

**REPORT
OF THE
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
UNION OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT WORKERS
Todd Panas
June 10 to August 30, 2019**

INTRODUCTION:

I want to begin my report by thanking my wonderful assistant, Julie Lavictoire for her hard work, dedication, and strong service to our membership. Julie continues to go over and beyond her duties for our members and keeping the office of the National President in good order. Thank you, Julie!

I was off due to medical challenges for two months during this report cycle and returned to my position officially on June 10th. I want to thank the National Office, Council, Locals and members for their emails, flower arrangements, and phone calls of support. Health and one's quality of life are paramount and we need to all focus on our health because at the end of the day, if we don't have our health, everything else becomes a challenge.

I want to thank and acknowledge all the members, activists, Locals and Council for the work they do for our members, as our organization is one of mostly volunteers who assist members with their challenges from the corner of their desks.

It's hard to believe that two years of flown by so quickly and that we are only one year away from our National Triennial Convention in Vancouver. There is a lot of planning that needs to happen and the bulk of the work will commence when the convention call-out is sent early next year.

I attended the PSAC Atlantic Occupational Health and Safety Conference in Moncton where I was asked to participate on an Environmental Panel to discuss the impacts on the Environment and where Unions can play an active role in saving our planet. The discussions on Bill C-65 which are the amendments to the Canada Labour Cod, Part II – Violence Prevention in the Workplace were very interesting.

Canadians will be heading to the polls for the October 2019 Federal Elections and we have some important decisions to make in this upcoming election. The UHEW has never endorsed any particular party. What we encourage and support is for members to speak with all candidates and

parties and seek their official party platforms with respect for government workers in terms of fair wages, secure pensions, and focusing on support for mental health.

PHOENIX:

The Phoenix disaster continues to plague our members and will continue to pose challenges for another 5 – 10 years, according to the PSAC. We are far from obtaining a new pay system and our members will be subject to continual pay issues over this period. Departmental pay pods have helped deal with the easier files, but the complex files are still not resolved.

The offer made by Treasury Board concerning Phoenix damages does not come close to addressing the devastation caused to our membership. The 1.25 days per year is far too little to compensate or even recognize the massive impact that Phoenix has had on our members' quality of life.

Over 270,000 employees have been directly affected and have suffered significant financial losses. There is a currently back log of 240,000 files to be resolved. More than 100,000 employees are still waiting to have their last collective agreements implemented.

With the disastrous effects of the Phoenix pay system on our members across the county, addressing these impacts has been central to the bargaining teams' negotiations with Treasury Board.

UHEW/PSAC members make up the majority of the federal public service and have suffered enormous damage because of the Phoenix pay system. Yet they continue to report to work every day, delivering the critical services Canadians depend upon. The PSAC or our Component will not trade in 4 years of our members' pain and suffering for a settlement that does not adequately compensate for the terrible toll Phoenix has had on their lives and their families.

The UHEW fully supports our Bargaining Teams and the PSAC on their strong opposition to this disrespectful offer. We encourage all members to speak with your members of parliament and echo our frustrations and union solidarity.

PSAC COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:

The PSAC Bargaining teams have reached an impasse with the Employer on contract negotiations. The PSAC and our Bargaining teams rejected the offer by Treasury Board which was accepted by all other bargaining units under Treasury Board. The government's offer does

not come close to fairly compensating our members the devastating impacts of Phoenix as our members deserve better compensation!

Our Bargaining teams have worked very hard dating back to early 2018 where they met with the employer on a regular basis, in order to advance member bargaining priorities to improve the collective agreements. This included the tabling of a comprehensive wage demand, which sought to address pay inequities, market comparability and the cost of living. In their initial response to our wage demand, the federal government proposed a two-year wage freeze, as well as other concessions.

The PSAC and our Bargaining teams have declared an impasse in our negotiations, the next step is to apply for a Public Interest Commission (PIC), under the auspices of the Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board. These PIC meetings have been scheduled for December of 2019. A PIC can be both a formal hearing and mediated negotiations. Following a PIC, a decision is rendered with a report which can help the parties negotiate a tentative agreement. If these post-PIC negotiations are unsuccessful, the PSAC must consider what option/s will help us secure a positive negotiated outcome. This could involve seeking a strike mandate from our members. No strike can take place before we have taken a strike vote and received a strike mandate from our members.

I urge all our members to contact their Members of Parliament and or other parties and candidates to advocate our strong and united position. The UHEW is fully supportive of our bargaining teams and the PSAC in a unified effort.

UHEW STRUCTURE COMMITTEE:

The committee is completing its consultations at the many Regional Conferences which have been happening in all regions. We have received some feedback from the regions and also emails to our generic email account from members. The committee will review the suggestions, ideas, and prepare a revised report for approval at the Fall Council meeting as well as, the October Presidents Conference which will be our first UHEW National Local Presidents' Conference in Montebello Qc.

This committee has done wonderful work with their three tasks: developing a delegate formula for our 2020 National Convention, defining our new Regions, and finally a new Council structure to move us forward as one united family serving all departments and agencies as one Union for the 2020 to 2023 component cycle.

This will not be an easy decision by the Committee or Council as there are many Regional positions and we cannot incorporate all recommendations. We really need to make a National decision which will involve compromise and trial and error. We also need to have a caveat which will have a review mechanism for the 2023 National Convention to evaluate the progress of this new structure and organization.

I'm going to be honest and blunt here, we have RVPs that have heavy work loads and we some that have very light work loads. Some RVPs are doing too much, covering for their inexperienced locals or getting personally involved. This is absolutely at no discredit to any RVP, but more so to the capacity of the local, apathy or fear of the reprisal, the job or duties prohibit the involvement or just the nature of the work place or culture. As stated, 90 percent of our membership will never need their Union or file a grievance in a lifetime, but there are those files and cases that take their toll of time and support. Size doesn't dictate work load nor does smaller locals and to find that perfect balance will never happen.

I feel we need to explore other options like Regional Vice-President duties as RVP, possibly expanding the role of service officers, and looking at the grievance process, and our effectiveness at the Union-Management Consultation Committees. RVPs were not intended to be operational representatives, but more so the political arm that deal with National governance and policy and not dealing with local cases or files. We need to continue to build stronger capacity at the local level and develop strong leaders where they can resolve the day to day work place challenges.

VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT WITHIN THE WORKPLACE:

Violence, harassment, discrimination and bullying cases are on the rise at alarming rates within all the departments and agencies we represent. As reported in my interview with the Hill Times on October 2, 2017 we have an epidemic within the public service and Senior Management must take immediate action with full accountability.

We are anxious with Bill C-65 and the many amendments to Regulation XX which will be in place June 2020. UHEW is hopeful with these many positive amendments will instill a zero tolerance approach within the Public Service.

There will be new timelines, anonymous complaint process, conciliation process, mandatory joint work place assessments, employees who leave the public service will have a two-month window to file a complaint, mandatory training, annual reporting by departments, etc.

At the National Union Management Consultation Committees, we are asking for Senior Management to establish joint committees to review and establish new procedures on Violence Prevention in the work place.

The UHEW is encouraging all members to file Work place Violence Complaints when they experience any form of harassment, bullying, intimidation, abuse of authority or violence. We need to hold everyone accountable on “zero tolerance”.

REPRESENTATION AND SERVICE ACTION PLAN:

Our Component is very proud to have in place the first ever service standards for our Component staff and all elected officers. I believe these service standards are the very first of all 15 Components and the PSAC. We have implemented goals and objectives for our Component staff, and the implementation of a performance management system so we can ensure that all of our staff have the appropriate tools, training, and capacity to provide the best representation and service to all our members.

If members have any complaints or issues regarding our representation or service action plan, they should contact their Regional Vice-President and or the National President of the Component.

Our goal is to have the best service component and to ensure our members are receiving the best representation possible.

CAMPAIGNS:

UHEW’s Respectful Work Place and Fear of Reprisal Campaigns are bringing awareness and promotion of what we want to achieve for every member and in each and every work place from ocean to ocean to ocean. I strongly believe that these two campaigns will eventually change the work place culture for our members and the entire public service. Changing culture doesn’t happen over night and sometimes takes many decades or even a century but these campaigns are making a difference and we will continue to raise the bar.

From November 25th through to November 29th, five departments and two agencies will be celebrating National Respect Day with many work place events and activities. ECCC will celebrate its 5th National Respect Day.

The new Department of Indigenous Services Canada will be holding its 1st National Respect day and Respect Symposium on November 27th. I'm very excited to be the National Respect Co-Chair with Valerie Gideon and co-hosting this first event.

Our goal and dream are to have both a National Public Service Respect Day and a World National Respect Day to celebrate and promote!

UNION MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMITTEES:

Our Component is advocating for more accountability and decision making at all UMCC's. We really need to achieve concrete decisions and actions that benefit our members at these meetings. UHEW has been the leader/s are most local, regional, branch and national UMCC's however we need the other bargaining agents to play an equal leadership role.

We need to evaluate the effectiveness at these meetings and if decisions are not being made or no resolutions are achieved – these outstanding issues need to be forwarded up to higher levels.

We also need to utilize contacting directing the Director, or the Regional Director General or Regional Executive Officer outside the UMCC process for results. The UMCC is only one of many processes in achieving resolutions to work place issues.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES:

I participated at the NCR and BC-Alberta and Yukon Regional Conferences where the focus was on building local capacity along with the consultation on the structure report and delegate formula. I want to thank the RVP's for their great work planning these conferences and the huge emphasis on training. I also very much enjoyed the break out sessions at both these conferences where we witnessed the synergy and passion with their assignments and roles. I was thrilled to help facilitate: Resolution writing 101, Local election procedures, Rules of Order, ABC's of UMCC's, Financial requirements of locals, and the Question and Answer session in NCR or Todd Talk was a lot of fun! It was much appreciated to see PSAC National President, Brother Aylward at the NCR conference where he updated our members on Phoenix and Collective Bargaining.

I will be attending the PNR conference in mid-September in Saskatoon. The two remaining conferences will be the Manitoba and Saskatchewan regional conferences which are tentatively scheduled for later in 2019.

UHEW CHAMPIONS:

We need to continue to develop and appoint Component Champions and pursue this very important initiative to make us a stronger and more informed Component. These champions will be the Component point person or subject matter expert on the issues as per the regulations, legislated framework or policies which govern these key areas. Our goal is to have only one leader per category however there will need to be training and transition. If you feel you have the knowledge, commitment and up for the challenge, please submit your name to the National Office.

Current Champions and Vacancies:

Human Rights - Michael Ballard
Performance Management - Todd Panas
Regulation XX - Marc Blanchard
Staffing - Shimen Fayad
Union Management Consultation Committees - Todd Panas
National Regulatory Enforcement - Rae McCleave
Disability Management -
Diversity and Inclusion -
Duty to Accommodate -
Occupational Health and Safety -

CONCLUSION:

I strongly believe and stand behind that we have one of the strongest components under the Public Service Alliance of Canada in terms of staff, the National Office, our Locals and elected officers.

Saying that we are going through some growing pains so to speak as a new organization. We also like all other Components and the PSAC are dealing with our internal challenges of harassment, bullying, and disrespect as a political and volunteer organization.

We do not do a good job of practising what we speak or what we advocate and or believe in for our members. We cannot have it both ways, and the cost in terms of our own mental health and financial costs will takes its toll on our existence as trade unions.

Our efforts and focus as Components and the PSAC are to reduce the in-fighting and unrests as an organization and to find concrete solutions to mitigate these negative impacts on our organization.

The back-room meetings, ongoing negativity, and various camps must stop and we need to focus our energies on the quality of life for our members and building a more effective and efficient Component. This is a business, a multi-million-dollar business that needs to be run as a professional organization and we all need to take stock, look into that mirror and bring ideas and solutions to the table.

Whether we need to follow Departments with the establishment of a Respect Bureau at the PSAC or Ombudsman, or an internal branch of alternate dispute resolution, something needs to change as operating the same old ways are counter productive.

I'm hopeful that we can achieve a new structure and united union at our 2nd National UHEW Triennial Convention in August 2020 in Vancouver. It's vital for our sustainability as a Component to become one Union and one Family representing all Departments and Agencies. Our current structure was only for merger and transition purposes and we must move forward as one united organization locally, regionally and nationally.

We are still operating as two distinct organizations and our current structure presents a lot of confusion for our members and departments/agencies we represent. Our Council of 17 members is too large where the PSAC is a Board of 24 and the majority of Components have an average of 9 - 10 representatives.

We need to focus on the larger picture as our duty as leaders is to leave our organization in a stronger capacity in which we came into and for a better future for all members.

Thank you.