

FALL 2022

# THE AGORA

*The Government Services Union Quarterly Newsletter*

## *Congratulations to GSU 2022 Bursary Recipients*



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My friends

Here we are. The end of 2022 is upon us. Another year where the omnipresence of Covid has been felt and where soaring inflation has added a layer of anxiety to our lives. A third year, where many of you have had to be creative, compromise, adapt and be resilient.

If I had one word to describe this first year as your National President, it would be optimistic. When I look at all the new faces in leadership positions within our organization, I am confident that we are on our way to solidifying our union power. When I look at the number of young workers – bright young workers with innovative ideas – serving as Local executives or showing a keen interest in GSU, I am confident in our future.

Many challenges remain and await us as we enter the new year. I am confident that **together and united**, we will go far and overcome the obstacles that lie ahead.

I want to acknowledge the work of GSU activists. Without you, there is no union. I have said it before, and I will say it again; the work you do is not easy. I sincerely thank you for being there, on the ground, defending workers' rights and being a voice for them.

It only remains for me to wish you a happy holiday season. Enjoy this time with your loved ones to rest and disconnect. Forget about GSU for a few days and come back in good shape to accomplish great things together in 2023.

For you and with you.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Bruce Roy". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

## The Government Services National Council

The Agora is published by the GSU National Office. Address any comments to [info@gsu-ssg.com](mailto:info@gsu-ssg.com)

Visit GSU's website: [www.gsu-ssg.com](http://www.gsu-ssg.com)

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# 2022 GSU Bursary Recipients



GSU is proud to announce that the Union Recognition Committee members have rendered their decision for the 2022 bursary recipients. GSU offers three bursaries of \$2,000 each to students who are dependents of GSU members in good standing and who are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary institution.

GSU also offers a \$2,000 bursary to members in good standing who are enrolled full or part-time in a post-secondary institution.

- ♦ The **A.F. Wood Bursary**, named in honour of a former member who made enormous contributions in the area of member education, has been awarded to **Patrick MacDonnell**, son of Troy MacDonnell from Local 60011.
- ♦ The **Jim Williams Bursary**, named in honour of a fellow member who served in union office from 1977 to 1999 where he was later elected RVP after the Convention merger, has been awarded to **Eve O'Dea**, daughter of Tracy O'Dea from Local 20008.
- ♦ The **Bonnie Robichaud Bursary**, named in honour of a woman who won a landmark sexual harassment case in the Supreme Court while holding numerous positions in Local 70019, has been awarded to **Stéphanelle Parent**, daughter of Michèle Parent from Local 10161.
- ♦ The **Bob Haywood Memorial Bursary**, named in honour of a tireless union activist and a man of great conviction who was committed to improving the world in which we live, was awarded to GSU member **Jean-Michel Riel** from Local 70020.

Recipients' essays are available on [our website](#)

The Committee expresses its admiration for the outstanding academic achievements and wishes to congratulate the winners.

Applications for the 2023 bursaries will be available early next year!



Jean-Michel Riel receiving the Bob Haywood Bursary from GSU National President, Bruce Roy

# Bargaining Update

## TREASURY BOARD NEGOTIATIONS

On July 5, 2022, the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Board called for the establishment of a Public Interest Commission (PIC) for the EB, PA, SV, and TC bargaining tables to help PSAC and Treasury Board reach an agreement. PIC hearing dates have been scheduled for late November to mid-December.

### Next Steps

As we close up on the hearing and wait for the reports, PSAC is increasing their pressure on the government by launching strike training for its members and getting organized. It is important to note that before going on the picket line, members in good standing – that is a member who has signed their union card – will be invited to a strike vote to give (or not) PSAC a strike mandate. If PSAC has a strike mandate from the majority of its membership, they will be allowed to declare a strike, so long as they provide the employer 72 hours' notice and that it is done within 60 days of the strike vote.

### What can you do?

Get involved, take action. **Being prepared for a strike is the best way to avoid a strike.**

- Register for **strike training** in your region
- Read our Treasury Board **bargaining toolkit**
- Check out PSAC **FAQ on Treasury Board bargaining**
- Attend PSAC National and Regional events
- Participate in actions, information sessions, lunch and learns, and workshops
- Get in touch with your **regional office** to get involved

## Royal Canadian Mint Negotiations

Two of our three Mint Locals are currently in negotiations. The bargaining team representing Local 70024—Ottawa and Local 50057—Winnipeg has made some progress with the Employer on non-monetary issues; However, a lot of work still needs to be done, notably in terms of wage increase and other monetary demands. Negotiations will resume in early 2023.

Local 50058—PSO Winnipeg, should also begin their negotiations sometime in the new year!

**Keep your contact information up to date to receive all the latest bargaining updates.**

**And make sure to sign your membership card if you haven't yet!**  
**<http://psacunion.ca/rand>**

# Representation Corner



## Leave and Inclement Weather

The snowy season is quickly approaching, and it's worth recalling the guidelines when determining your ability to report to work during inclement weather.

While many individuals are working remotely, or have the possibility to do so, this isn't always the case, as several professionals must still fulfil their duties in person and on-site. Management determines whether or not to close offices or worksites. If the Employer confirms that work will be done regardless of the weather, each employee must decide if it's safe for them to commute and report to work in adverse weather.

Most collective agreements allow the Employer to provide leave with pay when matters beyond the employee's control prohibit them from reporting for duty. While such leave is discretionary, the employer's use of that discretion is constrained by the requirement that it cannot deny requested leave in an unreasonable manner. As a result, a worker must demonstrate that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from reporting for duty. Put simply, an employee must exercise reasonable effort to get to work.

The Employer, on the other hand, must consider each request and its set of facts individually, and management's decision must be based on the merits of each request.

As is often the case, the credibility of the worker is a crucial factor that can have a decisive impact on the outcome of management's decision or the decision maker. It is strongly recommended that you act with honesty, transparency, and integrity in supporting your claim.

Your local union will be able to assist you depending on your specific situation. Here is some general advice if you believe that you're unable to report to work:

- Save local newspaper weather coverage.
- To document your situation, compile a list of closed businesses and government offices (local, provincial, or other federal government departments).
- Obtain a copy of road condition reports or information on power outages.
- Notify management of your situation as soon as possible and, if feasible, in writing.
- Management should be kept up to date as time passes or if your circumstance changes.

While it can be difficult to determine whether you are able to or should report to work, the key is to rely on the reasonable judgment that most people would have in that same circumstance.



# Conferences and Convention

## 2022 Local Presidents' Conference

The GSU 2022 Local Presidents' Conference was held during the week of September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in Toronto, Ontario.

The week started off with the registration and a *meet-and-greet*. Local presidents and observers played a fun little game to get to know others and chat with people they don't already know. It was nice to see everyone interacting. Representing members coast to coast, elected officers do not always know their fellow volunteers, so this was a good ice breaker to get the Conference started. Interestingly, most of the participants were attending the Conference for the first time. Days were filled with guest speakers, presentations, and workshops.

The next Local Presidents' Conference will be held in 2024, marking GSU's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



## 2022 GSU Young Workers Conference

Did you know that GSU is one of the only PSAC Components to organize a Young Workers' Conference every cycle? GSU Young Workers Conference! Eighteen GSU members aged 35 years old or under gathered in Ottawa for a 2-day Conference on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Guest speakers and workshops on strike preparation, mobilization, workers' rights and anti-oppression were on the menu. Although most of the participants did not know each other at the beginning, bonds were quickly forged between them.

Another successful event held this Fall!



## GSU 9th Triennial National Convention

It is that time again where we need to prepare for our Triennial National Convention. In 2023, over 100 delegates from all GSU Locals will gather in Ottawa to set the direction for GSU for the next three years and beyond. Locals are invited to start thinking about resolutions they would like to put forward.

More information will be available early next year. For now, circle the week of September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in your agenda for GSU 2023 Convention!