

**REPORT  
OF THE  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
Todd Panas**

INTRODUCTON:

It has been 8 months since our Inaugural Convention and we are coming together as a new Component. There are many pressing issues facing our membership such as: Phoenix, Devolution of First Nations and Inuit Health Branch to self government, transition to the new Department of Indigenous Services Canada, harassment, bullying and violence within the work place, Occupational Group Structure Review, Classification, Performance Management, staffing, classification in general and classification of our field level Fishery Officers, as well, the appendixes which that dictate their work and pay such as; appendix C, and appendix K, the Fishery Officer Career Progression Program which is 30-month program. Our members are also faced with continual restructuring and reorganization with departments and agencies transforming, which is an ongoing process.

The “Fear of Reprisal” continues to plague our members and we need to do more to raise awareness and to create safe work places so all members and employees can come forward and bring issues to management without facing reprisals. I certainly hope that this government takes notice of the Hill Times article where I was featured in November of 2017 where I referred to the state of bullying/harassment and violence as an epidemic within the Public Service.

On a positive note, our RESPECT in the work place campaigns and committees continue to make small yet needed cultural changes within the Public Service and the departments and agencies we represent. We must realize that changing a much needed 75-year-old paternalistic culture takes time. Our first ever joint labour-management sub-committees on staffing with both Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada will bring more openness and transparency to the new staffing directive. Our hope is to create the first ever guidelines on staffing pools which are abused and unclear to our members. We are making some inroads with respect to union management consultation however, we need to raised the bar with our informal consultation with more concrete decisions for our members.

UHEW hosted its open house on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 where our council were present to welcome members of the PSAC National Board of Directors, Departmental Officials, Local Executives, and members at large. This was a great opportunity to reveal our newly leased and renovated headquarters. This was complete success and the general consensus was that we had the best office space within the PSAC family. Thanks to Shimen, Julie, staff and Council for making this open house a complete success!

I want to thank our National Council for their dedication and service as well as, our staff for their commitment to improving the quality of life for our members. Also, I want to acknowledge the great work and service of our 57 locals across the country for their representation of our members. Our locals are the social fabric of our Union and we need to build capacity, promote engagement and ensure we have succession to represent our members and bring accountability within the Public Service. A special thank you to Brother Michel Lépine for his important role as co-trustee for Local 70008 and all his help and assistance within our National Office. Brother Lépine truly has the heart of gold and he does whatever needs to be done to help his Union and our members.

Lastly, but certainly not least, the solid work of our Vice-president, Shimen Fayad, for her excellent work as co-trustee, office manager and dealing with our internal operations. Our Union is fortunate to have this paid VP position to manage our operations. The UHEW also witnessed both Executive Assistants retire. Gary Trivet retired on December 31, 2017 after 12 years as an employee of both the former National Health Union and the Union of Health and Environment Workers. Daryl Hoelke retired on January 31, 2018 after 22 years as an employee of the former Environment Component, the Union of Environment Workers, and UHEW. On behalf of UHEW, I want to thank both of these long-time employees for their work, dedication and service. We wish them the very best on their respective retirements.

There were two major events this spring: the PSAC National Bargaining Conference and the PSAC National Triennial Convention. The PSAC National Bargaining Conference was held March 26 to 29<sup>th</sup> where UHEW had 29 delegates representing the TC, PA, SV, and EB bargaining units. The PSAC National Triennial Convention is being held in Toronto from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 4<sup>th</sup>. UHEW will be fielding 22 delegates which will be its largest delegation and will definitely make an impact in the decision-making process which will shape the next three years.

After almost 26 months of agreeing to a meeting with myself, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Honourable Catherine McKenna finally met with me in her office. Although the meeting was cut short, I managed to speak about Phoenix, Respect, the Communications Branch, and other workplace issues. With this meeting, I was very disappointed that Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Fisheries and Oceans) and Minister Jim Carr (Natural Resources Canada) refused to meet with me. I hoping to meet the Minister of Health Canada and Indigenous Services Canada in 2018.

I held a number of meetings with all Deputy Ministers, Presidents, and Deputy Heads over the last year, not too mention many Assistant Deputy Ministers to discuss various work places issues. The majority are very receptive to these bi-lateral meetings and I find them very productive to bring major and unresolved issues to the forefront.

UHEW offered two staff assignment opportunities to Jayne Powers (Regional Vice President of NCR) and to Julie Lavictoire. These are temporary 8-month positions until we create new job descriptions and define the future roles of all employees.

UHEW hosted it's first every Component Presidents meeting at our office in February where 11 of 15 National Presidents gathered together and I had the honour to chair this very important meeting. We discussed a number of work place issues, such as; Phoenix, Activity Based Work (ABW) Stations, Collective Bargaining, PSAC Convention, and other issues. We also recommended establishing Component President Champions so we can have a go to subject matter expert on a number of key subjects like; Duty to Accommodate, Mental health, Regulation XX, OHS, Performance Management, Disability Management, etc., - a future list will be created. I put my name for Champion of Regulation XX and Performance Management.

#### NEW DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA:

The transition to the department for our members in First Nations and Inuit Health Branch to ISC on the surface seems like business as usual however there are many unknowns in terms of the new structure, future office space, the labour management framework and whether there will be any job impacts? The first ISC National UMCC for ISC is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> where we will discuss the labour management framework and the many ongoing issues which face our members.

The senior ADM, Valerie Gideon is committed in improving the many ISC workplaces across the Country in partnership with the bargaining agents. We held a joint labour management work place intervention at Sioux Lookout on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. This has been a concerned workplace with many historic and cultural issues which needed to be addressed with two separate town halls and a future follow-up meeting. These town halls were received very well and management and unions will be working on a joint action plan with direct input from all the members.

#### VIOLENCE IN THE WORK PLACE:

As stated in my introduction, this epidemic within the Public Service requires the most urgent attention.

We need to do more to bring awareness, action, and holding everyone accountable for their actions and/or their lack of. Our respect campaign needs to be heightened with Regional and local joint work place committees. We need to have this as a standing item on all local – regional – branch and national UMCC's. We need to file Regulation XX complaints as our dispute mechanism on all cases of harassment/bullying and violence versus the grievance process or harassment policy under Treasury Board. We need to lobby and pressure all levels of government to establish more legislation to protect the complainants, whistleblowers, or other who come forward. Bill C-65 will hopefully place more pressure on departments and agencies with financial penalties where violence is condoned.

The zero-tolerance rule is just not good enough as we need faster action and more preventative programs to deal with the root causes of violence within the work place. The “fear of reprisal” needs to be the new standing item for all meetings including; management, union, and union-management meetings.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

I had the pleasure to attend 27 annual general meetings this year with 9 of these being Health Canada and PHAC locals. This was by far my most AGM's that I ever attended. This was mainly due to the new 6-month AGM cycle which allows me a larger window to travel and my emphasis to attend as many HC/PHAC AGM's.

I'm hoping to attend the others next year as annual general meetings are the best opportunity to meet the members, meet with local management, tour the work places and speak one on one with members on the many work place issues. There is no better opportunity as a National President then to visit individual members work station to work station and to have this open venue to assist where possible.

#### UNION MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMITTEES:

UHEW continues to be the most active bargaining unit and leader at all the Branch and National UMCC'S. This is an excellent venue to bring work place issues in an informal manner to the table for action and resolution. It is important to have an annual review mechanism for all UMCC's to review successes and where joint decision were truly made to improve the quality of life for our members. To just have a good meeting with good dialogue and conversation for two to three hours does nothing to help our members. We need to raise the bar and make tangible changes and improvements to each and every work place from ocean to ocean to ocean.

The standing items both Branch and Nationally are the following: PSES, Performance Management, Respect, Fear of Reprisal and staffing. We also continually to request annual statistics on harassment/violence complaints, grievances, VICR and OCM/ICMS reports, Ombudsman and Respect offices, the number of casuals, students, terms over three and five years, and Guardians under Conservation and Protection. We will be asking for the enforcement numbers over the last five years with respect to Fishery Officers, Wildlife Enforcement and Environment Enforcement officers. What are the trends post deficit reduction action plan and have the number decreased per region across both departments?

#### PSAC COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE:

I was very proud to witness the election of four of our delegates to their respective bargaining units. Congratulations to Brandon Thorne as the PA group representative, Richard Dollimount and Kevin Lundstrom to the TC group and finally, Franceso Lai as a member of the EB group. These are excellent representatives who will represent their respective groups on their National Bargaining teams.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEE 2017 SURVEY:

The results have been posted on the Treasury Board site for all departments and agencies. We have work to do to conduct an analysis at the Regional and National levels to see if there are any improvements and where we need to focus on to improve the workplaces. Early indication is that that harassment has increased within the many departments and agencies we represent. We need to address this epidemic of harassment and violence which our members face on a day to day basis. This government needs to be held accountable for 19 years of surveys with no improvement in this area.

#### UHEW CHAMPIONS:

I would like our RVP's to put the names forward as Component Champions where they can bring knowledge, information, and the acquired skills to certain subjects or commonalities which face our membership. We could mirror the Component President Champions. The following subject matter experts would be a benefit and not limited to the following:

Duty to Accommodate  
Mental Health  
Occupational Health and Safety  
Disability Management

Regulation XX Violence Prevention in the Work Place  
Performance Management  
Union Management Consultation Committees  
Staffing  
Respect and Wellness  
Informal Conflict Management/Mediation Services

CONCLUSION:

We have a number of Convention issues to resolve within this mandate and certainly before convention. The most important will be the delegate allotment formula for our 2020 Convention in Vancouver as well as, the recommendations for the new UHEW Regional and National Structure. I'm very proud of the committee which was assembled to conduct this review and recommendations. This committee consists of Sisters Karla Levangie-Connor, and Cheryl Sullivan, and Brothers Larry Schlosser, Steve Maund and Benoît Thibault as Chairperson, and myself as ex-officio on this committee and technical advisor.

This will also be the start of our Regional Conference two-year cycle where many local representatives will come together at five separate regional conferences held in the Atlantic Region, Quebec Region, Western Region, Ontario Region and National Capital Region. These regional conferences will be an excellent venue and investment for networking, training, and discussing work place issues across all departments and agencies which we represent.

I'm very fortunate to be the National President of the Union of Health and Environment Workers and a job that I truly love. Where else can you have a job where you fight 24-7 for your members, debate with senior departmental officials and sometimes Ministers, improve the quality of life for your members, and put smiles on their faces where and when you possibly can? Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.