

SGM November 10, 2021
2:30pm Zoom

Minutes

Start Time: 2.36pm.

Meeting moderator: *Lizzie Bygott*

Determination of Quorum: Quorum of 20 members is met (30 attendees)

Opening remarks: Quorum check is complete, we'll vote on a meeting secretary now.

Election of Secretary:

Motion: To elect *Harshavardhan Thyagarajan* as secretary for this meeting made by *Harshavardhan Thyagarajan*.

Second: *Ethan Mitchell*

Discussion: *Harshavardhan* accepts nomination to act as secretary. No questions or discussion on this.

Vote: Passed unanimously. Votes for (30). Against (0). Abstentions (0)

Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda as circulated made by *Canan Sahin*

Second: *Brittainy Bonnis*.

Discussion: Note any calls for amendments. Note voting on calls for amendments if necessary.

Vote: Passed unanimously. Votes for (30). Against (0). Abstentions (0)

Statement on harassment:

Prerna Subramanian - Our union is made strong by Sisters, Brothers, and Siblings working together to improve our working lives and to preserve the rights that we have struggled to achieve. Mutual respect is the cornerstone of this cooperation. The PSAC Constitution states that every member is entitled to be free from discrimination and harassment, both in the union and at the workplace, on the basis of age, sex, colour, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, marital status, criminal record, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,

language, class or political belief. Members are also entitled to be free from personal harassment.

If you experience harassment at an event, contact the identified Anti-Harassment Resource Person(s) to discuss the situation and possible responses. Our initial approach is to encourage early and informal resolution and to facilitate our members speaking directly with one another to resolve the matter. If this is not successful or possible, the Constitutional and policy mandates on the issue of harassment will be fully and quickly enforced.

Harassment in all its forms detracts from our common purpose and weakens our union. Let each one of us, as we work together on the important task at hand; treat each other with dignity and respect.

Land acknowledgement:

Prerna Subramanian – PSAC Local 901 is situated on the traditional territories of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one that predates the establishment of European colonies. As workers who participate in the production and dissemination of knowledge, we consider ourselves duty-bound to educate ourselves about the ongoing colonial history of Canada. We stand with Indigenous communities on Queen’s campus who continue to fight for equity, justice and reconciliation at our workplace, and offer our uncompromising support and alliance for their struggles. This includes our efforts at the bargaining table with Nat day for truth and reconciliation, and also our solidarity for all actions undertaken by Indigenous members of our local and the broader community.

Rules of order refresher:

Lizzie Bygott –

[Rules of order available within the meeting package.]

Approval of Minutes

Discussion: Note any corrections/amendments.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the May AGM as circulated with the SGM package made by *Jake Morrow*.

Second: *Katrina Taibi*.

Vote: Passed unanimously. Votes for (18). Against (0). Abstentions (12).

Introduction: Note name of Chair/Speaker.
Briefly note content of introduction.

Reports:

1. Written Reports:

Exec reports

Astrid Hobill – All the reports are available in the SGM package, and so to conserve time, I will provide a quick overview here.

Very briefly, we've been pretty busy working on all the committees and the executive, along with hiring administrative staff and working on bargaining. Happy to elaborate on any points if there are any questions.

No questions or comments raised on this.

Motions: *Canan Sahin* motions to pass all the written executive reports as a single block, as provided in the SGM package.

Second: *Skylar Kovacs*.

Doug Yearwood – to clarify, we are going through all the exec reports, so if anyone has any questions, this a good time to discuss them.

Vote: Motion passes. Votes for (27). Against (0). Abstentions (3).

Committee reports

Doug Yearwood – All the reports are available in the SGM package. I'd like to provide some information on the affordable housing working group. Over the last three or four months, we are working on studying where Queen's invests its resources to support graduate students in this disastrous housing market. We've attached a letter from the group including all of our concerns with Queen's community housing, including postdoctoral scholar

exclusion and other such issues. We are really interested in having your participation, getting your feedback and support in the future.

Harshavardhan Thyagarajan – Quick update on mobilisation. Rally coming up on the 25th, based on demands as articulated in the survey. Currently in the process of tabling rounds and prepping for the rally. Any interested members can reach out to support these efforts!

Motions: *Samantha Twietmeyer* motions to pass all the written executive reports as a single block, as provided in the SGM package.

Second: *Jillian Koner*.

Vote: Motion passes. Votes for (22). Against (0). Abstentions (9).

2. Oral Reports:

A. Bargaining Committee –

Rohit Revi:

- Negotiations ongoing since June.
- As things stand, non-monetary package has been presented, with monetary demands to be presented soon.
- 5 bargaining communiques have been circulated with details of the negotiations so far.
- Quick overview of process of bargaining – details can be found on the FAQ on our website.
- The employer expects that we do not raise any demands, because COVID has apparently hurt them. We believe that this is a time that graduate students need to work hard to reboot our collective agreement to better protect us in these trying times.
- At some point or the other, we will need to discuss what an impasse or a strike vote means for us, due to the behaviour of Queen's at the bargaining table.
- Details about negotiations on specific non-monetary demands - details can be found on the FAQ on our website
- This is a time that employers across workplaces have allied to make the right sounds about sexual violence, anti-racism etc, but refuse to

- put their money where their mouths are. Queen's is no less in these hollow statements – refusing to pay for trainings against sexual violence on the same week as hoco, considering themselves antiracist while refusing to pay for trainings on that and paying the city exorbitant sums of money to police the town more effectively.
- Our shows of strength have not been useless – with the employer gradually taking our demands more seriously.

Miles Lambert – Is there a deadline for Queen's to respond to non monetary demands?

Astrid Hobill – This we are currently leaving to the discretion of our professional mobilizers – but we can make a decision if this pushes to far without resolution.

Rohit Revi – This also depends on our intent to file for an impasse and conciliation on the table. Roughly, we imagine that this might happen in late January if there are no improvements on this front.

Jake Morrow – When you say January – will the bargaining committee be gauging member support for further action at that point, or will it be ongoing?

Rohit Revi – This is definitely something we'll work on continuously through mobilisation, but it will definitely be something we do specifically right before we think about an impasse/strike.

Miles Lambert – There is a need for more mobilization at the school of rehab, but there are currently a lot of folks with not much experience of TAsHips etc so things will change in the coming semesters.

Christina Steinecke – Biology TAsHips don't seem to awful, but many people in the department very upset with mental health support.

Jake Morrow – Would like to echo Christina in terms of how English dept members feel about mental health.

Canan Sahin – Long work hours and the need to balance this with graduate student work poses a major issue. There is an urgent need for high quality therapy support, with the availability of therapists with diverse knowledge. We are hoping to get this by getting a reimbursement fund to deal with mental health – we ask only for a quarter of what the university has spent on policing for hoco.

Brittainy Bonnis – At the bargaining table, the employer is very interested in bifurcating our identity as student/employee. It's really important that we hyphenate ourselves as student-workers to avoid this classification issue.

Samantha Twietmeyer – In the dept of politics, we have low involvement in political participation, with things like the union – arguably due to the pandemic. It's been very hard to get the word out because of the limited interfacing that happens these days. Another issue we see is that a lot of folks do RA work as GRFs, doing research completely unrelated to their thesis. The union awareness is clearly lacking on these fronts, that stops members from working on these things.

Ross Campbell - I'm too new as a TA in the geology dept. to gauge the work climate accurately but I agree there is a high stress level in general, and mental health support would help. The union is not especially visible here. Apologies my mike is not working.

Shane Forbrigger – Was speaking to a lab tech unionized with CUPE, who are also negotiating at the moment. How much communication with these sister locals do we have at the moment?

Astrid Hobill – Unity council is the place we meet with the other locals on campus. We are invested in supporting the fights of our sister locals and build alliances with them. When CUPE is ready, we will definitely share their news with our membership and mobilize support for them.

Doug Yearwood – These are really important conversations to have with members of sister locals on campus. Historically the cross local support

is pretty limited though. We have tried to maintain contact, but it hasn't been overly strong so far due to our own time constraints. That said, our interests are very much intertwined and these are important connections to build.

Jacqueline Giesbrecht – From the CUST perspective, I send out emails to 200 member listservs regularly, and many of these folks don't know where to find the resources urgently and its important that we are available to support and make union visibility better.

Motions: *Doug Yearwood* motions to accept the bargaining team oral report.

Second: *Katrina Taibi*.

Vote: Passed unanimously. Votes for (19). Against (0). Abstentions (12).

B. Mobilization

Harshavardhan Thyagarajan

- Alignment between bargaining team and mobilization committee to take a more direct approach to mobilization – with an agitational approach taken to dispel the notions of status quo set up by the employer.
- Will need a lot of pressure to actually win – showing that grad students genuinely value the demands that we have put forward.
- So far, an unprecedented show of union support on campus
- 25th November Rally
- A need to build solidarities and alliances on campus – with AMS and QUFA.

Shane Forbrigger – Running an in person lab next week. What are the limits to what I can say to these students?

Harshavardhan Thyagarajan – The bargaining team has severe limits on speech – I don't think that you have any such issues as an individual TA.

Brittainy Bonnis – Would highly encourage such engagements, and push people towards interacting with the local's social media.

Rohit Revi – Everything we've discussed today is open to be discussed outside this meeting.

C. Budget

Ethan Mitchell

- The local has spent money liberally on bargaining and mobilization.
- A report on where we are on expenditure with the budget is available in appendix A of the SGM package.
- Some highlights –
 - o We've spend a lot on outreach and events and are over budget on bargaining currently
 - o This is not an issue, we entered this year with a few consecutive years of surplus on our back, we are well prepared for this, plus we receive support from the regional PSAC office.
- Proposed changes – Appendix B of the SGM package
 - o Additional 20k to bargaining budget as an upper estimate of what we need to push the employer and deal with bargaining.
 - o Additional 1500 to website hosting and maintenance
 - o These changes are recommended by the budget committee and me personally, based on the rationale that this is an extremely important time to spend and back the bargaining effort, and that we've had consistent surpluses for the last few years.

Motions: *Craig Berggold* motions to accept the budget report and recommendations for budget amendments.

Second: *Doug Yearwood*.

Vote: Passed unanimously. Votes for (24). Against (0). Abstentions (10).

Elections – VP Community

Miles Lambert – I am yet to receive nominations over email for the position, accepting nominations from the floor.

Doug Yearwood – Nominates Shane Forbrigger.

Opportunity to Speak – *Shane* – I really appreciate the motion, but do not have the time sorry.

Canan Sahin – I would like to nominate Justyna

Rohit Revi – I second.

3 Calls for nominations – no response

Miles Lambert – Would like to confirm that there is nothing preventing Justyna from standing for the position.

Brittainy Bonnis – Nothing prevents her - she is a member in good standing.

Opportunity to Speak – *Justyna* – Thank you for the nomination, I will attempt to hold office well.

Vote to acclaim

Justyna has been voted into the position of VP Community

Announcements

Astrid Hobill – Call for delegates to PSAC national conference

Harshavardhan Thyagarajan – Reminder for stewards to organise departmental meetings around bargaining.

Adjournment