



**Public Service Alliance of Canada
Regional Executive Vice-President, Ontario
Report
September 7, 2013 to January 6, 2014**

Sisters and Brothers,

This report is a listing of activities that have occurred in the PSAC Ontario region for the period following our last PSAC National Board of Directors Meeting.

Collective Bargaining

Highlights of Ongoing Negotiations

- UNDE PSAC Local 00639 - GDI Services at CFB Petawawa continue to bargain with a meeting scheduled for January 14, 2014.
- Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) Local 00555 have reached a tentative agreement. A ratification vote will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

First Agreement

- Postdoctoral Fellows who work at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario (DCL 901 Unit 2) ratified their first collective agreement on October 21, 2013.

Renewal Agreements

- Windsor Airport (UCTE 00012) members ratified their new collective agreement on September 25, 2013.
- Technical Services (TC) members ratified their new collective agreement, which was signed on October 18, 2013.
- DCL 500, Georgian Downs Racetrack workers ratified their new collective agreement on November 7, 2013.
- University of Western Ontario (DCL 00611) Post-doctoral Fellows ratified their new collective agreement on November 19, 2013.
- Queen's University Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows (DCL Local 901 Unit 1) ratified their new collective agreement on December 13, 2013.

Organizing

PSAC Files Certification Application at OLG - Sault Ste. Marie

PSAC filed a certification application to represent four hundred (400) employees of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) in the city of Sault Ste. Marie. On December 18, 2013, the Ontario Labour Relations Board ordered a union certification vote. The vote resulted in a "No" vote for unionization. However, following the vote, a significant number of ballots have been disputed, as a number of issues relating to the Employer's conduct have been raised. The organizing committee will be meeting to discuss how to proceed, as a significant number of workers voted "yes" to joining PSAC.

London Airport

Members of UCTE Local 0003 filed for a decertification application, choosing instead to form an association themselves. Despite PSAC's Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) complaint, which argued Employer involvement in this decision, the CIRB granted this decertification application on October 8, 2013. The Local consisted of a dozen members, who will now have to bargain directly with the Airport as a stand-alone association.

Operational Managers at Ontario Corrections

PSAC Ontario has launched a campaign to organize 600 Operational Managers employed by Ontario's Correctional Services. Ontario's Correctional Service establishes, maintains, operates and monitors correctional institutions and probation and parole offices. The Union of Solicitor General Employees (USGE), a Component of the PSAC, has expressed their support for this organizing campaign. PSAC filed a certification application to request a Union vote and the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) ordered a vote for the week of April 16th till April 19th, 2013. All ballots have been segregated and the count postponed until the Employer challenge with respect to managerial exclusion is dealt with. The first hearing date took place on October 9, 2013, with hearing dates to be scheduled in 2014.

Queen's University Graduate Research Assistants (700 members)

PSAC is organizing 700 research assistants at Queen's University. PSAC already represents 1,300 Graduate Teaching Assistants and 200 Postdoctoral Fellows at Queen's University in a single composite Directly Chartered Local 901, which fully supports the organizing campaign. Card signing continues and a vote is anticipated for later in 2014.

Postdoctoral Fellows at Western

PSAC is certified to represent 40 Postdoctoral Associates at the University of Western Ontario. PSAC has filed a grievance taking the position that the employer has misclassified over 200 Postdoctoral Fellows as non-bargaining unit independent contractors instead of bargaining unit Postdoctoral Associates. Hearing dates have been scheduled for June 6th and June 25th, 2014.

First Nations Officers and Civilians

Officers and civilians who work for Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service ("NAPS"), Anishinabek Police Service ("APS") and Treaty Three Police Service are currently represented by PSAC under federal labour legislation, and have been for a number of years. Each of these 3 police boards, in an attempt to union bust, have brought forward legal challenges that state PSAC should not be the bargaining agent because First Nations policing should be covered provincially.

PSAC is maintaining the position before the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) that PSAC was properly certified for each of these groups under the Canada Labour Code. Consequently, in the alternative that the CIRB agrees with the police boards' position, PSAC conducted an organizing campaign to sign provincial union cards with all three groups.

After a majority of cards were signed, the Ontario Labour Relations Board conducted a vote and counted the ballots on September 16, 2013. The ballot results in each of the four (4) Union certification votes (officers and civilians of each group) were:

- Officers and Civilians employed by the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service Board ("NAPS") voted overwhelmingly in favour of PSAC.
- Officers employed by the Anishinabek Police Service ("APS") also voted overwhelming in favour of PSAC.
- APS Civilians voted No in the Union certification vote.
- The ballots cast by Treaty Three Officers and Civilians were previously counted and their result was also overwhelmingly in favour of PSAC.

On November 25, 2013, the Canada Industrial Relations Board provided their decision for the NAPS group jurisdictional challenge. PSAC was successful in arguing that First Nations policing falls under federal jurisdiction. NAPS has applied to judicially review the CIRB decision, however, in the interim this decision provides a strong legal precedent in the other two jurisdictional challenges brought by APS and Treaty Three. The hearing dates for APS and Treaty Three have been scheduled for the full week of February 3-7, 2014.

Federal By-Election

On November 25, 2013 a by-election was held in the riding of Toronto Centre. The by-election was called after Bob Rae, the Liberal MP who represented the riding, resigned. The riding has been a Liberal stronghold for years, and analysts had predicted this would remain so.

The by-election was a two-way race between the Liberal and NDP candidates, both having media backgrounds and campaigning on economic inequality. PSAC Ontario sent out a letter from the REVP to all members in the riding, urging members to get out and vote. The letter also focused on the negative impacts of Bill C-4 and how members should question all candidates on this legislation.

The successful candidate in the end was the Liberal candidate, Chrystia Freeland. Below are the results reported from Elections Canada:

Liberal	Chrystia Freeland	17,194	49.4%	
NDP-New Democratic Party	Linda McQuaig	12,640	36.3%	
Conservative	Geoff Pollock	3,004	8.6%	

Mobilization

Border Services (FB) group Day of Action

On October 10, 2013 a National Day of Action was called to mobilize support for the 7,000 members who work for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). These members, who belong to the Customs and Immigration Union, a component of PSAC had been experiencing one of the most difficult rounds of bargaining ever experienced for our union.

Months of heated negotiations filled with Employer ultimatums, attempts to circumvent the bargaining process, final offers and even a forced vote that was found to be non-compliant with federal labour law, gave rise to this National Day of Action.

In Ontario, Toronto Pearson International Airport was selected as a key target for this Day of Action. Buses of members came from different areas, including Niagara and London, to demonstrate at Canada's busiest airport. Hundreds of members gathered and walked through Pearson chanting and waving banners and flags. The day was very successful, receiving media attention and forcing the Employer back to the table. Within two weeks a tentative agreement was reached.

PSAC Ontario scheduled ratification votes across the region to ensure members had a reasonable opportunity to vote on the tentative agreement, which was ratified. During the ratification vote process, hundreds of FB's signed their pledge cards.

We Are All Affected Campaign

Fix Our World

September 14-15, 2013, PSAC Ontario took part in the 4th Fix Our World event in Hamilton, Ontario. The event is inspired by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which countries around the world have agreed to in an effort to end extreme poverty. The event offered the opportunity for our activists to discuss with the public the importance of public services in combating extreme poverty and creating a more equal society.

Raise the Rates

On October 19, 2013 a rally was held in Sudbury, with close to 400 people participating, including members of our Regional Women's Committee, to protest the Liberal government's planned merger of the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works. The merger of these two programs will see further funding cuts and the amalgamation of these two very different social programs will result in further inaccessibility for the public.

Meeting with Premier

On November 4, 2013, Sharon DeSousa, PSAC REVP for Ontario, along with the Ontario Federation of Labour and leaders from each of the affiliated unions met with the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne. The meeting was held to discuss the need for labour-friendly legislation, improvements on public services and fair taxation. Sharon DeSousa gave a presentation on the changes to Employment Insurance and the need for the government of Ontario to advocate for the reversal of these legislative changes to the federal government.

Bill C-4 – Budget Implementation Bill Telephone Town-hall

On November 14, 2013 PSAC Ontario held a province wide telephone town-hall to discuss with members the impacts of Bill C-4. The telephone town-hall garnered thousands of participants and was well received by members. With the passing of Bill C-4, members are now aware of the implications this legislation will have on our working conditions, particularly the changes to collective bargaining. PSAC will now be taking the government to court to fight this legislation, along with every other federal public service union, as well as filing a complaint with the United Nations, International Labour Organization.

Not in the Syllabus: Graduate Student Mental Health

The Canadian Federation of Students and its coalition partners, the Academic Workers sector of PSAC Ontario and the Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee of CUPE Ontario, have committed to the first phase of a major campaign to address bullying and harassment issues in the academic sector.

PSAC represents over 4,000 academic workers in Ontario who work at Queen's University, Western University and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Graduate academic workers face significant and unique challenges in their workplaces, which are also their places of study. There is a great deal of pressure, because often their work as teachers and researchers is intimately related to their work towards completing a thesis or dissertation. This competitive environment can also lead to instances of bullying and harassment. A survey to determine the prevalence and scope of harassment and bullying has been developed and distributed province-wide to gather information to ascertain a plan of action.

Veterans Affairs Canada Campaign

PSAC has launched a National campaign to save the 9 district Veterans Affairs Canada offices slated to close in 2014. Working with local veterans, Legion's and the Canadian Veterans Advocacy group, the campaign is part of our We Are All Affected campaign, which links the loss of public services to negative community impacts.

PSAC held a press conference in Ottawa on October 3, 2013, which saw members of the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees, a Component of the PSAC, and veterans discuss the impacts of these planned office closures and the cutbacks to the department of Veterans Affairs. A short 3 minute Youtube video PSAC produced was shown and can be viewed online here:

<http://psacunion.ca/help-our-veterans-stop-veterans-affairs-office-closures>

Two of these office closures take place in Ontario; in Windsor and in Thunder Bay. During the press conference on October 3rd, PSAC Ontario held simultaneous town-hall meetings at local Legion's in Thunder Bay and Windsor. Both were well attended by veterans, members and the media.

Following these events, PSAC Ontario REVP, Sharon DeSousa, sent op-ed stories to local media in Windsor and Thunder Bay showing how closing local Veterans Affairs offices will adversely affect veterans in those communities. The op-ed was used in the following:

- Windsor Star on October 18, 2013 - **Government shouldn't look for cutbacks at Veterans' expense** (<http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/10/18/government-shouldnt-look-for-cutbacks-at-veterans-expense/>)
- Windsor Star on October 25, 2013 - **Canadians support vets, government does not** (<http://www.windsorstar.com/Canadians+support+vets+government+does/9081866/story.html>)
- Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal on October 21, 2013 - **Veterans Abandoned** (<http://www.chroniclejournal.com/editorial/letters/2013-10-21/veterans-abandoned>)

To further garner local political support for keeping the Veterans Affairs offices open, Sharon DeSousa, PSAC REVP-Ontario, wrote to the Windsor Mayor, Eddie Francis and Thunder Bay Mayor, Keith Hobbs, urging them to stand against the federal government's decision to close the Veterans Affairs offices.

On November 4, 2013, the Windsor City Council voted unanimously to pass a motion to lobby the federal government to reverse their decision, which was reported on by every major media outlet in the Windsor area.

On November 18, 2013, Thunder Bay's City Council debated and unanimously adopted the following resolution to also protest the closure of its local Veterans Affairs office:

With respect to the closure of the 9 District Veteran Affairs offices across Canada, including the office located in Thunder Bay, we recommend that City Council advise the Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs of its opposition to the closures;

AND THAT it urges the Minister to reconsider this decision in the best interest of serving our countries veterans;

AND THAT copies of this motion be sent to MP's John Rafferty and Bruce Hyer, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

Working with the local Royal Canadian Legion Branches, the turnout of veterans and our members to this City Council meeting was very strong. All local media was present and reported on the story.

On November 22, 2013, PSAC held a rally at Conservative MP Jeff Watson's office in Essex. The PSAC Windsor Area Council helped to organize the rally, which was well attended by veterans and our members. Jeff Watson is the only local politician that has not denounced the closure of the Windsor Veterans Affairs office, which is why he was targeted.

On November 27, 2013, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), which represents all the local mayors in Northwestern Ontario had their annual general meeting in Thunder Bay. At this meeting a resolution opposing the closure of all 9 Veterans Affairs offices was also adopted.

The veterans campaign has been very well received by our members, veterans and the public. There has been a tremendous amount of media coverage, as can be seen in the listing on our campaign webpage: <http://ontario.psac.com/stop-the-closure-of-veterans-affairs-offices>

We Are All Affected Billboard

UNDE Local 629 in Petawawa, Ontario purchased a 1 year lease for a We Are All Affected billboard centrally located in Petawawa. The billboard has garnered tremendous attention from the public and allowed for discussions on the importance of our campaign in the region. The billboard was funded by the local, PSAC Ontario and UNDE.

One-on-One Campaign

The second **Campaigner Trainer** phase of the **We Are All Affected Campaign** is well underway within the Ontario Region with Campaigners being trained and pledge cards being signed on an ongoing basis. The Harper Conservative government's vote in favour of Bill C-4 and recent decision to cut Canada Post services has made their anti-union agenda very clear. Our strategy must be equally clear to all our members that Harper and his Conservative Party must go in 2015 and a government that supports public services and the principles of free collective bargaining must be elected.

Canadian Labour Congress - Lobby Day of Action

PSAC - Ontario sent four (4) members to Parliament Hill to meet directly with MP Daryle Kramp and MP Kellie Leitch on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 as part of a national lobbying effort coordinated by the Canadian Labour Congress to defeat Bill C-4.

Education

Area Council Summit

On Saturday, November 2, 2013 the REVP's office held an Area Council Summit in the Toronto Regional Office. The event acknowledged the work and important role of Area Council's including engagement in political action. Sixteen (16) Area Council representatives from across the Region were in attendance. With the many issues members are dealing with and the ongoing conservative political attacks it is vital that Area Councils are ready for action and connected with each other. The Summit aimed to connect all the Area Council representatives together in order to:

- Review Area Council practices and procedures;
- Share best practices across the Region;
- Create a political action plan for 2014 and defeating Harper in the next election

Labour Movement/ Solidarity

United Way Toronto Labour Breakfast

On October 2, 2013 the United Way Toronto held its annual Labour Breakfast, in appreciation for the contributions that unions have made in charitable work. Sharon DeSousa, PSAC REVP-Ontario was a guest speaker, along with Susan McIsaac, President and CEO, United Way Toronto and John Cartwright, President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council.

The event was hosted by Tim Maguire, President of CUPE Local 79 and Earl Burt, Treasurer of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Peoples Social Forum

The second General Assembly of the Peoples Social Forum was held in Edmonton on July 2nd and 3rd, 2013. From this meeting, it was decided that the first Canada-wide Social Forum will be held in Ottawa at the end of August 2014. The Edmonton assembly also saw the birth of a Labour Caucus which includes Canadian and Quebec union activists.

At present, the Forum General Assembly includes five caucuses (Labour, Original Peoples, People of Colour, Women, Quebec) as well as several Regional Commissions (Montreal / Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver). A few more are in the works, particularly in the Maritimes and the Prairies (www.peoplessocialforum.wordpress.com).

Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Convention

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) held its 12th Biennial Convention in Toronto from November 25-29, 2013. The Convention brought over 1,000 union members together to discuss, debate and vote on resolutions. PSAC's resolution on Bill C-4 was adopted, solidifying the labour movement's opposition to this piece of legislation.

Before the Convention on the Sunday, November 24, 2013, PSAC Ontario and NCR region held a joint caucus meeting for our members. The meeting allowed for presentations from the OFL Executive Board who were seeking re-election. Subsequently, all members of the OFL Executive Board were re-elected.

Solidarity with Bangladesh Garment Workers

On Tuesday, December 3, 2013, PSAC Ontario REVP, Sharon DeSousa met with Kalpona Akter of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity in Toronto. The meeting, which brought together various union and social activists, focused on strategies to continue to pressure Canadian corporations who produce garments in Bangladesh to support garment workers in improving their working conditions.

PSAC stands in solidarity with garment workers in Bangladesh who continue to push for stronger workplace health and safety protections and increases to the national minimum wage. Canadian and other retailers selling clothes made in Bangladesh for the Canadian market need to compensate the victims of Rana Plaza and other factory tragedies and to sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh.

Equity and Human Rights

Take Back the Night

On Thursday September 19, 2013 members of the PSAC Niagara Area Council took part in the St. Catharines take back the night event. There were roughly 300 participants in total.

Clothing Drive

On September 22, 2013, the PSAC Toronto Regional Women's Committee completed their clothing drive in support of "Sistering". Sistering is a non-profit organization that offers support

to homeless and low income women in Toronto (www.sistering.org). The Committee was able to gather 10 bags of clothes (some shoes, belts, hangers and purses as well), to donate to Sistering. A special thanks to the Clothing Drive Coordinators who delivered the donations, Anna Roosen-Runge, President, UNE 00137 and Gaylene Higgs, CEIU 569.

Toronto Equity Committee's and Area Council Open House

On October 21, 2013, all five PSAC Toronto Equity Committee's and the Greater Toronto Area Council held a joint open house to celebrate our membership's diversity and the common struggle against discrimination. The event was well attended, with over 40 PSAC activists. Sharon DeSousa, PSAC REVP for Ontario opened and closed the event, with John Cartwright, President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council giving the keynote address.

PSAC National Equity Conferences

The PSAC National Equity Conferences were held in Toronto from November 18-22, 2013. This year marked the first year that all five equity conferences were held together. The event brought over 500 equity activists together under the umbrella theme "Equity – We Are All Affected".

On the Friday, November 22, 2013, PSAC Ontario held a caucus meeting to discuss next steps in promoting equity in our union, our workplaces and in our communities. The PSAC Ontario Council will be moving forward with the ideas presented.

In conclusion,

I have included the details of my activities since the last National Board of Directors meeting for your review.

Respectfully submitted for your approval,



Sharon DeSousa
Regional Executive Vice-President
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Ontario

REVP Schedule for the period September 7, 2013 to January 6, 2014

Sept. 9-11, 2013 – Alliance Executive Committee meeting
Sept. 13, 2013 – PSAC Ontario education meeting
Sept. 16, 2013 – Ontario Council Education sub-committee meeting
Sept. 17, 2013 – Ontario Federation of Labour Executive Board meeting
Sept. 18, 2013 – Technical Services ratification vote meeting
Sept. 24, 2013 – Nishinawbe-Aski Jurisdiction Challenge hearing debrief
Sept. 30, 2013 – Union of Postal Communications Employees mobilization meeting in Hamilton
Sept. 30, 2013 – PSAC Toronto Racially Visible Action Committee meeting
Oct. 1, 2013 – Union of Postal Communications Employees mobilization meeting in London
Oct. 2, 2013 – United Way Toronto Labour Breakfast
Oct. 2, 2013 – Union of Postal Communications Employees mobilization meeting in Mississauga
Oct. 4, 2013 – Georgian Downs Negotiations meeting
Oct. 7, 2013 – Alliance Executive Committee meeting
Oct. 8-10, 2013 – National Board of Directors meeting
Oct. 10, 2013 – Frontier Border National Day of Action rally at CBSA headquarters
Oct. 15, 2013 – United Way Labour Luncheon
Oct. 16, 2013 – PSAC Barrie Area Council meeting
Oct. 21, 2013 – Ontario Council education sub-committee meeting
Oct. 21, 2013 – PSAC Toronto Equity Committee's Open House
Oct. 24, 2013 – PSAC Ontario Council Committee meetings
Oct. 25-26, 2013 – PSAC Ontario Council meeting
Oct. 29, 2013 – Ontario Council education sub-committee meeting
Oct. 30, 2013 – Union of Solicitor General Employees training session
Nov. 2, 2013 – PSAC Ontario Area Council Summit
Nov. 4, 2013 – Meeting with Premier Kathleen Wynne
Nov. 5, 2013 – Alliance Executive Committee meeting
Nov. 6, 2013 – National Board of Directors meeting
Nov. 7, 2013 – Ontario Council education sub-committee meeting
Nov. 7, 2013 – PSAC Toronto Racially Visible Action Committee meeting
Nov. 9, 2013 – Coalition of Black Trade Unionists Awards Dinner
Nov. 11 ,2013 – Remembrance Day ceremony at Toronto Old City Hall
Nov. 14, 2013 – Telephone Town-hall on Bill C-4
Nov. 17, 2013 – PSAC National Equity Conference Racially Visible Caucus meeting
Nov. 18-22, 2013 – PSAC National Equity Conference
Nov. 21, 2013 – PSAC National Equity Conference Raise the Roof rally
Nov. 23, 2013 – Ontario Federation of Labour Workers of Colour Conference
Nov. 24, 2013 – Ontario Federation of Labour Executive Board meeting
Nov. 24, 2013 – Ontario Federation of Labour Convention PSAC Ontario and NCR caucus meeting
Nov. 25-29, 2013 – Ontario Federation of Labour Convention
Nov. 27, 2013 – Agriculture Union Local 00014 Annual General Membership meeting
Nov. 27, 2013 – Cliff Pilkey Awards dinner
Nov. 28, 2013 – Raise the Wage Rally
Dec. 2, 2013 – PSAC Hamilton Area Council and Committees' holiday dinner
Dec. 3, 2013 – meeting with Kalpona Akter of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity in Toronto
Dec. 11 ,2013 – PSAC Greater Toronto Area Council meeting
Dec. 12, 2013 – PSAC Kingston Area Council meeting
Dec. 18, 2013 – PSAC Toronto Pride Committee meeting