

PSAC 610 – Stewards Meeting, April 4, 2017
Minutes

Agenda

- 1) Approvals^[SEP]
 - a) Minutes: February 16, 2017
 - 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 Bylaws Committee
- 6) Extended Health Plan Report
- 7) Motions
- 8) Appendices: ^[SEP]
 - a) Bylaws and Policies Changes
 - b) Draft Budget 2017-18

Minutes taken by Mary Blake Bonn
Meeting called to order 5:35pm

Approvals

Minutes approved unanimously
Agenda approved unanimously

Report from the President

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

President: The Postdocs returned to the bargaining table yesterday. The employer requested conciliation. This process will require patience and it will require unity. It is a pleasure to serve as your president. As always, feel free to talk to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Report approved unanimously

Report from the Admin and Internal Communications Chair

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Report approved unanimously

Report from the Finance Chair

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

The Finance Chair elaborates on his written report. Discussion of the projected deficit ensues between the Finance Chair, Indranil Chakraborty, and Martin LeFebvre.

Martin: I've worked with a union before. Chief Stewards were not part of the executive. If we made the Chief Stewards non-executive officers, couldn't we wipe out our deficit?

Finance: In my experience and in the memory of this Local, people become demotivated when they are not paid.

Martin Lefebvre: They should be paid, but a stipend.

Administration: The Bylaws Committee did consider this option.

Speaker: I don't think we should enter into a debate about having the Chief Stewards on the executive. We need to continue the conversation about the budget.

Postdoc: I would like to reiterate the importance of having the Chief Stewards on the executive.

Speaker: Again, we should return to the discussion of the budget.

Martin Lefebvre: In diminishing our reserves, aren't we weakening our bargaining position?

Finance: To a certain extent. I could look at past audit reports and give you more specific information. It is also important to remember that we don't run on a for-profit model.

A Steward: Have the executive members considered taking a pay cut across the board to reduce the deficit?

Imran: That already happened. The present executives are making 25% less than previously. In addition, we cut one Chair position, and two executives, Mary Blake and Shirzad, took all the work from this position without additional pay. You can also consult the audit reports before the AGM and make any suggestions to us.

Report accepted unanimously

Report from the Bylaws Committee

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Extended Health Plan Report

Written Report Delivered (See Appendix)

Motions

Bylaws Review (Moved by Admin, Seconded by President; Passes Unanimously)

BIRT the stewards accept the Bylaws Committee's recommended changes to PSAC Local 610's Bylaws and Policies and recommend them for presentation to the general membership.

Question called on report (Moved by Martin Lefebvre, Seconded by President; Passes Unanimously)

Bylaw 9.12, creation of Portfolio Review Committee (Severed from Bylaws Committee Motion, Moved by Admin, Seconded by President; Motion is defeated)

BIRT the stewards recommend the creation of the Portfolio Review Committee to the general membership.

Bylaws Committee (Moved by Admin, Seconded by Martin Lefebvre; Passes unanimously)

BIRT the stewards approve the Bylaws Committee's Terms of Reference as amended in March of 2017 (see Bylaws, Appendix F).

Portfolio Review Committee Terms of Reference (Motion ruled out of order)

BIRT the stewards approve the Portfolio Review Committee's Terms of Reference as drafted in March of 2017 (see Bylaws, Appendix P).

Budget (Moved by Finance, Seconded by President; Passes Unanimously)

BIRT the stewards recommend the 2017–18 draft budget to the general membership.

Appendices

Report from the President

Dear Stewards,

It is incredible to reflect on the many victories we have accomplished together during this academic year: from running a successful fundraising campaign to returning to the Bargaining Table for the Postdocs and begin the process for Teaching Assistants. This has been a good year.

It has been a true honour to act as the President of our Local. I have heard many of your comments and concerns and suggestions and have had good discussions. I can see the passion to keep moving forward.

I appreciate your work as stewards. You are the face of the Union in the departments. Hence, as we proceed in bargaining for TAs, I encourage you all to fill out the membership survey and encourage others to do so:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TY3PT8W>

Even though my PhD is on Comparative Literature, words fail to convey and express my gratitude towards my colleagues in the Executive Committee, the Office Staff, all those involved in the committees, and the day-to-day academic and labour activism.

Let's keep it up! The AGM and Elections are coming up soon. Participate with your full potential. A Union is made strong by its members. United we bargain, divided we beg!

In solidarity,

Jaime R. Brenes Reyes^[1] President (president@psac610.ca)

Report from the Administration and Internal Communications Chair

Dear friends and allies,

It has been an honour to serve you as Administration and Internal Communications Chair this year. Thank you all for the work you have done as stewards, and I hope that you will continue to be involved with the Local in the coming year.

As you know, I perform a wide variety of roles within the Local as Administration and Internal Communications Chair. I take minutes at meetings, I negotiate contracts and sign cheques, I attend meetings of the Labour/Management Committee with our President, I keep our files organized and up to date, I attend SOGS council meetings as the Local's principal designate, and I work with our two reliable and dedicated staff members to effect the day-to-day operations of the office.

Of the various roles I have taken on this year, one of my greatest joys has been working with the three committees that fall under my portfolio: Financial Assistance, Food Support and Resources, and Bylaws. The Financial Assistance and Food Support and Resources Committees have worked tirelessly throughout the year to administer our benefit programs because they care about the wellbeing of our members. The Bylaws Committee met this winter to review the Local's Bylaws and Policies, and drafted the revisions to the Bylaws that I will present to you at the meeting. The committee worked not only to effect the changes that need to be made in the coming year, but also to think in the longer term about the future of the Local.

I believe that PSAC Local 610 is at a crossroads. As we approach the end of our current Collective Agreement, discussions are ongoing about our budget, our priorities, and our values. I do not know what my colleagues will tell you in their reports about our financial situation, our staff, or our responsibility to the membership. I can only urge you to remember that there are complex issues to be addressed and important decisions to be made in the coming year. That is why I encourage you to run for executive positions, join committees, or simply stay on as stewards next year. You are all esteemed members of your Local, and when we stand together, we are strong.

Thank you all for putting your faith in me this year, and I look forward to continuing to serve you next year in my new role as SOGS President. Always remember that there is power in our union.

In peace, love, and solidarity,

Mary Blake Bonn^[1]_[SEP]
Administration and Internal Communications Chair
PSAC Local 610^[1]_[SEP]
administration@psac610.ca

Report from the Finance Chair

Dear Stewards,

I would like to thank you all for coming to this stewards' meeting. The finance committee has prepared a draft budget for 2017-2018. The budget has three main sections, General Budget, Financial Aid Fund Budget, and Health Fund Budget. I have attached the draft budget with my report. Please, let me know if you have any recommendations or questions regarding the budget.

I would also like to highlight a few key points about this draft budget. We have made few changes in the general budget. According to the recommendation of the Bylaws Committee, the local will have an elected speaker for its regular meetings. We have increased the amount of general donation and reduced the strike support donation.

We did not make any major change in the health fund budget.

We have an increase in our Financial Aid Fund budget. Based on the recommendation and discussion of the finance committee members, there will be significant increase in UHIP disbursement and TA assistance program.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the finance committee for their valuable time.

Regards,
Md. Imran Khan
Finance Chair

Report from the Bylaws Committee

Here is a brief summary of the changes we are proposing to the PSAC Local 610 Bylaws and Policies. These changes will be presented in more detail at the meeting, and the precise wording for these changes is shown in the copy of the bylaws that was sent out with the agenda for the meeting. Here are the changes:

Executive Officers

We propose that assisting the External Communications Chair and the Administration and Internal Communications Chair with their duties be added to the responsibilities of the Divisional Chief Stewards. The motivation for this is that last year, when the position of Community Chair was eliminated, the former Community Chair's duties were not

distributed equally among the members of the Executive Committee, but rather were all assigned to the Administration Chair and the Communications Chair. This unequal distribution of duties has created challenges.

The Speaker

We recommend creating the elected, non-executive position of Speaker. The Speaker would be tasked with chairing Stewards' Meetings and General Meetings. The motivation for this change is that typically, we hire someone on a per-hour basis to chair these meetings. If we are going to hire someone anyway, it makes sense that it be a member who is elected for this purpose.

Political Action and Social Justice Committee

We recommend expanding the mandate of the PAC/Social Justice Committee to include fundraising for the Thesis Completion Fund, a new joint effort between PSAC Local 610 and SOGS to raise money to help support students who are beyond their funding period. Per a memorandum of understanding with SOGS, PSAC 610 is responsible for organizing the fundraising, and the Bylaws Committee feels that this work is consistent with the existing mandate of the PAC/Social Justice Committee.

Portfolio Review Committee

We recommend the creation of a standing committee tasked with reviewing the performance of members of the Executive Committee. The motivation for this change is that in any elected position, accountability and transparency are paramount, and the Portfolio Review Committee will help the Local to continue to work toward these ideals.

Conflict of Interest

We recommend more specific wording regarding conflict of interest, including instructions for what to do in particular cases.

General Meetings and Stewards Meetings

We recommend a revision of the wording regarding participation of non-members at meetings to bring our policies more in line with best practices.

Ratification Votes

At the suggestion of the Executive Committee, we have added wording addressing how the Local should handle ratification votes.

Extended Health Plan Report

Status of the EHP

Despite my efforts to communicate to the Executive Committee that there exist serious

threats to the Extended Health Plan, it seems that no action has been taken to investigate or deal with these threats. The program currently opens the Local to an unknown amount of financial risk and an unknown financial and legal liability due to the status of the program as a taxable benefit. Either of these issues could seriously damage both the ability of this program to survive the next round of bargaining and the financial health of the organization. Currently, these issues limit the amount of funds that the program can distribute to individual members.

Current Status of EHP Claims

There will be significant delays in the claims currently filed and in claims filed in the near future. As the Executive Committee has communicated to me that they are planning to, at some point in the near future, eliminate the position of the EHP Administrator, the work of the position has been diverted to preparing a manual to pass on the knowledge of the procedures of the position. While some of this work has already been performed, much of the manual relied on the assumption that there would be a position responsible for the work. Therefore, much of the current manual has to be rewritten.

Processing the EHP relies on an understanding of the health insurance plans of members, the policies of this organization, how to track members and claims properly in the database for the program, how to issue cheques for the program, how to create financial reports, and a number of other technical duties. All of these procedures need to be documented for the future operation, if any, of the program. The manual for the program currently being rewritten will also include documentation on the code that maintains the EHP database and procedures that need to be followed to update the database from the sometimes inconsistent file formats provided by Western administration. It is likely that the Local will be required to hire a contractor skilled in VBA for these tasks.