

**REPORT  
OF THE  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
Shimen Fayad  
Fall 2021**

Even though it has only been a few short months since our convention, many activities are happening at the National level and I have been working hard to protect not only rights and benefits of our members in the workplace but improve services we provide to our members.

After taking two weeks' vacation after our Triennial Convention, I returned to the busy pace of your National President.

The federal government implemented a mandatory vaccine policy for all employees in federal workplaces. It was announced that those employees that do not adhere to the policy, they would be placed on Leave Without Pay (LWOP). Since that announcement, I have had numerous meetings with ECCC, DFO, ISC, HC and PHAC, the departments where most of our members work. At these meetings, I was specific with the employer that our members privacy was paramount in the implementation of this policy. I emphasized that managers should not be using this policy to further harass our members or use it as a means to get rid of members they feel are problematic. I noted that managers need to be cognizant of the potential conflicts within individual units between members who adhere to the policy and those that do not.

During the following weeks, some departments met with Bargaining agents on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. We were provided statistics on members attesting, those seeking accommodation and those with no response. To date, we have a small number of members across departments requesting accommodations and a small number placed on LWOP.

Departments have begun to review the accommodation requests at very high levels such as the ADM, and a recommendation will be provided to the managers. I requested departments allow our members to have a support person or union representative present at the meetings the managers will have with employees on their accommodation request.

In addition to meetings with the employer on the vaccine policy, I received emails from employees concerned about the policy and sharing their medical information. I had the office create a tracking form for these emails and to track the responses that myself, Ben and the PSAC responded.

Currently, we have some members wanting to submit a grievance. In those instances, I have a Labour Relations Officer assigned to the file and a merit analysis will be completed and a recommendation provided on filing a grievance. For those grievances filed, I have asked the departments to bypass the first level and go straight to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level so our LROs can assist locals in these files.

### **Federal Election Oversight Committee**

After the Convention, I participated on the PSAC federal election oversight committee. We were provided with updates on the activities the PSAC was undertaking to promote members to vote for a party that would support employees.

### **Ontario Regional Vice President**

A representing ECCC, DFO and NRCan. I explained to the presidents the role of an RVP and discussed interest amongst their locals in running for the position of Ontario 1 RVP. To date, we had one member willing to run for the role and another member willing to run for alternate RVP. The election is being scheduled for a date in the next week or two. Until the election is held, I assist the locals in issues and Ben has attended a Regional UMCC in support of the locals.

### **Quebec Regional Vice President**

A meeting was scheduled with Quebec locals to discuss the process of an election and interest in locals to run for the position of Quebec RVP 1. A few of the participants could not meet and the meeting was rescheduled. Until the election is held, Benoit provides support to the locals on issues.

### **National Office manager position**

The National Council passed a motion at the Spring 2021 meeting and as a result we will have to create a job description that not only encompasses the duties that oversee staff, but duties that will ensure the position is a level higher than the current staff. I received copies of job descriptions of PSAC positions that contained some of these duties and well as job descriptions from some components. Ben and I reviewed the work descriptions and compiled a draft job description which we will be submitting to the consultant and the PSAC for review. Once we have their input, we will provide the draft description to Council prior to submitting the JD for classification.

### **Full time elected officer**

At an emergency council meeting prior to convention there was motion duly passed by council allowing for the elected full-time official to not relocate their family or relocate to the NCR region. For this cycle only, a shorter cycle, could be provided reimbursement of reasonable expenses to reside in the NCR region as our by-laws state. I created an ad hoc advisory committee as laid out in our bylaws that consists of two members of our Standing Finance Committee and two council members. This committee was to meet um a couple weeks ago, but a member of the Finance Committee was called into work and therefore I met with the committee to provide a mandate and some guidance. Once the committee meets and reviews NJC directive and other PSAC components relocation guidelines they will provide a recommendation to myself and Council.

### **UHEW Future Strategy**

As noted in my address to Convention, UHEW, moving forward, must build capacity at all levels. Most importantly at the local level. It will become increasingly harder to engage the membership as we move past the pandemic. Many members will be working a hybrid schedule of working in the office and at home. We have to find ways to engage our members and find members to assist at the local levels. This will be a huge challenge and locals and RVPs, with their workload and being busy with union work,

they do not have time to focus on this. At the National Office we will need to look at ways to increase our social media presence and online presence. This will be reviewed by the National Office in the weeks to come.

I had requested UHEW VP, Benoit, to organize with the LROs to facilitate information and training sessions to locals that request this. Starting in 2022, I feel UHEW will need to expand training to be available to those that want to participate. The UHEW will now have its first ever Education Committee, to be decided at the Fall Council meeting. This committee will be mandated to come up with a plan on how to provide learning opportunities and info sessions to locals' executives and local reps. The PSAC has now released online training, which is great for our locals, however, UHEW must also be involved in building capacity of our locals.

While we had planned to organize a membership survey, the shift to focus on the vaccine policy questions delayed that plan. In early 2022, as we move to returning to the workplace and out of the pandemic, we plan to move forward with this survey.

As a further effort to build capacity of locals, the UHEW website will have a page specifically on Health & Safety. The Canada Labor Code Part II requires the employer to adhere to legislation and having a section on the website to refer to, will assist The UHEW Health & Safety committee representatives to fulfill their role.

UHEW has an ongoing campaign to hold the employer accountable in following through on their promise to reclassify Fishery Officers. The employer announced a plan to reclassify and did not provide an opportunity for more than just a couple questions. I organized a town hall for Fishery Officers to give them an opportunity to voice their concerns. At this Town Hall, we had over 100 FO register. I provided a timeline of the UHEW activities of meeting with the employer to advocate the reclassification. RVPs were invited to observe the video meeting with Fishery Officers.

We will continue to advocate for the reclassification, and we will continue the political campaign until the employer follows through on their promise.

Plans are underway to create a meeting group for Environmental and Wildlife Enforcement Officers. The National Director of Regulatory Enforcement will lead this group and raise any issues with the National Council if need be. Currently, there are grievances across the country submitted by employees in this group. As we move forward with the presentation of these grievances, the RVP for NCR 1 will be reaching out to the grievers to plan the presentation strategy.

I have met with the Chief Enforcement Officer on systemic harassment issues in this field of work. The CEO is now on leave until 2022 so I am meeting with the interim CEO to discuss an action plan on addressing these issues.

Over the last year, our members have had to work at Canadian border crossings due to the mandate given to the Public Health Agency of Canada. I had numerous meetings with the PHAC President and senior managers to raise concerns I heard from the RVPs and locals. While we have made some stride and some issues have been addressed, it is not perfect. I emailed the new PHAC President to continue these meetings and we will be meeting in the next few weeks. There are a multitude of issues such as harassment/violence, personal protective equipment, lack of health & safety committees, scheduling inconsistencies and training accessibility. I will continue to advocate on this front.

In the next cycle, we do need to learn about the where our members work, the various departments, agencies and separate employers. I will be providing Council with a briefing of all the departments where our UHEW members work. I will be asking RVPs to work more together to learn about each other's departments they are responsible for. This will strengthen our family and help us work together in supporting members.

As travel restrictions ease across the Country, I will be able to attend local AGMs. In preparation for this, I will work with the RVPs to strategize which regions to travel to first. This should be a team effort as it will be impossible to attend over 50 AGMs! We will strategize so that locals have an opportunity to have myself, the NP or Benoit, the NVP attend their AGMs.

Lastly, I want to note that the pace we are having to work in is unprecedented. We are all working longer hours. While working from home, it is so easy to go 'quickly' check your emails. I want to thank all of you for your dedication, but I caution you. If we continue this pace, we will see ourselves and our locals burn out. We must take time for ourselves. Of course, I need to take my own advice, but I want you to know I understand how much you have to do. It can be overwhelming. Stop, take a deep breath.

The work will be there tomorrow, but I want to make sure you are as well. We cannot do this work alone, so we need to ensure we are healthy to do this work together!