2022 Special General Meeting October 31st at 11:30 am

Public Service Alliance of Canada Local 901

The Union of Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Postdoctoral Scholars.

Queen's University - Kingston, ON

www.psac901.org

Disclaimer: The following gathering will be held through digital means (including videoconferencing and webcam usage). You are not required to turn your camera on. This gathering will not be recorded by the host.

AGENDA

- Quorum Check Information Officer notes # of Composite Unit 1 and Unit 2 members in attendance.
- 2. Elect Secretary
- 3. PSAC Statement on Harassment
- 4. Land Acknowledgement
- 5. Rules of Order
 - Moderator familiarizes attendees with the rules of order.
- 6. Adopt and Approve the Agenda
- 7. Approve the Minutes from the 2022 Annual General Meeting
- 8. Executive and Committee Reports
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President Community Relations
 - c. Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars
 - d. Vice President Research Assistants
 - e. Information Officer
 - f. Treasurer and Budget Committee
 - g. Co-Chief Stewards
 - h. Equity Officer and Social Justice Committee
 - i. Occupational Health and Safety Officer
- 9. Budget Proposals
- 10. Announcements

Bourinot's Rules of Order at a Glance:

To Do This:	You Say This:	May Interrupt the Speaker?	You must be Seconded ?	Is this Motion Debatable ?	Is this Motion Amendable?	What Majority is Required?
Consider something out of its scheduled order.	I move the agenda be amended in order to deal with the following item:	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority
Postpone further discussion on a motion until later in the meeting	I move that the motion be tabled until	NO	YES	YES- only to time	YES	Majority
Postpone consideration of a motion until a future meeting	I move that the motion be postponed until	NO	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Have a motion studied more before voting on it	I move that the motion be referred to 	NO	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Raise a matter previously tabled (if at a different time from when it was decided	I move that the motion about be lifted from the table	NO	YES	YES	YES	Majority

To Do This:	You Say This:	May Interrupt the Speaker?	You must be Seconded ?	Is this Motion Debatable	Is this Motion Amendable?	What Majority is Required?
Reconsider a motion already voted on earlier in the meeting	I move that the motion about be reconsidered at the next meeting" and provide written notice that the matter be raised at the next meeting	NO	YES	YES	NO	2/3 Majority
Object to something which prevents your continued participation (e.g. excessive noise)	Point of Privilege	YES	NO	NO	NO	No vote taken, chair rules
Seek clarification from the previous speaker	Point of Information	YES if urgent	NO	NO	NO	No vote taken, chair rules
Overturn the ruling of the chair	I challenge the chair on	YES	YES	YES	NO	Majority
Enquire about procedure or consequences	Point of Order	YES	NO	YES, only to the point	NO	No vote taken, chair rules
Object to Incorrect procedure being used	Point of Order	YES	NO	Yes, only to the point	NO	No vote taken, chair rules

EXECUTIVE & COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Astrid Hobill

It's hard to believe that we are already more than half way though the Fall semester! Since the AGM in March, over the summer the union has been very busy behind the scenes starting to implement all the new changes that we fought for in the last Unit 1 Collective Agreement, and has also being pursuing a number of grievances against the Employer for a number of different things including failing to provide members with the accommodations they needed and ensuring that our members are paid for all of their hours worked.

Since the last AGM, our wonderful new executive members have jumped into their roles and alongside our returning members have been incredibly active in their portfolios. We have a lively steward's network that since September is finally back to a hybrid model where many of our members are meeting in person. It is great that we are starting to be able to do more in-person things with our membership, and we hope to start having more membership events in person in order to strengthen our community and return to more dynamic interactions. We are hoping to return our boardroom to more of a community space on campus in this regard, a safe space for membership to come, stay tuned for details!

Excitingly, since the AGM we have also hired Tracie, our office manager. After reviewing the position, and with a membership that has grown extensively over the years, we reevaluated the role through the staff management committee and realized that rather than having a part-time person in the role, it necessitated a full-time person. We will be able to serve the membership far better: provide quicker responses, ensure the prompt delivery of bursaries, keep you up to-date with union events, assist the executive with their portfolios and keep up the administrative aspects of the union amongst other things. Tracie has energetically taken on this role and is quickly getting the local in order after covid, and multiple years of intermittent staff support. If you have not already met her, stop by the office on the 5th floor of Robert Sutherland Hall at some point to say hello pick up some union swag!

When bargaining for Unit 1 (TAs, RAs, and TFs) ended in the spring we began working on implementing the new collective agreement. We are researching and writing the protocols that should be in place shortly for our new Mental Health and Hardship Bursary as well as our Professional Development bursary. Once the application process is live, we will ensure that we advertise it to our membership. We are also working on ensuring that both the anti-racism training and the sexual violence prevention training that we fought for will be provided by the university. We also want to make sure that our membership is aware of the benefits and rights that they have under the collective agreement, so we have employed a member to create graphics educational campaign which we will be rolling out soon. As we implement the bargaining demands that we won for Unit 1, we are starting to organize our Unit 2 members (Postdoctoral Scholars) and prepare their bargaining demands for next year. There are already

a number of areas that we are looking to improve namely salary, access to healthcare, child care access, vacation time, workload and housing. This committee is well underway and we hope our entire membership will support them!

Our other committees are also hard at work organizing, with the Social Justice Committee currently working on Migrant student issues through a joint project with the Union Gallery, and the Affordable Housing Working Group is creating coalitions with other groups to address the housing precarity facing so many of our members. We urge those interested to join and get involved in these or our other committees such as our Political Action Committee, our Budget Committee, our RA Committee or our newly formed Events Group. We would also like to remind membership that we have money for campaigns and events driven by rank and file members who are more than welcome to use the resources and support of the union to undertake particular actions, events, seminars, etc. The local recently supported the rally in response to the killing of Mahsa (Jina) Amini by the Iranian Regime. We hope that we are able to support our membership to the best of our abilities and empower members to take action on campus and within our communities.

Finally, as midterm season is upon us, and many of us are loaded down with marking- make sure you are tracking your hours. If you know or feel that the number of allotted hours that you were contracted for is insufficient for the semester, inform your supervisor and ask for a meeting. If you do not feel comfortable doing so- please reach out to us- we are here to help! We can always have your departmental steward or an exec member there at a meeting in order to help facilitate conversation. If you run into any other issues, or think something might be an issue – just reach out and ask- we are here for you and we want to make sure that you have the best working conditions possible!

Vice President Community Relations Justyna Szewczyk-El Jassem

My priority has been to work with the broader university, Kingston and the labor community. At the PSAC level, I participated in the 2022 PSAC National Convention. At the Convention, I had an opportunity to learn about the struggles of PSAC members in other sectors. My priority at the convention was to vote in favor of a resolution that would secure a greater representation of DCLs (Directly Charted Locals – like PSAC901) in the National Board of Directors. Unfortunately, the resolution did not pass. I also attended Kingston Regional Women's Committee Meetings, where I voted in favor of a resolution to include non-binary members in Regional Women's Conferences, childcare at PSAC events, and menopause support, among others.

At the local level, I represented PSAC901 at a rally supporting library workers protesting the proposal to implement staffless hours at the Pittsburgh Library Branch. I also joined a rally in support of fired Napanee shelter workers. I went to the Wolfe Island ferry workers' picket and plan to help collect signatures for their petition. I represented the Local at Kingston District Labor Council, PSAC Area Council, and Unity Council.

I joined the work of the Staff Management Committee, which recently hired an Office Manager. I am in the process of facilitating the formation of the Social Events Planning Group. Also, I am organizing a movie screening within the Canadian Labor International Film Festival.

Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars Kaveh Mousavand

Below, I, Kaveh Mousavand, summarize some of the main activities that Unit 2 has been focusing on since I was elected for this position, and I further outline some concrete objectives the unit will pursue in the coming months.

Considering that in Spring 2023, the postdoctoral unit will begin the official bargaining process over the new collective agreement with Queen's University, our first and foremost priority has been putting together a strong and committed bargaining committee that can identify the main priorities and come up with feasible ideas by May 2023. That said, since I was elected as the VP of Unit 2 (in mid-August), we have reached out to all postdocs both via emails and surveys, as well as in person to stimulate active participation in the union activities. This was to first identify some active members of the unit who are willing to serve in the bargaining committee, and second to distribute more information among postdocs and invite them to be more involved in various activities, so we can increase the awareness of the union members about certain issues which have existed in the past few years.

A list of major activities to engage more postdoctoral fellows is as follows:

Outdoor Social Event on August 27th (between 17:00-19:00).

Lunch-break meeting with postdoctoral fellows on October 6th (between 12:00-13:30).

Conducting survey on the social events that postdocs find more interesting (in early September).

Establishing a working group for postdoctoral fellows that meets weekly (on Wednesday evenings, between 17:15-19:00).

Thanks to the above-mentioned activities, we have found some active members and consequently formed a bargaining committee which, in addition to the VP of Unit 2, has 5 other postdoctoral fellow members. The committee has had two formal meetings (on September 30th and October 21st) to brainstorm and outline the main plans that will be pursued in the following months. In particular, the top five main concerns that the committee has shortlisted are as follows:

Salary increase
Affordable housing
Access to healthcare
Access to childcare
Vacation days

To approach each of these matters systematically and collect the necessary information and evidence, we have been in contact with some members of Unit 1 who were actively involved in that unit's bargaining process last year, so we can employ their related experience. Moreover, following a

particular timeline that will be established in the coming weeks, the unit 2 bargaining committee has planned to treat each one of the above-mentioned issues during a focused interval, so that we can draw attention of the unit members to certain issues, raise awareness and receive the necessary input from the members. To fulfil that, we plan to organize various activities in the coming months and will make the announcements.

Vice President Research Assistants Gabriela Castillo

Since I was elected Vice President Research Assistants my main concern has been to continue with the main task of the previous VPRA Portafolio, meaning, aiding in the process of grievance regarding the misclassification of Graduate Research Assistants (RA) and Graduate Research Fellows (GRF). Our union is going through an arbitration process with Queen's regarding the classification, treatment and compensation of Graduate students contracted under a Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) or Graduate Research Assistant Fellowships (GRAF) between 2015 and 2019. PSAC 901 firmly believes that a large number of GRFs and GRAFs were misclassified and mistreated, and they performed duties that fell under the category of Graduate Research Assistants (GRA).

With the help of the President and the Information's Officer, we've reached out to PSAC 901 members via email or through social media in the hopes of finding misclassified GRA/GRFs willing to cooperate; we've had relative success, but we need more support from the rank and file.

Other tasks in the portfolio involve reviewing the bylaws directly related with the nature of the RA Committee and the planning of an RA/TF Social hopefully in November.

Information Officer Brittainy Bonnis

As the Information Officer I am often the first point of contact for our members and it has been so great to be able to meet so many of you in person this year. A lot of what I do happens behind the scenes where I work to help executive members and committees get word of their work out to the local membership and to the larger Queen's and Kingston communities. On that note, if you don't already, please follow us on Instagram, Facebook and/or Twitter and check your work email regularly for 901 Newsletters. Last year I served on the Bargaining Committee for Union 1 and have since been working hard to get the new funds we won up and running and educating the membership about their rights under the collective agreement. 901 is looking at new social media campaigns and networking opportunities. In great news, as a member of the Staff Management team I happy to have been involved in the hiring and training of our new Office Admin person! Come by the office and meet Tracie in person when you have a chance! Tracie is, amongst other things, taking over bursary administration as well as day to day operations. I continue to attend Stewards Council, Budget Committee, Joint Health and Safety and Staff Management Meetings and probably some other meetings I am forgetting to mention

here. If you have union questions and don't know who to ask you can always start with me at info.officer.psac901@gmail.com.

Treasurer and Budget Committee Harshavardhan Thyagarajan

Income and expense reporting - Profit and loss report - May-Sept

Major expenses incurred:

- Donations and Solidarity Contributions have been made to Kingston District Labour council for May Day, to the striking workers at Lennox & Addington interval house and we are in the process of voting on donations towards Briarpatch magazine for labour reporting on migrant issues. Along these lines, we also made a contribution towards the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).
- Bargaining related expenses A grad club party was organised, open to all members to celebrate
 the new collective agreement for unit 1. This was partially funded using money from the union's
 regional office as a part of the bargaining campaign budget, and partially through the local's
 own budget. A grad club lunch was organised for PDFs, to create a space to discuss bargaining
 issues as we enter a bargaining year for unit 2. This was entirely from the local's budget.
- Research Two RAs have been hired by the local's committees and working groups. Specifically,
 the affordable housing working group hired an RA to work on tenant rights education and
 surveying the housing needs of graduate student workers; and the health and safety committee
 hired an RA to create a system of disbursal of MH bursary funds.
- Staff hiring The local's office staff employee resigned prior to the summer to take up employment elsewhere and a temporary position was created with reduced hours to cover the gap for the summer. A new full time employee has since been hired.
- Accounting Within this period, the local also paid invoices towards accounting as required for the financial year 2021-22.
- Fall social expenses for members of units 1 and 2 The fall social was funded from a combination of the following line items - Orientation and Outreach, Transport, Events, campaigns and networking, Social Justice committee, Political action committee, Postdoctoral unit committee
- Social justice committee events The SJC spent funds to organise events, spending to compensate members carrying out organising work and purchase supplies.
- Bursaries Childcare, gender affirmation bursaries received applications over the summer period and were approved for expenditure.

Budget Committee

There have been 2 budget committee meetings between May and Sept. Key items discussed:

- Capacity for member and steward trainings training models and compensation protocols were discussed. These recommendations are currently being used to design trainings for stewards and other interested members.
- 2. Arbitration compensation The BC made a recommendation to compensate members and exmembers for their service in attending arbitration hearings to provide testimony in grievances that continue to be stretched out by the employer. It was proposed that this be done through bylaw changes that reduced the cumbersome requirements of convening a grievance committee, and providing the committee with a standing budget to compensate people as recommended.
- 3. Bursary payouts The BC recommended that the H&S committee hire an RA to design disbursal systems for the bursary.
- 4. Investing reserves The local's reserves have so far been parked in chequing and savings accounts that do not collect interest. The BC forwarded a motion to the SGM on this to invest reserve funds.
- 5. Staff member special levy The staff management committee has recommended increased hours of work and new duties for the new staff member. Accordingly, the BC forwarded a motion to increase both the special levy and the staff member salary line item in the budget.
- 6. Comparative income statement The BC recommended that the treasurer and office staff work together to produce monthly comparative budget figures for review by the executive, rather than the current system of income and expense reporting.
- 7. Bargaining The BC recommended changes in the bargaining line item to support research for unit 2 members bargaining priorities.
- 8. Minor expenses, budget changes The BC forwarded motions to the SGM to modify line items such as solidarity, donations and software to adequately reflect current usage.

Chief Stewards and Stewards' Council Jake Morrow and Avi Friedlander

PSAC901's Co-Chief Stewards share the responsibility of organising departmental steward representation and collectively act as points of contact for members' labour concerns, including conflict and grievance-based issues. This year we have also focused on working with Stewards and concerned members to organize within individual departments and campus wide. Our focus is on filling out the Stewards' Network so that we can make sure we're reaching and hearing from as many members as possible in order to properly represent and rectify the concerns of our members.

With a quick turnaround between last year's Unit 1 bargaining success and the beginning of Unit 2 bargaining this year (with an immediate return to the table with Unit 1 in 2024!), it is crucial that we seize on ongoing momentum and build a network and culture of engaged support that can apply sustained pressure in advocating for members' demands, both inside and outside of bargaining periods.

By building on last year's historic support for the bargaining team as well as the social energy and

excitement of this year's return to majority in-person operations, we have a momentous opportunity to engage membership and ensure future success. With member support, we can build a safe, equitable working environment that honours the full spectrum of work done by graduate student workers, from in-class training and learning, to research, knowledge mobilization, and teaching.

A full, functioning Stewards Network is the key to growing a sustainable model of success for our local to function under. There are currently 27 Stewards across 26 departments. While that is a good start, there are many departments especially in Engineering and Health Sciences that lack representation. The up-to-date list of Stewards can be found here. Check the list to find out who your stewards is, and be sure to contact them if you encounter any issues. If your department does not yet have a Steward in place, please contact us and we can work with you to fill the position!

Despite the diverse array of our working environments on campus and beyond, we face common issues as graduate workers: from working more hours than we're paid for to the threat and reality of harassment and discrimination in our workplace. The more alone in these issues we feel, the less likely we are to feel empowered to make positive changes, and the more Queen's benefits from our individual inaction. They can only be addressed by standing together with our coworkers: speaking out, standing up, organizing, community building and participating in collective action, filing grievances and holding Queen's accountable whenever they violate workers' rights.

Already in the first few months we have been Co-Chief Stewards, many of our fellow graduate workers have stood up and fought Queen's when the Employer has done wrong. In doing so, they have won multiple grievances resulting in payment of unpaid wages and having other workplace concerns addressed and rectified. We have learned important lessons from watching our colleagues and comrades stand up for their rights as student workers. Chief among them: that it is always worth fighting when Queen's infringes on graduate student rights; that it helps to talk to your colleagues because you are likely not alone; and that it is important to remember to track your hours so you know if you are being paid appropriately (because we very often aren't). If you are unsure if something that your employer is doing is allowed: just ask! Talk to your Steward or reach out to either one of us.

The Employer wants members to believe that there is a division between your own work and work for the university. That a member can in one moment be an employee of Queen's and in another an unemployed student. As graduate student workers, we know that this is an inherent falsehood. All graduate student work, from training to research, from learning to teaching, develops knowledge, reputation, and revenue for the university. Graduate student education is graduate student worker training. As the employer refuses to acknowledge this inherent truth, we must empower our members to understand the full extent of their employment at the university. To this end, efforts are underway to increase social engagement and engagement on student issues. This year sees the commencement of two new working groups: The Social Event Organizing Group, and the Student Issues Group. Both these groups will be stronger and more effective if they include and are led by rank-and-file members like you. If you are interested in participating in either of these groups in any capacity, reach out and we can find ways for you to be involved that suits your interests!

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your employer is doing is allowed: just ask! Talk to your Steward or reach out to either one of us.

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Equity Officer and Social Justice Committee Reports Prerna Subramanian

This year has been mostly about keeping the momentum after bargaining high and sustain it in productive ways for our community and for our members. Most of the work i have done or have helped in is described in the Social Justice Committee report. Other than chairing the committee, I have helped disburse gender affirmation bursary and Childcare Bursary when a staff was absent for the same. I have also collaborated with and assisted the Health and Safety officers in tracking COVID 19 measures on campus and related accommodations.

Social Justice Committee Report

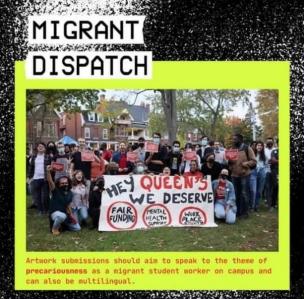
During this year, the Social Justice Committee has been working towards strengthening our union's capacity post bargaining. This year, we have taken a self motivated action approach for empowering individual members to take action and scale our presence on campus. In this way, members of SJC have taken actions on their own accord with support from the larger body of PSAC 901.

We have especially focused on Migrant rights and done solidarity work accordingly. Most recently, members of the SJC organized a protest in solidarity with protesters and women of Iran.

We also want to note that the bursary created to financially support gender confirmation procedures for trans members has achieved more visibility and has shown to us the need for more trans-inclusive services on campus.

We have worked on informal programming: collaboration with Union Gallery. We conducted an open mic night for migrants and allies on campus. We are also working on a migrant rights survey as I write this.





Collaboration with the Union Gallery

I would like to thank everyone who has been active in the initiatives of the Social Justice Committee this year, for making all of these events possible.

Health and Safety Executive Jacqueline Giesbrecht

Much of my time this summer was spent familiarizing myself with my role, updating old files, and preparing for the 2022-2023 school year. Due to the varying numbers of members in various faculties, there has been difficulty filling some of our Joint Health and Safety Committee rep positions in recent years. I am working to fill empty positions in a way that satisfies the rules Queen's Environmental Health and Safety has in place while prioritizing our need to have Unit reps in each committee.

At the end of August, I coordinated the survey to members about Covid-19 and how they felt about returning to campus for the Fall semester. The exec wrote a letter to Queen's based on this feedback, to which Queen's did not reply. As such, I and the other exec have been looking at this ongoing issue through the lens of equity, accessibility, and accommodation to support members' needs as they work within the current Covid-19 guidelines. As I am writing this report, I am involved in numerous projects related to these areas that are in development – more details to come.

Additionally, I have been focusing on other areas of occupational health and safety, particularly mental health. Over the summer, we hired a Mental Health RA, Sarah Smith, to do research for the dispersal of the new Mental Health and Hardship fund. Out of this came the Mental Health Survey, from which the RA is drafting a report of insights and recommendations for how to disperse this fund equitably. This fund (\$120,000 for 2 years) is a one-time fund, so it is crucial we use it in a way that both meets the

needs of members at the moment while also demonstrating to Queen's the need to have this fund renewed. The survey closed on Oct 26th and the RA is currently working on a report to share with the Mental Health Committee in November. The fund will be open by the end of the semester.

BUDGET COMMITTEE PROPOSALS

- 1) Increase in Staff Member Salary Budget Line Item to cover full-time hours.
- 2) Increase in Special Membership Levy to cover costs of full-time staff contract.
- 3) Consolidation all Software Line Items
- 4) Consolidation of Donation and Solidarity Budget Line Items
- 5) Reserve Budget Investment Guaranteed Investment Certificate KCCU
- 6) Bargaining Line Motion Increase in support of Unit 2 Bargaining Research