PSAC555 commonly asked Questions and Answers:

**What is PSAC555?**

PSAC555 is the member-driven local Union for all Post Doctoral Fellows, Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Invigilators, Sessional Instructors, and Clinical Instructors.

**Who is a member?**

If you are a Post Doctoral Fellows, Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Invigilators, Sessional Instructors, or Clinical Instructors at Ontario Tech University (UOIT) then you are a member.

**What does member-driven mean?**

Members have a say in their working conditions (pay, health & safety, hours, etc.). This is done through members negotiating Collective bargaining agreements, Member Grievances, Joint Union Management Meetings and Employee Job Actions.

Members make the decisions on who will be their representation on the negotiation teams, who will be their representation at the local level (president, stewards, VPS, treasurer, secretary) their budgets, their funds, and their mobilization events.

**How do I participate on a Collective Bargaining team?**

When your Collective Bargaining Agreement expires. The elected local executives will do a call out to the membership for bargaining team members and negotiation team members.  They will also send out a survey for all members to report on what are their concerns and bargaining priorities.

**How do I file a grievance, what is a grievance?**

If you feel that, your employer (the university) has violated any article in your Collective agreement, a University policy, and any employment legislation.  Then come talk to us and we can help you grieve the violation and make things the way they should be.

Grievances are resolved through a progressive procedure that you can find in your Collective Bargaining Agreement. They start off informal, become formal and then can move to the labor board for a decision.

The PSAC555 local resolves 50-100 informal grievance per year, 20-30 formal grievance and 2-5 grievances make it to the labor board for mediation and/or arbitration.

Examples of the types of grievances we have handled: Priority Hiring Violations, Excessive work hours that exceed your pay, Health & Safety, Harassment, University Policy Violations (travel, assembly. GRA claw backs), termination of a contract, discipline that was not progressive.

**What is a Joint Union Management Team?**

Members can have issues that are not grievances. The elected representation takes your issues (often anonymously) to the attention of the management team to try to get them resolved.

Membership tells us these issues through, one on one meetings, emails, twitter, and Facebook.

**How is my elected representation chosen?**

You can find this information in your PSAC bylaws.

Anyone who is a member can run for the elected positions with the Union. The election process is done at a yearly Annual General Members Meeting (however, if a position vacant and needs to be filled it can be done at other meetings where the general membership is present and informed of an election).

Once a member is elected, they hold that position for the term, unless they vacate it.

**Are these paid positions?**

No. The elected positions are not paid but they can claim their expenses. These expenses are limited. For example, a VP or Steward of Post Doctoral Fellow affairs cannot exceed $350 dollars in expenses per month.

**How do I know when the General Meeting is and when the election is happening?**

PSAC555 will inform you through communication email, twitter, facebook, and we post posters on the walls on Ontario Tech.  Normally, we have a General Members meeting in December and in April.

**How do I get to decide what is on the budget and any Member-driven funds?**

The budget is created by the finance committee every April the General Membership. at a general meeting has to approve the budget.

Once a budget has been established any changes to the budget have to be submitted through the finance committee and will be presented at general members meeting for the general membership to approve or deny.

**Who is on the finance committee?**

The elected PSAC555 treasurer is the chairperson of the finance committee. However, any member can join the committee. And any member can participate/ make a recommendation to the committee.

**Who decides on Member Driven Funds?**

Members. After operational expenses are budgeted there is usually money left in the budget for the members to decide on where it should go.

Currently, members have decided on three funds: the Hardship Fund, the Professional Development Fund, and a Bursary Fund.

Policies and Applications for these funds can be found on our website. We also tell members about these fund in our orientations and in our communication emails.

**Is it true that the University provides funds to Union for travel & professional development?**

No. The University in 5.08 of your Collective Bargaining Agreements provides a lump sum to the Union for Administration of the Agreement.

However, the Union does have in its budget membership-driven funds- $500.00 per year for the Hardship fund, $500.00 Professional Development Fund and $1000 Bursary Fund. The policies and applications are on our website and you can contact our office for more information on these funds Office@psac555.ca.