

THE KNOWLEDGE TREE

What is the Knowledge Tree?

In order to succeed on behalf of its Members' interest, a Union must have an efficient communication system within a structure that shares experience and knowledge throughout the chain of support. We learn from each other. The 'Knowledge Tree' illustrates how this system works within GSU.

How Does It Work?

All begins with a Member who has a concern and seeks advice. The Member turns to the Local Steward. If the Steward cannot answer the question, then the Steward can turn to the Chief Steward for advice. The Chief Steward has the Local President as a resource.

More often than not, the question will be answered within this group and the Member will receive informed assistance. At the same time, each person within the chain has learned through the exchange. Should that Steward be asked the same question in the future, the answer will be forthcoming to the Member without delay.

Sometimes the question is unusual and the Local President can turn to the Regional Vice-President for assistance. The Regional Vice-President may have the answer and proper advice from previous cases. If not, the Regional Vice-President can contact the Senior Union Representative at the GSU National Office.

Again, the answer may be found there as the Senior Union Representative is working on cases from all the Locals and may have seen the problem before. The informed advice passes back down through the chain to the Member. Each person in the chain will know how to answer that question should it arise again in the future.

In the event the Senior Union Representative is unable to answer the question, that person can contact the PSAC Representation and Legal Services Branch for advice. Once the advice is received, it will be shared with the Regional Vice-President and it will be passed back down along the chain to the Member. Should another Regional Vice-President ask the same question of the GSU Senior Union Representative, there will be no need to turn to the PSAC and take up its time. The previous case has provided the answer and that knowledge will pass back down through a different branch of GSU Locals.

You will note from the illustration that a GSU Regional Vice-President is responsible for more than one Local. Should another Local have the same question, it will go no further than the Regional Vice-President to find its answer. In a sense, one Local has helped another.

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If someone should leave that chain of support, the experience and knowledge gained from the case will not be lost to the Membership. There are five or six others who have learned from the process as well. They will remain to help in the future.

