

Queen's TAFE (PSAC) Inaugural General Meeting
April 19, 2010
Registration for new members 5:30pm
Chernoff Hall, Rm 117
Queen's University

Chair: Mark Rosner (Philosophy)

Agenda

1. Explanation of meeting rules (Chair)
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Report on charter application and interim governance (Brenda Shillington)
4. Introduction of PSAC representatives for Bargaining Team: Gaby Levesque and Shawn Vincent (Chair)
5. Collective bargaining: process, possibilities, priorities (Gaby Levesque, Shawn Vincent)
6. Collective Bargaining Committee selection: explanation of process (Chair, Gaby Levesque)
7. Call for Nominations to Collective Bargaining Committee
8. Election of Bargaining Committee
9. Other business
10. Announcements

Meeting called to order at 5:45pm

1. Explanation of meeting rules (Chair)

Chair explained that because the new Local has not yet established by-laws, the meeting will run according to Bourinot's Rules of Order as laid out in PSAC materials.

2. Approval of the agenda

MOVED BY Andrew Fraser (Philosophy)
SECONDED BY Usman Mushtaq (Civil Engineering)
CARRIED unanimously

Chair explained that the nomination and election process for the Collective Bargaining Committee must begin by 7pm, after which the meeting would return to unfinished agenda business.

3. Report on charter application and interim governance (Brenda Shillington)

Chair introduced Brenda Shillington from PSAC, who will be assisting in establishing the new Local.

Shillington: An application to become a Directly Chartered Local of PSAC (Public Service Alliance of Canada) would be filed as soon as the bargaining certificate has been issued by the Labour Board.

As per PSAC practice, the TAFU organizing committee would serve as an interim Executive for the new Local until by-laws are drafted and approved and elections held in the Fall.

The interim Executive Committee will work to draft by-laws for the new Local over the summer. Others who would like to join the Committee to help draft by-laws are encouraged to send e-mail to info@qtafa.com or phone 613-547-2507.

Member: What is the difference between a Directly Chartered Local and a member of a Component of PSAC?

Shillington: A Directly Chartered Local (DCL) is an autonomous Local within PSAC, whereas other Locals are generally smaller units that are grouped into "Components" which have a degree of shared governance/representation within PSAC. DCLs have the greatest autonomy.

4. Introduction of PSAC representatives for Bargaining Team: Gaby Levesque and Shawn Vincent (Chair)

Chair explained that Levesque and Vincent are PSAC staff who would be members of the Bargaining Team negotiating the collective agreement with the University along with members of the Local

5. Collective bargaining: process, possibilities, priorities (Gaby Levesque, Shawn Vincent)

Levesque: PSAC was still waiting for the Labour Board to issue a bargaining certificate, but it had reached the last stage prior to issuance of a certificate. The collective bargaining process does not wait for the Local to establish by-laws and an Exec; that is a separate, parallel process. The first step in the bargaining process is to establish a Bargaining Committee. The Bargaining Committee will select representatives to sit on a Bargaining Team along with Levesque and Vincent to negotiate directly with the Employer. The Local is entitled by statute to have three members on the Bargaining Team.

The Bargaining Committee acts as a consultative body to the Bargaining Team, which is elected from and by the Committee. The Committee is responsible for identifying bargaining demands to present to the Employer for negotiation by the Bargaining Team.

Levesque will set a meeting for the Bargaining Committee to examine existing collective agreements in Ontario to use as models (e.g., University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario, etc.). Most of these collective agreements are "mature agreements" that have been built over many years, so not all clauses will necessarily be achievable in a first agreement at Queen's. UOIT is a very recent 1st collective agreement.

Once the Committee has drafted its own model collective agreement, PSAC will issue a Notice to Bargain, notifying the Employer that it is ready to begin bargaining. The Bargaining Team will then begin negotiating with the Employer, working its way through each clause in the proposed agreement.

Bargaining will hopefully begin during the Summer.

When bargaining begins, current working conditions will be “frozen” according to Ontario law. This means that existing conditions of employment cannot be changed by the Employer until a collective agreement is reached.

The members of the Local who sit on the Bargaining Team generally present on each issue at the table, with the PSAC representatives acting in a supporting role. Bargaining typically occurs in a series of three day sessions. Non-monetary issues are generally negotiated first, followed by non-wage benefits, then wages last.

The Bargaining Team uses the Bargaining Committee to communicate with the Members during the process. The initial bargaining position (i.e., proposed agreement from the Bargaining Team to the Employer) will be posted, and bulletins will be issued. Once agreement is reached between the Bargaining Team and the Employer, the collective agreement must be ratified by a vote of the members.

All bargaining unit members (i.e., people who fall within the description of the bargaining certificate) will be included within the collective agreement. However, only members of the union are allowed to vote to approve a collective agreement. All bargaining unit members are entitled to become members of the union by signing a union membership card.

Member: How does Queen’s compare to other universities in terms of hostility to unions?

Levesque: Queen’s as an employer has historically been notorious for its opposition to unions.

Member: Why can’t people who were TAs last term but not this term come and vote?

Levesque: Legally they must have a current employment relationship with the Employer. However, new people can be added next term. Various clauses of the collective agreement and the Local’s by-laws can also establish a 12 month period for membership for various purposes.

Member: How can people not present sign cards?

Levesque: People can contact TAFE for individual appointments, and cards will be available at each meeting.

Member: Are benefits tied to each term if you only TA one term per year?

Levesque: As a union member, you still have access to union services (e.g., grievance procedure) and some benefits as determined by the collective agreement, even though employment contract is per term.

Member: Benefit plans can be negotiated for 12 month coverage?

Levesque: Yes, benefits can be negotiated to cover 12 month periods, but pay is tied to actual work.

Member: TA hours are allocated differently in different departments. Is there flexibility in how hours are allocated?

Levesque: You can negotiate anything – but the Employer must agree. Terms are up to the Bargaining Committee; members must let them know what their concerns are. Once the bargaining proposal is submitted, that's it. Must have everything in at the beginning – but can simply include place holders for various items and state that specifics details will come later.

Member: Do you pay dues all year?

Levesque: Only pay dues when you have work.

Member: Are you still a member even if not working in a term?

Levesque: Depends on if you are guaranteed work over a period of time – an “on-going relationship”.

Member: Will we not be able to vote on collective agreement over the Summer?

Levesque: The bargaining process will last into the Fall, so there will be nothing to vote on over the Summer.

Member: Don't we already have an intellectual Property (IP) policy at Queen's?

Levesque: Yes, but that would only pertain to you now as a student; in a collective agreement it would cover your work.

Member: This was raised as a bargaining issue in relation to things such as TF syllabi.

Member: Can a 12 month definition be defined?

Levesque: Yes.

Shawn Vincent described some of the typical provisions found within existing collective agreements:

- participation rights: leave from employer to do union work (e.g., stewards)
- joint union-management committees dealing with issues in the workplace
- union access to bulletin boards, space, phones, internal mail, photocopies, etc. to enable the Local to function
- grievance procedure and arbitration
- job appointments: language around who, what, when, etc.
- hours of work (max. per day/week/term)
- duties
- statutory holidays
- anti-harassment and discrimination policies
- health and safety: ex. info to members regarding employer's responsibilities employee's rights
- leaves of absence (sick, bereavement, parental) with or without pay

Member: Can the employer raise tuition to compensate for cost of benefits?

Levesque: Not unilaterally; there are provincial guidelines.

Member: Would overtime be covered?

Levesque: Yes, limits on required work hours would be set.

6. Collective Bargaining Committee selection: explanation of process (Chair, Gaby Levesque)

At 7pm, Chair called for Bargaining Committee selection to begin.

Levesque called for twelve people who would hear from her within a week to set a first meeting to go over existing collective agreements elsewhere. The first meeting would likely be in mid-May. A second meeting would likely occur in early- to mid-June. Would like to have first meeting with Employer in June/July. The Committee would likely meet twice in the Spring/Summer and twice in the Fall. Being on the Bargaining Team would be a much bigger time commitment.

Member: How will members communicate with the Committee?

Levesque: Names and contact info for the members would be posted on the Web site and members would be e-mailed.

Member: Who is serving on the interim Executive?

Levesque: The members of the organizing committee from TAFE, but they welcome interest from other members. [Interim Executive members present in the room were asked to stand.] They have no power, but will be drafting by-laws for approval by the members. Positions will be established and voted on by the members in the Fall.

7. Call for Nominations to Collective Bargaining Committee

Chair called for a nominator and a seconder for nominees to fill 12 spots. Chair asked that nominators, seconders, and nominees identify themselves by name and department. Another member asked that nominees identify themselves as domestic or international students, which was agreed.

Chair stated that a letter had been received from a member, David Thompson (History), who was away at a conference and was interested in serving on the Committee. Chair asked if there was a nominator for D. Thompson. Nominated and seconded.

Nominees (below), with nominators and seconders below each:

1. David Thompson (History, domestic)
Toby Moorsom (History)
Tim MacIntyre (English)
2. Elizabeth Lee (Mech Eng, domestic)
Michael Pathuk (Mech Eng)
Jason Bornstein (Chemistry)
3. Paul Webster (Physics, domestic)
Mithcell Anderson (Physics)
Michael Pathuk (Mech Eng)
4. Aaron Hetinger (Political Studies, domestic)
Brandon Tozo (Political Studies)
Drew Lazon (Political Studies)
5. Lisa Starr (Microbiology, domestic)

- Gareth Jones (Microbiology)
- Mary-Anne Laurico (English)
- 6. Ursula Thorley (Mining, domestic)
 - Tim MacIntyre (English)
 - Toby Moorsom (History)
- 7. Michael Pathuk (Mech Eng, domestic)
 - Jason Bornstein (Chemistry)
 - Elizabeth Lee (Mech Eng)
- 8. Tim MacIntyre (English, domestic)
 - Daniel Moore (English)
 - Bree-Anne Oryschak (English)
- 9. Sean Field (Geography, domestic)
 - Mary-Anne Laurico (English)
 - Toby Moorsom (History)
- 10. Mary-Anne Laurico (English, domestic)
 - Pantlis Isaiah (Mathematics)
 - Toby Moorsom (History)
- 11. Cara Fabre (English, domestic)
 - Mary-Anne Laurico (English)
 - Bree-Anne Oryschak (English)
- 12. Cristo Aivalis (History, domestic)
 - Michelle Rosner (History)
 - Andrew D.F. Ross (Philosophy)
- 13. Ian Rugar (Chemistry, domestic)
 - Jason Bornstein (Chemistry)
 - Michael Pathuk (Mech Eng)
- 14. Katherine Wayne (Philosophy, domestic)
 - Mary-Anne Laurico (English)
 - Karl Hardy (Cultural Studies)
- 15. Mitchell Anderson (Physics, domestic)
 - Matthew Schulz (Physics)
 - Michael Pathuk (Mech Eng)
- 16. Ralph Callebert (History, domestic)
 - Raji Singh Soni (English)
 - Anne-Marie Grondin (Sociology)

B. Shillington issued three calls for further nominees. None received.

Member: Since 12 positions is only a guideline, would it be possible to have more people serve on the Committee?

Levesque: Yes. Asked if the members present had any objection to allowing all nominees to serve. No objections.

8. Election of Bargaining Committee

Motion to acclaim and endorse the members of the Negotiating Committee:

MOVED BY: Andrew D.F. Ross (Philosophy)
SECONDED BY: Michael Pathuk (Mechanical Engineering)
CARRIED Unanimously

9. Other business

Chair said the Local would need to decide on a name, and invited suggestions.

Member: Does the Local have a PSAC number?

Shillington: Has not been issued yet.

Member: May want a name that won't exclude others (e.g., RAs) who may want to join later.

Member: May not want to creep mandate yet, either.

Member: May want a name other than TAFE because that was a name for an organizing committee. This would be a name for a union local.

Chair asked members to send suggestions to TAFE at info@gtafa.com, phone 613-547-2507, or stop by the TAFE office at 177 Wellington Street, Suite 201.

Member: There was only one international student nominated to the Bargaining Committee. This was an indication of the relative marginalization of international students, who were particularly vulnerable. The Committee needs to remain cognizant of international students and their issues.

10. Announcements

Chair announced that the new Local was attempting to find space on or near campus. Asked anyone who knew of space that may be available to contact TAFE.

ADJOURNED 7:36pm