (1) \$35,000 on January 31<sup>st</sup>, and (2) \$40,000 on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The Local divides these two payments into two programs: the first payment is dedicated to bursaries to offset exceptional financial emergencies and the second payments is dedicated to offset financial burdens of international students, specifically UHIP premiums.~~

The Financial Assistance Committee is encouraged to review disbursement criteria to compare demand upon the fund to the available funds within the account. The committee ~~is also encouraged to may~~ increase benefit amounts and/or create new programming to meet the needs of the members, if and only if funds are available. The purpose of the Financial Aid Fund is to provide the greatest benefit to members in the greatest amount of need.

### Members

1. Chairperson: the ~~Community Chair~~Administration and Internal Communications Chair, or a designate elected by the Committee.
2. Maximum of 8 members, but the committee can vote to increase to the membership cap.
3. Members will be selected and elected by the Executive Committee after a call-out has been sent to the membership.
4. Committee members shall meet several times and coordinate efforts to choose the ~~scholarship and bursary awardees~~recipients of financial aid.
5. Meetings will be held at the PSAC Local 610 Union Office, Somerville House Room 1313.
6. Members will receive an honorarium for their contribution.

### How to Apply

Members should contact the ~~Community Chair~~Administration and Internal Communications Chair at ~~community@psac610.ca~~administration@psac610.ca and cc psac610@psac610.ca to express interest in joining the Committee. The Executive Committee will consider all members who express interest ~~by the deadline.~~

## Meetings

### *Meeting Duration and Location*

Meetings will be held at the [GTA-PSAC Local 610](#) Union Office, Somerville House Room 1313. Meetings shall be held monthly and scheduled for ~~one and a half (1.5)~~ two (2) hours, although they ~~will frequently~~ may take less time.

### *Attendance*

Physical attendance at meetings is required, with the exception of remote participation where the Chair deems it appropriate. To maintain membership on the Committee, members shall be physically absent for no more than two meetings per academic year, except under extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, research travel, bereavement).

## Non-disclosure Policy

Members of the committee shall hold confidential all the information related to applications, circulating at the meetings of the committee. This information related to the applications is not to be disclosed or shared with a third party without the written permission of the applicants.

## Deliverables

The Committee shall communicate its decisions to the PSAC Local 610 Office Manager.

## Disbursement Policy for the Financial Assistance Committee

The Financial Assistance Fund exists to provide assistance to members who experience unexpected financial need. TAs who have held a teaching assistantship for at least one term in an academic year are eligible. This fund is structured as a series of streams to meet the unexpected needs of members who have exceptional demands upon their finances. This policy exists to define such needs, and how the Committee is authorized to respond to and assist applicants.

The Committee recognizes the issues of student poverty within PSAC Local 610. Unfortunately, the Committee must also fund applications according to preferential criteria and cannot offer funding to all applicants. The Committee gives priority to unexpected and unavoidable expenses; therefore, expenses cannot arise from a chronic need. While the Financial Assistance Committee cannot offer funding for general expenses, such as food or groceries, the Local does offer assistance through the [Food Bank Food Support and Resources](#) program. Members are encouraged to apply to this program, should they feel the need to.

Although we offer limited funding for some academic expenses, the Committee cannot act as a substitute for departmental or external funding, nor can we fund tuition or any other academic fee.

To apply, fill out the application form. You will need to attach ALL receipts for expenses already incurred. You will also need to have signed your union card (the blue card). Applicants must be members of the Local at the time of the expense.

Applications are considered throughout the year. Please allow time for a response from the Committee. The committee aims to respond to all applications within one month. Applicants will be notified of decisions by email, and if your application has been successful, you can pick up your [support cheque](#) at the Local's office.

The Financial Aid Fund is limited, and, unfortunately, not all applications can be approved. You may receive a bursary that was not the full amount of your request. These circumstances are based on several factors: need, available funds, and number of applicants. If your application was declined and you want to know why, please contact the ~~Committee chairperson~~ [Administration and Internal Communications Chair \(administration@psac610.ca\)](mailto:administration@psac610.ca). Be advised that in contacting the Committee about your application, you will have self-identified, that is to say, your application is no longer anonymous.

The application process assures your confidentiality:

1. Each applicant is assigned an ID number.
2. Applications are reviewed without any identifying information.
3. Committee members must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement before adjudicating applications.
4. Applications are kept on file for future use in characterizing members' needs for future rounds of negotiations.

Applications must be filled out in full to receive consideration. The Committee will verify the receipts appended to the application. Only documented expenses for which receipts are included shall be considered. Please include original receipts, or photocopies of original receipts, not bank statements.

While the Committee has the authority to fund or deny any application, the following criteria express the Committee's preferences.

Unlikely to be funded:

- Pet care expenses
- Passport fees, Visa applications or permanent residency fees
- Vehicle [maintenance](#) expenses ([repairs, tires, etc.](#))
- UHIP expenses
- Textbook purchases, tuition fees
- Technology purchases, unless these can be explicitly justified
- Conference fees or membership fees
- And any other expense that does not qualify as "unexpected need"

Exceptions in the above cases, while extremely unlikely, are possible, at the Financial Assistance Committee's discretion based upon the applicant's justification.

Support for personal and medical emergencies can only be received once per term, up to a cumulative amount of \$500, regardless of when the expense was incurred. The terms divide into Summer (June--August), Fall (September--December) and Winter (January--April), and here refer to the time the committee adjudicates the application, not the date of the expense itself. [Support for childcare expenses can only be received once in an academic year \(September--August\), up to a cumulative amount of \\$500.](#) Support for academic expenses can only be received once in an academic year (September - August), up to a cumulative amount of \$300.

Should an applicant's claim exceed the allotted \$500 within a single term, the applicant may reapply in the next term for the remainder of the same expense. However, new claims from previously unfunded applicants take precedence. [Please note as well that applicants may not receive funding for the same expense more than three times. In addition, the committee cannot consider expenses for which the](#)

| receipts are more than 12 months old. Applicants who have received the maximum disbursement in a term are not eligible to apply again to the FAC within the same term.

The following types of expenses can be funded, with appropriate justification:

**- 1) Medical Emergencies (maximum \$500 per term)**

- These include emergency medical or dental bills, including bills incurred outside Canada
- Please ensure you have applied for and exhausted your eligible SOGS health plan and EHP benefits
- You may claim for a dependent, such as a child, spouse or parent

**- 2) Personal Emergencies (maximum \$500 per term)**

- Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Bereavement travel expenses
  - Financial difficulties related to separating from a spouse or partner
  - Loss of property due to an unforeseen catastrophe: house fire, flood, etc.
- Please ensure you include receipts and an rationale for a brief description of the nature of the emergency
- The Committee keeps all such private and personal information confidential

**- 3) Academic/Conference Travel (maximum \$300 per academic year)**

- Please demonstrate proof that you have applied to your department and SOGS for travel funding prior to applying to the FAC
- Please enclose records of your participation at the conference (e.g. approved abstract, photocopy of conference program, etc.) and receipts
- The Committee will only consider applications in which the applicant was an approved participant in the academic conference (e.g. as a presenter of a paper or poster, a responder, a panel chair or organizer, etc.)
- The Committee will not fund conference or membership fees
- The Committee will not fund food expenses

**- 4) Child Care Subsidy (maximum \$500 per academic year)**

The Financial Assistance Committee is pleased to offer a subsidy to help members of PSAC Local 610 offset the considerable cost burden of accessing quality child care while they complete their work as teaching assistants. We recognize that as well as balancing their duties as workers, researchers, and students, members who are parents must manage additional financial and personal responsibilities. This subsidy is offered as part of a pilot program that seeks to address child care as a serious member need, and also to gather vital data on how our membership is affected by the cost of child care in Ontario.

- The Committee and PSAC Local 610 may use non-identifying information from applications, such as the financial cost of child care, etc., in order to gather data about how our membership is affected by this issue.
- Please enclose the appropriate documentation and receipts with your application.
- Members are also encouraged to apply to SOGS Child Care Subsidy.
- Only receipts from licensed childcare providers and programs will be considered for the subsidy. For a list of licensed child care providers, go to <http://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/LCCWWeb/childcare/search.xhtml>

Members are encouraged to contact the ~~Community Chair ([community@psac610.ca](mailto:community@psac610.ca)) or the committee chair ([fac@psac610.ca](mailto:fac@psac610.ca))~~ Administration and Internal Communications Chair ([administration@psac610.ca](mailto:administration@psac610.ca)) should they have questions about the Financial Assistance funding process.

[Updated ~~February 2014~~ [October 2016](#)]

## Food Bank Committee Terms of Reference

### Name

The ~~Food Bank~~ Food Support and Resources Committee

### Mandate

The ~~Food Bank~~ Food Support and Resources Committee administers and dispenses resources that have been budgeted to aid the Local's members in the event that they experience financial shortage that affects their ability to purchase food for themselves and/or their families. Committee members meet at least once per ~~month~~ term to coordinate and regulate the disbursement of the ~~food bank~~ Food Support Fund's resources and also conduct business, such as the adjudication of ~~food bank~~ Food Support applications, via email. If they wish to, the committee may also create and distribute educational resources on subjects such as food security, nutrition, and eating on a budget. The ~~The~~ committee follows the guidelines for standing committees stipulated in the union's bylaws.

### Membership of the Committee

The committee shall be composed of:

~~The Chair: The Community Chair~~

The Chair: The Administration and Internal Communications Chair, or a designate

7 Members: Up to a maximum of seven (7) members, selected by the ~~Activism~~ Chair Administration and Internal Communications Chair after a call-out has been sent to membership of the Local. Numbers of members are subject to change according to applications received to sit on the committee. Of these members, no more than five (5) shall be responsible for reviewing applications. Additional members may assist in community education and creating food-related educational resources.

Members will receive small honorarium for their contribution.

### How to Apply

Interested members should contact the ~~Activism Chair~~ Administration and Internal Communications Chair at [community@psac610.ca](mailto:community@psac610.ca) [administration@psac610.ca](mailto:administration@psac610.ca) and [psac610@psac610.ca](mailto:psac610@psac610.ca)

All members who express an interest ~~by the deadline~~ will be considered for appointment by the Executive Committee.

### Meetings

#### *Schedule*

The schedule for subsequent meetings shall be decided upon at the first meeting. Meetings shall be held at least once per academic term.

#### *Meeting Duration and Location*

Meetings will be held at the ~~GTA-PSAC 610~~ Union Office, Somerville House Room 1313.

Meetings shall be scheduled for one and a half (1.5) hours, although they will frequently take less time.

#### *Attendance*

Physical attendance at meetings is required, with the exception of remote participation where the Chair deems it appropriate. To maintain membership on the ~~Food Bank~~ [Food Support and Resources](#) Committee, members shall be physically absent for no more than two meetings per academic year, except under extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, research travel, bereavement).

#### Procedures

The Committee will proceed under the PSAC's Rules of Order, which can be viewed on our Local's website.

All members of the Committee have voting rights in matters of debate, which shall be decided by simple majority vote (50% + 1 of the total membership). In cases where the voting pool is comprised of an even number of members, the ~~Community Chair~~ [Administration and Internal Communications Chair](#) will not cast a vote and will not be counted towards total membership.

## Women's Committee Terms of Reference

### Name

The name of the Committee is the Women's Committee.  
"Women" is understood to refer to past/present/future women, that is, those who have been, are, or will be fully or partially female identifying.

### Term of the Committee

The work of the Women's Committee is ongoing, but members are elected each year as specified in the bylaws of the GTA Union PSAC Local 610 bylaws.

### Mandate and Goals

The Women's Committee is a special standing committee of the GTA Union PSAC Local 610, as specified in the bylaws of the GTA Union. According to the bylaws, "Special standing committees aid the Local in its integral and ongoing political outreach and social justice work, central to any labour organization."

The Women's Committee seeks to foster a greater sense of community among past/present/future women graduate teaching assistants and advocates for improved accessibility, resources, and working conditions for past/present/future women graduate teaching assistants at the University of Western Ontario, while building relationships with organizations in the city of London that advocate for improved rights, resources, and support systems for past/present/future women in the larger London community.

### Membership

The Committee shall be composed of the chair, the secretary, the treasurer, and a representative from each faculty division (Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences), if possible.- Membership roles can differ from these stated roles at the discretion of the Chair. The Committee shall be restricted to past/present/future women members in order to give a safe space for women's voices. Although voting members shall be restricted to the seven specified positions, the Women's Committee welcomes any woman observer to attend committee meetings. The Committee shall have no more than seven (7) members, but may vote to raise the membership limit. Events sponsored by the Women's Committee will be open to women and men unless specified otherwise.

The responsibilities of Committee members shall be as follows:

**Chair** - The Chair shall organize meetings and prepare meeting agendas. She shall be the Committee's primary point of contact with the Local's executive committee and other organizations, whether internal or external to the Local and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. The Chair shall be primarily responsible for bringing motions and bargaining demands arising from the Women's Committee to the appropriate Committee or organization.

**Secretary** - The Secretary shall take minutes of Committee meetings and distribute them to the Committee membership. She shall make room reservations when appropriate.

**Treasurer** - The Treasurer shall maintain the Committee budget. She shall be responsible for working with the Local's Finance Chair to reimburse members' expenses, and she shall prepare a proposed budget for the next year, to be reviewed by the Committee during the May meeting.

**Faculty Representatives** - (one for each faculty: Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences) The Faculty Representatives shall represent and report back to women from their respective faculties. They shall be responsible for formulating bargaining demands and motions representing the interests of women graduate teaching assistants in each of their faculties.

## Membership Selection

The process for committee membership selection is specified in the [bylaws of the GTA Union PSAC Local 610 bylaws](#). Interested members must send an email to the Local's [Administration Chair](#) [Administration and Internal Communications Chair](#) at [administration@psac610.ca](mailto:administration@psac610.ca) (please cc the [Interim Chair of the Committee at president@psac610.ca](mailto:president@psac610.ca), [office at psac610@psac610.ca](mailto:office@psac610.ca)), indicating (a) their interest to be on the Committee and (b) their faculty of study. When voting on specific positions, all current members and candidates for positions may vote.

## Meetings and Communications

Meetings occur on a monthly basis and shall be scheduled according to the schedules of the members. Meetings shall generally be held in the [GTA-PSAC 610 Union Office](#), Somerville House Room 1313, and shall generally be scheduled for a period of an hour and a half. ~~The first meeting of the 2012-2013 term shall be scheduled by the chair and the appropriate information will be emailed to successful candidates.~~

The primary form of communication for the Committee shall be meetings and email.

## Procedures

The Committee will proceed under the PSAC's Rules of Order and the Feminist Method of Decision Making, as outlined in the *PSAC Regional Women's Committee Handbook*. According to the *Handbook*, the feminist process is "a method of working together and an approach to organizational structure that moves away from hierarchies and authoritarianism. The Feminist process is based on the principle of equality. **It emphasizes shared goals, authority, responsibility, and accountability,**" (15, bold type original).

## Honoraria

Small honoraria of People's Pesos will be provided to all non-executive members of the Committee, pending the approval of the executive committee of the Local. Pending approval of the budget and under the condition that members must attend at least 9 meetings to be eligible for compensation.