

PSAC 610 – Steward Meeting, February 16, 2017, 12:00pm

Minutes

Agenda

- 1) Approvals
 - a) Minutes: October 25, 2016.
 - b) Agenda
- 2) Report from the President
- 3) Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair
- 4) Report from the Finance Chair
- 5) Report from the Social Science Chief Steward
- 6) Extended Health Plan Report
- 7) Motions, Amended Committee Terms of Reference

Chair: Dave Blocker

Meeting Called to Order: 12:02pm

Minutes: Mary Blake Bonn (Administration and Internal Communications Chair)

Approvals

Agenda and past minutes approved.

Reports

Report from the President

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

President: This is a very exciting year because the Postdoctoral Fellows have just joined us, all the postdocs are in bargaining, and the TAs are going into bargaining in the fall. We are also hosting this year's meeting of the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions. I encourage you to get involved with the Local by joining the Negotiation Committee. The committee works to determine what our demands should be as we go into bargaining.

Report adopted.

Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Report adopted.

Report from the Finance Chair

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Finance: There should be representation from all the departments, and we don't have stewards from all departments. As we go into bargaining, it is especially important that we reach out to the membership so we know what their priorities are. Please take advantage of your solidarity events to talk to your members. If you have friends who want to become stewards, it's not too late; they can still sign up.

Navraj: Some members start their program in the winter, not in the fall. We need to do more to reach these members. Maybe we could have a social event in January specifically for new members.

Report adopted.

Report from the Social Science Chief Steward

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Report adopted.

Extended Health Plan Report

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Report adopted.

Motions

For the PSAC-ON Convention

Resolution #1: DCL representation on the Social Justice Fund Board (Moved by President, Seconded by Arts; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas PSAC supports a culture of inclusion;

Whereas PSAC has a Social Justice Fund, which is steered by a board without representation from any DCLs;

Be it resolved that the Social Justice Fund Board include a designated seat for an AEC member.

Resolution #2: Tri-Annual National DCL Conference (Moved by President, Seconded by Postdoc; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas PSAC promotes and represents solidarity;

Whereas all DCLs share political issues;

Whereas all DCLs need a forum to discuss our shared issues and support one another;

Be it resolved that PSAC National fund a National DCL Conference.

Be it further resolved that DCLs organize and plan the DCL Conference.

Resolution #3: Tri-annual National Academic Sector Conference (Moved by President, Seconded by Arts; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas PSAC promotes and represents solidarity;

Whereas all Academic DCLs share political issues;

Whereas all Academic DCL's need a forum to discuss our shared issues and support one another;

Whereas the DCL Academic Sector is the fastest growing sector within the PSAC;

Whereas Academic Workers have precarious and atypical working conditions that require a venue to discuss.

Be it resolved that PSAC National fund a National Academic DCL Conference.

Be it further resolved that Academic DCL's organize and plan the Academic DCL Conference.

Resolution #4: Gender Neutral Language in Personal And Public Address (Moved by President, Seconded by Administration; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas the labour movement has historically been responsible for lifting up the struggle for equality and;

Whereas Public Service Alliance of Canada (hereafter PSAC) is committed to promoting and embodying, an inclusive and non-discriminatory society, and;

Whereas the designations "brother" and "sister" once captured a sentiment of inclusive identity, today we recognize a far greater diversity in gender expression and identity;

Whereas "gender expression" has recently been added (2012) to supplement "gender Identity" in the existing grounds for discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code;

Be it resolved that the PSAC will retire the public use of the designations "brother" and sister" in the singular or plural form. PSAC will consider these designations as inappropriate in the discharge of all PSAC's public business.

Be it further resolved that individual members will be actively discouraged from the use of said designations in customary greetings.

Be it further resolved that in extension to the aforementioned retirement of the designations "brother" and "sister", that alternate forms of personal and collective address be determined, such as "Friends and Allies", which satisfy the terms of inclusive language in the present context.

Discussion:

President and Admin motivate.

Arts: Why aren't we using "comrades"?

President: What can I say? Some people don't feel comfortable with the term comrade.

Tristan: I don't have much to add, but I want my approval noted.

Resolution #5: Fair Terms of Office for Elected Positions (Moved by President, Seconded by Administration; Motion Passes, PhysicalSci abstains)

Whereas current terms of office are discriminatory towards precarious atypical workers who are on short-term contracts;

Be it resolved that anyone voted or acclaimed to hold an elected PSAC office shall be able to hold the term of said office for the full term regardless of employment status.

Be it further resolved that if chosen by the membership to be a delegate to fulfill a mandate, delegate status will remain regardless of employment status.

Discussion:

Communications: I want to propose an amendment to the motion, to prevent this from applying to former TAs who have graduated. I want to add "unless they have graduated" to the BIFRT cause.

Finance: I'm seconding the amendment.

Debate on the amendment:

Postdoc: If we change something, it will be complicated because these resolutions came from the three Ontario academic DCLs together.

Tristan: I'm speaking against the amendment because the wording is prone to abuse and misunderstanding.

Admin: I'm speaking against the amendment as well. The original motion applies to all PSAC Locals, not just academic Locals. For this reason, the amendment is too specific and could create problems with non-academic Locals.

Postdoc: I'm speaking against the amendment. The concerns raised by the Communications Chair can be addressed by amending our own Local's bylaws.

Amendment is defeated (PhysicalSci abstains)

Resolution #6: International Workers' Day (May 1st) Participation (Moved by President, Seconded by Arts; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas PSAC currently supports the September Labour Day political action events.

Whereas PSAC is a voice of Labour in our communities.

Whereas many PSAC Locals currently promote and participate in "International Workers' Day";

Be it resolved that PSAC promotes and participates in local “International Workers’ Day (May 1st) events and activities.

Discussion:

President and Arts motivate.

Tristan: I would like to speak in favour of the motion as a steward from the History department. As a union, we need to acknowledge our history, and May Day is an important part of that.

Resolution #7: Funding match for the Ontario PSAC Labour Arts and Culture Scholarship (Moved by President, Seconded by Postdoc; Motion Passes)

Whereas PSAC promotes the advancement of Labour Arts and Culture;

Whereas PSAC promotes membership involvement and development;

Be it resolved that Ontario PSAC match the Ontario DCL Academic Sector (DCL 555, DCL 901, DCL 610) scholarship of \$3000.00 by contributing \$3000.00 to the Ontario PSAC DCL Academic Sector Scholarship Fund.

Discussion:

Finance: Point of information. I thought this was going to be \$3600. Why is it \$3000? Each of the three Locals contributes \$1200, so should PSAC Ontario should contribute \$3600?

Postdoc: \$600 is the administrative fee.

Resolution #8: DCL Local Staff in the PSAC Competition Process (Moved by President, Seconded by Administration; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas large DCL like the UWO’s GTA and Postdoctoral Union, Local 610 have hired staff to run their local union office.

Whereas these DCL are responsible for all the component level services to their membership via a service agreement with the PSAC.

Whereas these DCL naturally hire from their membership and past members, but DCL staff can lose their PSAC membership status as they now work for the Union Local.

Be it resolved that the PSAC allow DCL Local Staff to compete at the same level as component staff in PSAC Competitions.

Be it further resolved that any PSAC policy, regulation or constitutional amendments be done to allow these staff to be treated as any other component employees in the PSAC Competition process.

Other Motions

Financial Assistance Committee (Moved by Administration, Seconded by Arts; Passed Unanimously)

Whereas the Financial Assistance Committee met on January 27th, 2017 and made several changes to their Terms of Reference,

Be it resolved that the Financial Assistance Committee's Terms of Reference be accepted as amended.

Postdoc Bargaining Compensation (Moved by President, Seconded by Arts; Motion Passes; Communications and PhysicalSci abstain)

Whereas PSAC-National compensate for members of the Bargaining Team that are in the bargaining unit;

Whereas per practice the former as well as the current president in order to ensure continuity and understanding;

Whereas the former president, Indranil Chakraborty, and the current president, Jaime Román Brenes Reyes, are not members of the bargaining unit currently in bargaining;

Be it resolved that Indranil Chakraborty be compensated accordingly for the bargaining process thus far for October 14 (9am-4pm), November 16 (9am-6pm) and December 8 (12-7pm) at the current TA rate of \$43.61, to a maximum of 7.5 hours per day, as per PSAC's regulations.

Be it further resolved that Jaime Román Brenes Reyes be compensated accordingly for the bargaining process thus far for October 14 (9am-4pm), November 16 (9am-6pm) and December 8 (12-2:30pm) at the current TA rate of \$43.61, to a maximum of 7.5 hours per day, as per PSAC's regulations.

Discussion:

President: PSAC National is paying for the other three members of the bargaining team because they are members of the bargaining unit. Bargaining is quite a lot of work, and Indra and I are currently not being compensated for it. I'm going to leave the room so I won't be here while you discuss the motion. ***(President leaves; Past President also absent for discussion)***

Arts: Bargaining is important work, so we should pay them for it.

Communications: Point of information. What was the hourly rate for the other three members of the bargaining team?

Speaker (Dave): They're being compensated at their own hourly rate of pay, which varies depending on their contracts.

Tristan: Another point of information. Is there a way that this can be turned into a policy so we don't need to pass a motion like this every time?

Mary Blake: The Bylaws Committee will look into it. I should also add that this should have been in the budget.

Postdoc: I have a friendly amendment. Jaime was only there 12–2:30 on December 8.

Speaker (Dave): I stepped out to speak to Jaime. He confirmed that the amendment is friendly and accurate.

Finance: I have another point. According to the PSAC rules, they will only pay for 7.5 hours per day. 9am–6pm is 9 hours. Are we going to pay for the full 9 hours, or just 7.5 hours? I would like to add “to a maximum of 7.5 hours per day, as per PSAC’s regulations.”

***Amendment moved by Finance, seconded by Communications (7.5-hour maximum).
Amendment passes (President abstains).***

Postdoc: I would like to bring an amendment. I want to change the rate of pay to \$20/hr.

Amendment moved by Postdoc, seconded by PhysicalSci (rate of \$20/hr).

Postdoc: The other three members of the bargaining team are postdocs. If you analyze the postdoc salary, in the tentative agreement that failed, the minimum annual salary amounts to maybe \$16/hr. That is my rationale for making the rate \$20/hr.

PhysicalSci: I would add that this amendment creates uniformity among the bargaining team.

Administration: I would like to speak against the amendment because the figure of \$20/hr was chosen arbitrarily. Paying bargaining team members according to the hourly rate of pay for their jobs is consistent with PSAC policy.

Finance: I would suggest going with the standard academic rate, if we don’t want to use the TA rate of pay.

Amendment is defeated (President abstains)

Scholarship Committee (Moved by Communications, Seconded by Postdoc; Motion Passes, Tristan abstains)

Whereas based on the membership's decision, the line item for TA scholarships reduces from 11,200 CAD to 10,000 CAD in 2016-2017 budget;

Be it resolved that the amount of money for 16 academic scholarships offered in Apr.2017 reduces from 500 CAD to 400 CAD to adjust the budget.

Be it further resolved that the amount of money for 4 community involvement scholarships offered in Apr.2017 increases from 400 CAD to 500 CAD to adjust the budget.

Be it further resolved that the stewards approve the corresponding changes to the Scholarship Committee’s Terms of Reference.

Discussion:

Communications: We added the labour scholarship (along with the other academic DCLs). This is why the total amount for our scholarships has changed, and why we’ve adjusted the amounts for the scholarships.

Postdoc: It makes sense to adjust the scholarships like this.

Mary Blake: I would like to propose an amendment to add a BIFRT clause that the stewards approve the corresponding changes to the Terms of Reference.

Amendment moved by Administration, seconded by Communications. Amendment passes unanimously.

Arts: I'm in favour of the motion because it's a response to the addition of the labour scholarship, but I would remind everyone that we are a union and we should be giving money back to the members going forward.

Meeting Adjourned, 2:00pm

Appendix

Report from the President

It is at the peak of winter when things get very warm at the Union. We are in the middle of many battles: Postdoctoral Bargaining process, preparing for the Teaching Assistants Bargaining, several activism activities in the community in response to xenophobia, and situations within our university regarding funding and the future of graduate studies.

I called this meeting in order for you all, stewards, to join the movement as we prepare and continue to work together for a stronger union. Postdoctoral bargaining will resume when we go back to the table with the employer, most likely in March. We need your full support in order to achieve a fair collective agreement. We need to start mobilizing and forming a Negotiations Committee that will review the current collective agreement for the TAs and prepare a survey for our TA membership. If you are interested, please speak with me after the meeting or email me at president@psac610.ca

In terms of activism, I have been very proud to see many of you, my fellow unionists, at many of the marches that have taken place in our communities condemning the recent misogynistic, xenophobic and Islamophobic attacks. As a union we stand together in solidarity!

It is also exciting that we are preparing for a North American union conference, the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions, which our local is hosting here at Western in August 2017. The Arts and Humanities Chief Steward is taking the lead in organizing this event, so feel free to email James at artschief@psac610.ca This conference will bring an open forum to discuss strategies and learn more about the struggles happening across the continent.

More immediate is the PSAC-Ontario Convention. You will see that we have eight resolutions that we would like to introduce at this convention in order for the DCL (Directly Chartered Locals, such as our own Local) to have more representation in the overall structure of the National Union. I can explain and motivate these motions.

And, we cannot deny that there are no problems happening right now: cases of funding being cut or not acknowledged as it was promised have come to light. As stewards, please be alert if anything like that is happening. A Union is made strong by its members. United we bargain, divided we beg!

In solidarity, Jaime R. Brenes Reyes

President (president@psac610.ca)

Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair

As Administration and Internal Communications Chair, I am in charge of overseeing the administration of our Local. I take minutes at executive meetings, sign cheques, manage the contracts of our two staff members, and assist the President. I am also in charge of the Financial Assistance and Food Support programs, in addition to being the Local's principal liaison with SOGS. Below, I've summarized the activities of my committees. I would like to highlight in particular the Bylaws committee, which is looking for members.

Financial Assistance Committee: The Financial Assistance Committee meets monthly to assess applications to the Financial Assistance program. Since June 2016, we have given out \$17,505.78 to cover personal and medical expenses and \$6935.00 to cover academic and childcare expenses. This means we have \$16,994.22 remaining in the medical/personal category and \$4565.00 remaining in the academic/childcare category. In other words, we're on budget for the year. Do remind your members about this program. More information is available on the website.

Food Support and Resources Committee: The Food Support and Resources Committee adjudicates applications to the Food Support program, formerly the Food Bank. Through the Food Support program, members can receive \$75 per term (plus \$25 for each dependent) to help with the cost of groceries. Please remind your members of this program. This is money that we get from the employer to help members in precarious financial situations, and we want it to go to those most in need.

Bylaws Committee: There's still time to join the 2017 Bylaws Committee. The committee is meeting this winter to review our Local's bylaws and make any necessary changes. Joining the Bylaws Committee is an excellent opportunity to be directly involved with the governance and functioning of the Local. Email me (administration@psac610.ca) if you or anyone in your department is interested!

As always, thank you to Conan, our Office Manager and Dylan, our EHP Administrator for the work they do for our Local.

Thank you to all the stewards for taking the time to come to this meeting and for the work you will do in mobilizing the membership as we head into bargaining.

In solidarity, Mary Blake Bonn

Administration and Internal Communications Chair

administration@psac610.ca

Report from the Finance Chair

Dear Stewards,

Thanks a lot for taking time out of your very busy schedule to attend this meeting. My duty as the Finance Chair of your PSAC Local 610 is to keep track of our financial transactions. That includes our everyday banking, budget making, and tax related issues.

We have formed a finance committee. This committee will prepare the budget for the fiscal year 2017-2018. As the stewards, you are the ones who have regular interaction with the

members. Any recommendations regarding our finance and budget, based on your experience and conversation with the members will help us to prepare a better budget.

I have added a year to date expense summary at the end of my report. Please, feel free to ask for any clarification.

In solidarity, Md Imran Khan Finance Chair, 2016-2017.

Year to Date Expense Summary		
Item	Budget	Expense as of January 31,2017
Total committee expenses	6500	1763
Total donations	3000	691
Education and training	4000	3608
Member driven program	13000	761
Postage	500	376
Printing and copying	3000	1610
Promotion and ads	6200	5699
Uncategorized expenses	1500	791
Utilities	5600	2009

Report from the Social Science Chief Steward

Hello Stewards!

Thanks so much for all your hard work so far this year, we couldn't do it without you!

Several of you have already started planning solidarity events for your departments, some have event hosted them already, and for that I thank you. If you haven't started planning yet, don't worry there is still lots of time left in the term.

We will soon be entering a period of bargaining for our new TA contract next year (our current contract expires August 31st, 2017). I would encourage you all to speak up and voice your opinions and concerns about our current collective agreement. Please discuss with your fellow TAs, in your own department and friends in other departments what issues you would like to see addressed. We have more bargaining power when our members are engaged and demanding change. If you are interested in joining the mobilization committee please contact myself or the PSAC office.

I am happy to report that there have been very few serious concerns raised regarding TA work in Social Science so far this year and the ones that were brought to my attention have been resolved quickly and amiably. If you have any questions or concerns or have members

come to you with concerns please continue to direct them to me and the PSAC office so we can resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

There is a new standardized Duties Specification Agreement that is distributed by SGPS to your respective departments. If you have yet to see and sign one for your TAship this term, contact your administrator to request one, for yourself and the other members in your department. These, along with your TA contract for winter 2017, were due by January 31, 2017. The DSAs are important for outlining specific expectations and contracting the hours to be worked throughout the term. Continue to record your hours worked throughout the term and be sure to notify your TA supervisor if you are approaching your maximum (140 hrs for full TA; 70 for 1/2 TA).

The year is nearly over (wow, time flies!), our general elections are coming up in April, and I would encourage you to consider running for any open positions.

As my term as Social Science Chief Steward comes to an end I would just like to say it was a pleasure working with you this year. I regret I cannot be here today, but I want to wish you all a great end of the term and summer, and for those finishing, congrats! and best of luck in your future endeavours.

In Solidarity,
-Heather Peacock

Extended Health Plan Report

EHP 2015-16

For the last year, the plan allocated \$229,794 in grants, a 29.1% decrease over last year. 729 members made 1281 claims, with 719 members reimbursed an average of \$320. The net income for fiscal year of the program, (September to August) was \$70,082 and the program had an accumulated surplus at the end of the fiscal year of \$161,859.

The use of the program by members was down to approximately 2013-14 levels, with 32% of members participating in the program. In 2014-15, 35% of members participated in the EHP and the Local expected that members would continue to increase their use of the program. This expectation led to the maximum grant per year to any member to be capped at \$400, less than the \$499 cap of previous years.

The decrease in use may be due to a number of factors. It could be that use in 2013-14 was a chance result and the performance of 2015-16 was a return to the mean behaviour of the program. (The average member participation for 2007-08 to 2013-14 was 29%.) However, it is reasonable to assume that some of the decrease in use was due to a smaller maximum grant than in previous years. Because of bargaining there was a delay in the employer funding of the program. In order to continue to operate the program, the Local set the initial maximum that a member could receive from the program to \$250. An additional factor that may have contributed to low use is reduced advertising for the program. The Local sent out fewer newsletters during the academic year relative to the previous academic year; thus there was less advertising of the program to members.

EHP 2016-17

As of the end of December, the program approved \$52,126 in claims, down 39% from the same time last year. Participation in the program is down 2% from last year. This may be particularly troubling as the maximum grant for this period last year was only \$250 and the maximum grant currently is \$499 and this should encourage more participation. As there were relatively fewer newsletters to members in the last term, reduced advertising for the program may be reducing participation.

EHP Future

While the EHP currently has an accumulated surplus, the Local has no means to judge the size of the surplus relative to the needs of the program. The EHP currently operates in such a way as to absorb the risk of the members' expenses. That is, the EHP issues grants based on the need experienced by members; while the maximum grant per year limits the potential total amount of grants, the total amount of grants is determined by the needs of the members and this is a product of random factors beyond their control or the control of the Local. During the previous term, I brought this risk and the need to properly understand it to the attention of the Executive Committee. Currently, the Local has not engaged in any significant efforts to determine the appropriate way to manage this risk and to evaluate the size of the accumulated surplus of the EHP as security against this risk.

An additional worry for the future of the EHP is the status of the program as a taxable or non-taxable benefit. Currently, the EHP does not issue tax receipts for its grants following a letter from the Revenue Canada indicating that they were not concerned with reporting requirements for grants below \$500. However, this letter does little to clear up the status of the EHP as a taxable or non-taxable benefit or whether the Canada Revenue Agency currently expects members to report their grants from the EHP as a taxable benefit. Recent changes in the tax status of insurance for primarily medical needs provide a promising way to establish the EHP as a non-taxable benefit and allow the Local to set whatever maximum grant per year the Local deems appropriate. However, meeting the requirements to establish the EHP properly as a non-taxable insurance plan will take a significant amount of work that the Local seems uninterested in pursuing.

Amended Terms of Reference for the Scholarship Committee and the Financial Assistance Committee: see following pages

Appendix G

Scholarships Committee Terms of Reference

Name

The Scholarships Committee

Term of the Committee

The scholarship applications open February 15th and the final deadline is April 15th. Scholarships will be awarded in the summer.

Members

1. Chairperson: the Communications Chair, or a designate elected by the Committee.
2. Maximum of 15 members.
3. Members will be selected and elected by the Executive Committee after a call-out has been sent to the membership.
4. Where possible, members of the Committee will normally consist of a representative of each of the four academic divisions: Arts & Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences.
5. The committee shall convene beginning in May to choose the scholarship awardees with a view to communicating its final decisions by midsummer.
6. Meetings will be held at the PSAC Local 610 Union Office, Somerville House Room 1313.
7. Members will receive an honorarium for their contribution.

How to Apply

Members should contact the Communications Chair at communications@psac610.ca and cc psac610@psac610.ca to express interest in joining the Scholarships Committee. The Executive Committee will consider all members who express interest by the deadline of February 28.

Non-disclosure Policy

Members of the committee shall hold confidential all the information related to applications. This information related to the applications is not to be disclosed or shared with a third party without the written permission of the applicants. All applications will have any identifying information blacked out by the Local's Office Manager prior to adjudication by the committee to secure the anonymity of applicants during the decision-making process.

Deliverables

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

Disbursement Policy for Scholarships

PSAC Local 610 awards multiple scholarships once a year to members who demonstrate excellence in the areas of community involvement, academic achievement, and outstanding contributions to research.

The committee will endeavor to distribute scholarships equitably between members at the Masters and Doctoral level of study, and across the four academic divisions of Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. In the event that there is no suitable candidate for a particular award, the committee reserves the right to use the available scholarship funds to make an additional award in another category.

All committee decisions are final and are not subject to appeal, except on the grounds that a conflict of interest can be shown to have occurred.

The scholarships are:

Academic Achievement Scholarship – These are awarded once a year to members in good standing of PSAC Local 610 at Western. There are 16 scholarships available: four for each academic division. The scholarships, worth \$400 each, are typically awarded to eight Masters and eight Doctoral students on the basis of academic achievement and research excellence.

Scholarship for Outstanding Research Contributions – These are awarded once a year to up to four members in good standing of PSAC Local 610 at Western who have demonstrated outstanding contributions to research in their respective fields. The awards, worth \$400 each, will typically be divided equally between students at the Masters level and Doctoral level whose achievements may include, but are not limited to, peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and workshops.

Union Scholarship for Community Involvement – These are awarded once a year to up to four individuals who are members in good standing of the Local. Applicants should illustrate a high level of involvement with organizations that contribute productively to the community (internal or external to UWO). Volunteer experience unrelated to the candidate's research with not-for-profit organizations in the community will be weighted more heavily for this scholarship. The awards are of \$500 each and will typically be divided equally between members at the Masters and Doctoral levels.

Conflict of Interest and Obligation to Report

Though all applications are anonymized by the Local's office manager prior to the committee's adjudication of scholarships, occasionally committee members may recognize an application as belonging to a partner, friend, or family member. In such an event, the committee member must declare to the committee chair that there is a conflict of interest and recuse him- or herself from the decision-making process for that scholarship.

Non-executive members of the Scholarships Committee are not barred from applying for a scholarship themselves, however they must recuse themselves from all committee discussions and decisions involving the award to which they have applied.

Committee members need not provide any identifying details about the nature of their relationship to the scholarship applicant (whether partner, friend, family member or self), simply that the conflict of interest exists.

Failure to declare a conflict of interest will result in disqualification after the fact and any award will be rescinded.

Members of the Executive Committee are not eligible to apply for a scholarship during their term of office.

Duty to Accommodate

PSAC Local 610 is dedicated to upholding the finding of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the Federal Court of Canada ruling that workers must receive accommodation for their childcare needs.

Committee members needing childcare during hours spent performing committee work will be provided with a subsidy to offset the cost of accessing quality childcare.

[Updated February 2017]

Appendix K

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 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.

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 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

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

How to Apply

Members should contact the Administration and Internal Communications Chair at 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.

Meetings

Meeting Duration and Location

Meetings will be held at the PSAC Local 610 Union Office, Somerville House Room 1313. Meetings shall be held monthly and scheduled for two (2) hours, although they 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 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 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 Administration and Internal Communications Chair (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 (May–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 up to a cumulative amount of \$500 per academic year (September–August). Support for academic expenses can only be received up to a cumulative amount of \$300 per academic year (September–August).

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
 - Extra expenses incurred during or as a result of an unforeseen, catastrophic home emergency: house fire, flood, sudden unexpected homelessness, etc.
- Note that we can only fund expenses for which a receipt is provided. Please ensure you include receipts and an adequate 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/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml>

Members are encouraged to contact the Administration and Internal Communications Chair (administration@psac610.ca) should they have questions about the Financial Assistance funding process.

[Updated January 2017]

