



Gender Equity Task Force Report



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service Alliance of Canada’s (PSAC) National Board of Directors (NBOD) struck a Gender Equity Task Force (Task Force) in 2018, as recommended by PSAC’s National Human Rights Committee, to investigate barriers to women members’ participation in union life and to make recommendations for change. The Task Force took an intersectional approach to its work in recognition that not all women experience gender inequities in the same way or to the same degree. Women have multiple identities that are both complex and interconnected, and this uniquely shapes their lived experiences. Thus, to affect systemic change, we must understand that barriers to participation differ for all women, including those who experience discrimination due to racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, xenophobia, colonialism, ableism, and classism. The Task Force engaged women members from across the country through surveys, telephone townhall meetings, focus groups, and in person workshops to gather input on how gender equity could be improved in all PSAC work.

The Task Force’s investigation identified key obstacles in the way of participation:

- 1. PSAC is confusing and uninviting
- 2. Inactive and/or unengaged Locals
- 3. Problematic union culture
- 4. Unsure how to get involved in collective bargaining
- 5. Fear of reprisal from the employer
- 6. Family care obligations
- 7. Lack of confidence/knowledge
- 8. Inaccessibility of union meetings

As a result of rigorous review and analysis of data collected through consultations, the Task Force developed a series of recommendations that will advance gender equity at PSAC, which have all been adopted by the NBOD:

- 1. Implement and integrate Intersectional Gender Based Analysis (IGBA) in all PSAC work
- 2. Renew the Local Development Program to be more inclusive and engaging
- 3. Develop an innovative and comprehensive union education program for women
- 4. Implement a Leadership Development Program

5. Create a Mentorship Program
6. Review and implement measures to make the bargaining process more inclusive
7. Examine and evaluate By-laws, Constitution, Policies and Regulations using an IGBA lens
8. Produce a PSAC awareness program
9. Design PSAC campaigns to inspire women identified members to mobilize and build solidarity with community partners and allies
10. Adopt measures to ensure data collection within PSAC is relevant and up-to-date
11. Establish a Women's Network
12. Implement Intersectional Gender-Based Budgeting
13. Enact an annual review of the implementation of Task Force recommendations

Over the years, PSAC has made significant gains in the fight for gender equity. Whether it is pay equity, paid maternity and parental leave, same sex benefits, domestic leave etc.; PSAC has represented its members every step of the way. At a time when women's equality in the workplace, in society and in the union continue to be met with resistance; this Task Force report and its recommendations will help pave the way to a more inclusive and united PSAC.



INTRODUCTION

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) has long been at the forefront in fighting for gender equity, achieving significant ground-breaking advances in: pay equity, the first-ever collective agreement clause providing sexual harassment protection, paid maternity and parental leave, same sex benefits, domestic violence leave and much more. Over the years PSAC has pushed the federal government to make its workplaces more inclusive to ensure our members feel respected and heard.

In 1994, PSAC adopted Policy 34 which provided a reflection on the state of the organization with regards to gender equity representation and inclusion. The policy paper called for:

- Union spaces that are family friendly;
- Increased representation of equity group members at all levels of the union's structure;
- Increased education on violence and harassment for Stewards and Executive Officers;
- Increased accessibility of union education; and
- Building a more inclusive and representative movement

What was clear then and what is clear today is that PSAC still has a long way to go in achieving gender equity. Women and persons from other equity seeking groups continue to be significantly under-represented in the elected leadership of PSAC and its components. This underrepresentation, and the current leaderships' willingness to work towards addressing this gap, was the catalyst to the formation of the Gender Equity Task Force (Task Force).

At the December 2017 meeting of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), the women's working group put forth the following recommendation to the National Board of Directors (NBoD):

We recommend that the NBoD strike a Task Force, immediately following the PSAC 2018 Triennial Convention, to develop proposals to achieve gender parity representation on all leadership bodies, including conventions, and to increase participation throughout the union and in all areas of union activity.

This Task Force should work in consultation and cooperation with the National Women's Working Group's and the National Human Rights Committee. It should look at possible constitutional changes, and changes in union culture and practices.

The Task Force was struck in 2018, following the PSAC National Triennial Convention, to achieve the following objectives:

1. Objectively assess the participation of women in PSAC at all levels of the union, giving special attention to the participation of women from equity-seeking groups;
2. Identify barriers to women's participation in the union, including the particular barriers faced by women from equity-seeking groups;
3. Evaluate the impact of existing PSAC equity initiatives with respect to the participation of women and the inclusion of women from equity-seeking groups;
4. Use the work of the task force to engage PSAC women members in the union;
5. Make recommendations to improve gender equality and women's participation within PSAC.

PSAC National President Chris Aylward appointed the following members to serve on the Task Force:

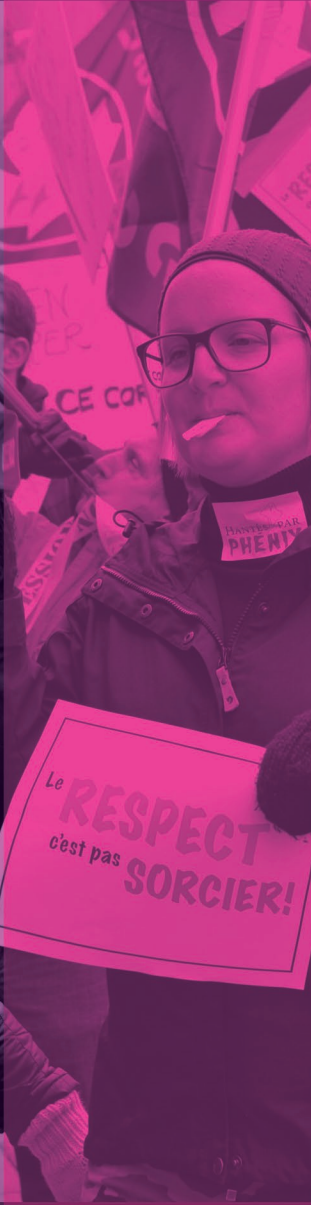
- June Winger, President of Union of National Defence Employees and member of the National Board of Directors
- Missy Taylor, Member of the National Human Rights Committee Women’s Working Group, Ontario
- Sandrine Oka, Member of the National Human Rights Committee Women’s Working Group, National Capital Region
- Angela Decker, Member of the National Human Rights Committee Women’s Working Group, Atlantic

Sharon DeSousa, Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President, was appointed as the Chair of the Task Force.

The Task Force engaged women members from across the country through surveys (see *Appendix A*), telephone townhall meetings, focus groups, and in-person workshops to seek their views on how gender equity could be improved in all areas of PSAC’s work. Additionally, the Task Force carried out research to identify gaps in representation, and to also assess PSAC’s gender equity work. A full description of the methodologies used by the Task Force to carry out its investigations is described in *Appendix B*.

The Task Force took an intersectional approach to its work in recognition that not all women experience gender inequities in the same way or to the same degree. Many women in PSAC experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression; and if PSAC is to meaningfully address gender equity, more needs to be done to understand the barriers to women members’ participation and how these barriers may differ for racialized women, Indigenous women, lesbians, bisexual women, trans women, non-binary people and women with disabilities.





WOMEN IN THE UNION

PSAC was formed in 1966 and is now one of Canada's largest unions, representing more than 200,000 workers in every province and territory in Canada and in locations around the world. Members work for federal government departments and agencies, Crown Corporations, universities, casinos, community services agencies, Indigenous communities, airports, and the security sector among others.

Women members are engaged within PSAC in various ways – as shop stewards, in regional committees, on local, regional and component executives, as convention delegates, and in national leadership bodies. However, a key finding of the Task Force is that women continue to face major barriers to participating in their union and that not enough is being done by PSAC to track the problem, to identify the barriers in their way, and to develop and implement effective ways to reduce and/or remove these barriers. This is particularly the case when it comes to tracking and identifying the barriers in the way of women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

“Our issues may differ vastly, but we have to all fight together.”

(PSAC member)

Poor data collection

The two primary sources for data collection on PSAC membership are UnionWare and the bi-annual Membership Poll. UnionWare does not contain any equity information other than gender. It is impossible therefore to carry out an intersectional analysis of women's union participation. Not only does this impact the way the union does its work, but it further impacts the research conducted for this report because we could not get access to the specific data associated with women who identify as members of other equity seeking groups.

Furthermore, UnionWare only allows two options for gender (male and female) and gender is not a mandatory field in the system. As a result, the gender of 22.63% of current members in UnionWare is 'unknown'.

Moreover, the reliability of UnionWare data varies by region, local and component. Some areas have far more up-to-date information than others. Data on regional committees, Area Councils, and shop stewards is sorely lacking.

What the numbers tell us

Given the problems with data collection, the Task Force made certain deductions about the number of PSAC women members, in part using data collected by Treasury Board in addition to what is available through UnionWare. Our conservative estimate is that women make up at minimum 60% of the membership. The data we have on the gender composition of leadership bodies at all union levels (National, Component, Local, etc.) is consistent. The NBoD serves as steward of PSAC between triennial national conventions. Only six of twenty-four NBoD seats are held by women identified members and there is only one self-identified racialized member and one self-identified Indigenous member (both are women). It is very possible and plausible that we may have similar problems at all other levels of PSAC, but unfortunately, we do not have the appropriate data collection mechanisms at this time.

Women at PSAC conventions

The PSAC National Triennial Convention is a space for members from across the country to come together and address specific issues affecting them. It is an opportunity for members to build solidarity around matters that are not only prevalent in workplaces but also in their communities. Most importantly, the National Triennial Convention is PSAC's highest authority. It decides PSAC's budget and policies through the adoption of resolutions by convention delegates. Although representation of women at the PSAC National Triennial Convention has been on the rise, it is far from being reflective of PSAC's membership; as demonstrated in the table below.

Convention year	Total delegates	Gender (Number of delegates)			Gender (% of delegates)		
		Women	Men	Unidentified	Women	Men	Unidentified
2003	415	154	222	39	37%	53%	9%
2006	441	207	234	n/a	47%	55%	n/a
2009	472	213	259	n/a	45%	55%	n/a
2012	524	237	287	n/a	45%	55%	n/a
2015	502	232	268	2	46%	53%	0%
2018	494	236	258	0	48%	52%	0%



Measures to encourage and facilitate women's participation

The PSAC National Women's Conference is held every three years. The conference brings together PSAC women from across the country to, among other things, discuss and adopt resolutions on issues and policies related to the advancement and empowerment of women. These resolutions reflect the direction and action that women want PSAC to take to further the status of women in the union, at the workplace and in society. The conference is also an opportunity for PSAC women to share with and learn from each other, to create networks and to feel empowered through workshops and speakers. Delegates to the conference also elect two women to attend the PSAC National Triennial Convention.



The PSAC National Equity Conference (NEC) was first established in 2013 where the National Women's Conference and the four other national equity conferences were held together as a combined event. It is a space for members of all equity seeking groups to come together and speak about emerging issues in their communities. It is also a space to network, learn through workshops and to discuss the work of PSAC on equity issues. In 2019, after some consultation, the AEC decided that the National Women's Conference would once again be a stand-alone national conference in recognition of other intersecting identities of women and that women make up more than half of the union membership. The NEC continues to bring together members who are living with a disability, LGBTQ2+, racially visible, and Indigenous; every three years.



Regional Women's Conferences are held once every three years. Each region organizes a Regional Women's Conference in which Regional Women's Committees play a crucial role. These conferences have traditionally served as introductory union events to newer women activists and are focused on increasing education around women's issues in the union, but to also receive input on work carried out by the Women's Program. They are also able to submit resolutions to the National Women's Conference.





Regional Women’s Committees were established in the mid-1980s to specifically address issues that women PSAC members face within and outside their workplace. These Constitutionally recognized committees receive annual funding and provide important forums to strategize for positive change in smaller group settings. Furthermore, it is through these committees that resolutions are brought to the PSAC National Women’s Conference. There are currently thirty-seven active Regional Women’s Committees and they are each entitled to send one delegate to the National Women’s Conference.

Bargaining Conferences are also an avenue through which members can provide input and feedback on bargaining priorities and develop initial mobilization strategies. PSAC regulations 15A, 15B and 15C include provisions to address the representation of equity groups at bargaining conferences and bargaining teams, by appointing additional members/delegates based on the identified gaps. Prior to Bargaining Conferences, a call out is issued to equity seeking groups to ensure that there is representation.

PSAC also has policies to facilitate women’s participation in the union (Family Care and Harassment being the main ones). Additionally, the PSAC offers several courses for women and equity seeking groups: ‘Women in the Union’ is offered at least once a cycle in some regions and in 2018 PSAC piloted both Domestic Violence Training and Indigenous Women’s Leadership.

WHAT WE HEARD

The Task Force's consultations with women members confirmed the prevalence of deep systemic problems that prevent women from participating within the union.

PSAC is confusing and uninviting

Women members often discussed the confusing structure of PSAC and not understanding what the various bodies are responsible for. This view was expressed by seasoned activists, newly active members and members who do not participate in union activities. They said that without understanding the structure, it is difficult to know how to get involved. Many said they received no orientation to PSAC upon becoming a member, and no invitation to get involved in the union.

Experience at the local level is paramount

Throughout the consultation process it was evident that how women regard their union, and whether they choose to get more involved, is highly dependent on their experiences at the local level because the first point of contact with the union is their local. Regardless of their level of participation, women said that their perceptions of PSAC (good or bad) rested on the level of activity and visibility of their local, the gender equity representation of their local executive, and the practices (or culture) of their local.

Many women members expressed their dissatisfaction with their local executive because it was not present enough in the workplace. Some said their local was run like an old-boys club. An overwhelmingly large proportion of women members felt uncomfortable about getting more involved because their local executive is male dominated. They said that male dominated local executives are not as welcoming to women's issues because they do not understand them, or even attempt to understand. A number of women said they experienced overt sexism and racism in their local. They said that local executives were too often confrontational and aggressive in their approach. They said such an environment makes it difficult for women who do get involved: they are made to feel small and are intimidated from speaking up.

"I found that a lot of problems start at the local level with communication."

(PSAC member)

“My local is very much a boys club.”

(PSAC member)

“The last update on women’s issues on my Component website was from 2014.”

(PSAC member)

Union culture a barrier

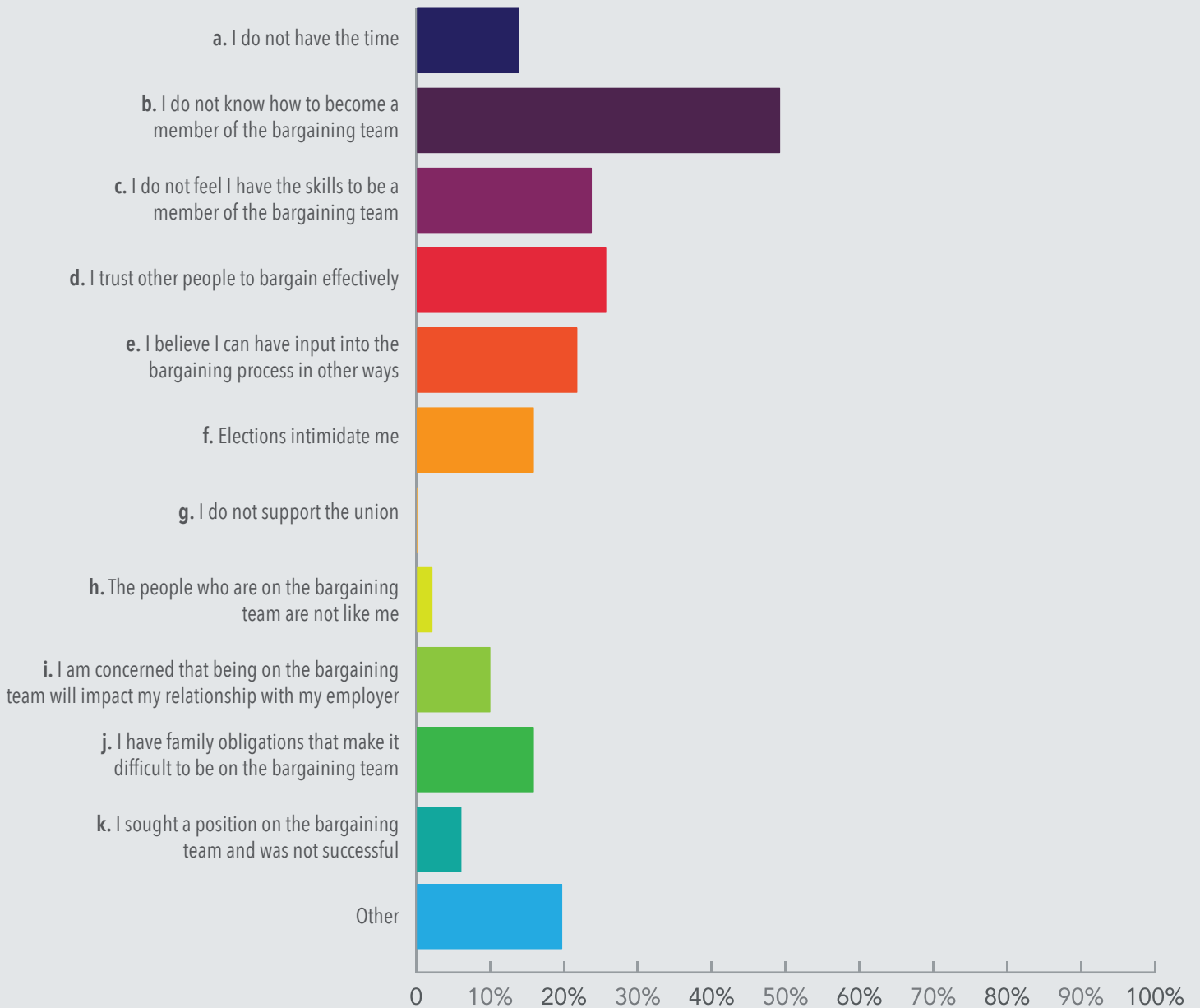
Among active women members, there is a reluctance to further their involvement in the union because of the union culture, which many identified as being patriarchal. Many said they believe that men are more likely to be union stewards because they are viewed as being more capable of negotiating with the employer, or more stern and stubborn in their arguments. It was said in the consultations that to take on a union position requires one to be adversarial. One woman said that doing a “good job” is that much harder for women because women have to “go the extra mile” to show that they can do just as good of a job as a man.

Women want to get more involved in collective bargaining but can’t

PSAC’s collective bargaining work and collective agreements were raised frequently during the consultations. Many women members said they wanted to get more involved in the bargaining process and learn more about it. However, they said they didn’t understand how to get involved in the process and did not believe they have the skills to be a member of a bargaining team.

Some members spoke about their initial interest in participating in bargaining, which led them to a bargaining conference, but felt that the environment was not welcoming. Additionally, they spoke of their impression that it seemed as though ‘back room deals’ had already been made regarding who would be selected to attend the bargaining conference or get elected to the bargaining team. This experience turned them away and changed their mind about getting involved.

**If you have never been a member of the bargaining team, why not?
(Please select all that apply)**



(Source: PSAC Gender Equity Task Force Online Survey)

“Women do a lot of work that is invisible and not credited.”

(PSAC member)

Fear of Reprisal from Employer

Fear of reprisal from their employer was named again and again as a barrier to union participation. Some cited specific instances of repercussions; others recounted remarks made by managers, or conversations overheard; almost all who participated in the consultations said there is a prevailing view that participating in union activities is a career-limiting move. Many members said they feared getting heavily involved in the union because it would mean having to stand up to management on behalf of a union member and therefore make career progression within the department and/or agency unlikely.

Family Care Obligations

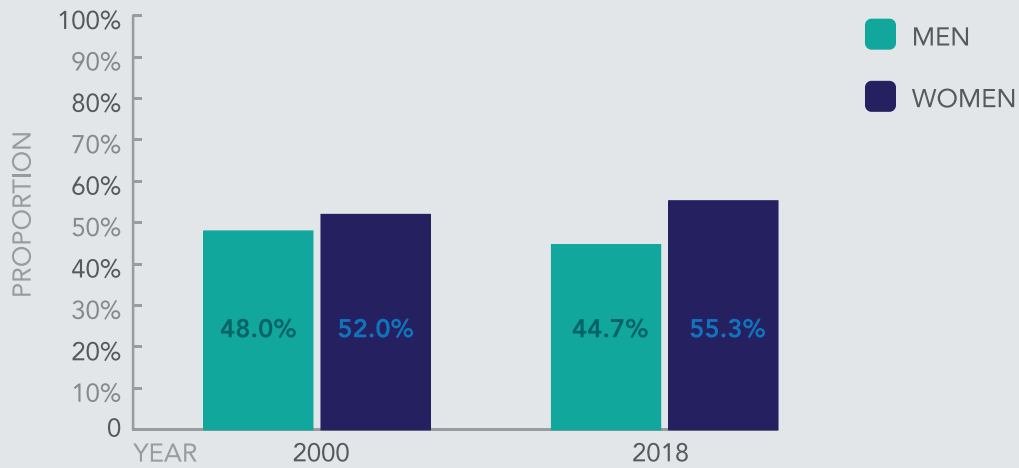
Women members overwhelmingly expressed that child care and family care obligations made it impossible for them to get more involved in their union. Women with babies and/or young children are often needed at home. This creates a barrier for women to get involved and network within the union. Without these opportunities to network and fully immerse themselves in union work, women will often feel as though they do not have the necessary experience, knowledge or even support to run for leadership positions.

“I was bullied out of being an executive.”

(PSAC member)

Many women members also felt that there is an “all or nothing” approach to union involvement and were concerned that if they got more involved it would affect their family obligations, which they view as their primary responsibility.

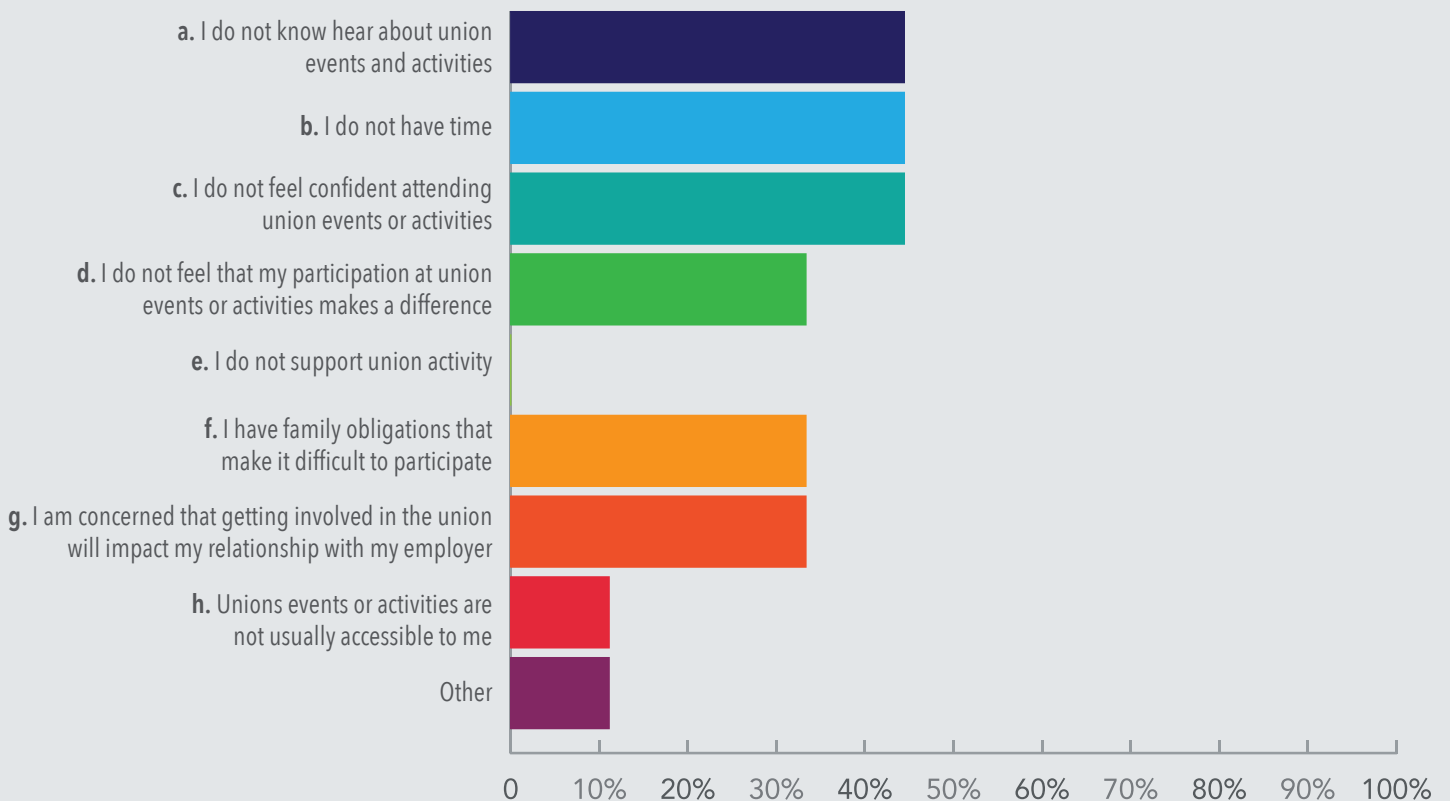
Some members also shared stories of women they know who were elected to positions but ended up facing burn-out. There is a fear that getting more involved could mean that they will take on more than they can handle, which will negatively impact their paid work.



(Source: Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.)

The above graphic from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat demonstrates that women’s participation in the federal public service work force has been on the rise. However, in response to our online survey (below) approximately 33% of respondents said that family care/child care obligations often prevented them from participating in union organized events or activities. Many women consulted at regional women’s conferences, shared that they often waited until their children were older to get more involved within the union.

**If you have not participated in union organized events or activities, why not?
(please select all that apply)**



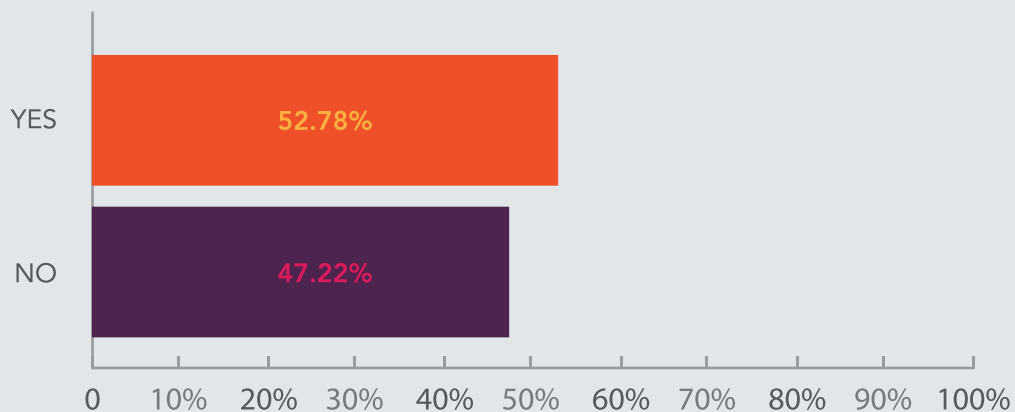
(Source: PSAC Gender Equity Task Force Online Survey)

Women want to get involved but lack confidence

Many who participated in the consultations said they were not confident enough to be effective union leaders because they have little knowledge of how to represent their fellow union members, or how to interpret collective agreements. They said they do not feel they are equipped or best placed to take on leadership positions.

Although there is a lack of confidence, there still is a desire to get more involved in the union. Over 50% of the respondents to the online survey indicated that they would like to get more involved in the union.

If you are or have been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council, do you want to seek a more senior position within the union than the one you had or have now?



(Source: PSAC Gender Equity Task Force Online Survey)

Additionally, many women in focus group sessions spoke to their appreciation of PSAC's efforts to advocate and campaign for gender equality. They felt these efforts gave them a connection to PSAC and made the work the union does more relatable. Some were quick to mention PSAC's work around Child Care and Pay Equity.

“Not only are we doing our union work, we go home and take care of our families. It leads us to burn out.”

(PSAC member)

“Being told ‘that’s not going to give you what you want’ is dismissive. Language can be dismissive.”

(PSAC member)

Accessibility of union meetings

Many women members felt that union meetings are often inaccessible. ‘Accessibility’ takes on various meanings in the context of women’s involvement in the union. It speaks to the times at which meetings are held, the locations and the structure and/or format of meetings.

Meeting Times:

Meetings in the evening make it difficult for women with children to attend and actively participate. Furthermore, some PSAC members work shift-work hours and therefore attending evening meetings is unattainable for them.

Meeting locations:

The geographical location of meetings is often a hinderance to participation because many members live in remote areas. Therefore, commuting long distances after work hours would negatively impact their performance in the workplace. Women members who took part in the Gender Equity Task Force Townhall sessions made it clear that living in remote locations was their primary reason for not being able to fully participate in the union.

Structure/Format of meetings:

Members expressed their reluctance to get involved because they feel the format of meetings with ‘Rules of Order’ makes participation within union structures daunting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the conclusion of the research and consultation phases of its work, the Task Force reviewed and analyzed the data collected and identified a series of measures PSAC could take to advance gender equity. These recommendations are:

1. Implement and integrate Intersectional Gender Based Analysis (IGBA) to everything PSAC does

Gender Based Analysis (GBA) evaluates the differential impacts of policies, programs and budgets on women and men to identify and correct equity gaps. Many organizations use GBA to advance gender equity (see *Appendix C to learn more about GBA*). This approach often leads to greater equality but not necessarily greater gender equity. This is because GBA does not recognize intersecting identities. Equality treats everyone the same. Whereas equity gives everyone what they need to be successful. Equality aims to promote fairness, but equity moves everyone closer to success by ‘leveling the playing field’ and recognizing that not everyone has the same starting point. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that **Intersectional Gender Based Analysis (IGBA) be adopted by PSAC in the development and implementation of union planning, education, campaigns, policies, programs, and all other areas of activity.**

IGBA would require, among other things, that paramount consideration be given to intersectional gender equity in decision-making, and that activities and programs be regularly evaluated from an intersectional gender equity perspective.

The Task Force has made this a first recommendation because it was evident through the investigation that particular

attention must be paid to intersectional gender equity. While PSAC repeatedly states a strong commitment to equity, there is nothing in place to ensure that progress (or lack of progress) is properly monitored, and/or that measures are developed and put in place to address inequities.

In order to implement this recommendation, the Task Force further recommends:

- IGBA training for all elected leaders
- IGBA training for all departments of PSAC
- A review and overhaul of current data collection methods to ensure that equity gaps can be appropriately and accurately identified.

2. Local Development Program

Cross country consultations with women members indicate that Locals are the first point of contact for members. The effectiveness of Locals is dependent on capacity, resources and ensuring Local executives have undergone appropriate training to not only meet the needs of PSAC members but to also engage and empower them. Local executives, especially those on which women are under-represented, must have training to ensure that women and gender-diverse members feel represented, are heard and encouraged to come forward with issues that affect them.

PSAC currently has a budget line item for a Local Development Program, however these funds are used to address “crisis” situations when what is needed is a comprehensive program to give all locals and opportunity to function at full capacity—whether or not they are in crisis. **A renewed Local Development Program would be designed, among other things, to provide locals with the skills and resources to ensure they are more inclusive and engage with members in a meaningful way.** The new Local Development program would also implement a mandatory training session on ‘Difficult Conversations’ and ‘Anti-Oppression’ for Local Executives.

3. Education and training programs for women, by women

PSAC’s complicated structure impedes the active participation of women members. There is a perception that involvement within the union can only happen with robust understanding and/or knowledge of the PSAC structures and the way they interact with each other. Furthermore, consultations indicate that those who are not actively participating are most often not doing so because they do not feel they have the necessary confidence to do a good enough job. Courses and/or training must be made available to PSAC members to help boost their knowledge of the union.

The Task Force recommends that PSAC develop an innovative and comprehensive union education program for women. The program would consist of three levels of education, from union basics to advanced union education. Establishing a three-step education process would ensure that

courses are built upon one another and that activists are more in tune with furthering their education. This program would provide a safe space for women members that wish to get more involved with an avenue to connect, build solidarity along with skills, and develop strategies for advancing gender equity. The program would include but not be limited to education topics such as:

- History of the Canadian labour movement, and how it works today
- PSAC’s victories for women members
- Talking Union Basics
- How to be an effective union leader
- Understanding budgets
- Writing resolutions
- Rules of Order
- The Bargaining Process
- Having difficult conversations
- Self-care 101
- Anti-Oppression training
- What is Intersectional Feminism?
- Interpreting Your Collective Agreement
- Mobilizing and Empowering Members
- Understanding Your Constitution
- You vs The Employer (understanding your rights)
- Strike Process

The program's education modules would be developed nationally and delivered in a variety of different ways, and cost-effectively. For example, some content could be delivered online, some as part of the regional education programs, some at conferences, some through locally-organized sessions, or sessions organized by regional women's committees.

4. Leadership Development

There is often a perception that those who are in leadership positions have the full knowledge and confidence to do their job adequately. Furthermore, many women expressed that they would be more inclined to run for a leadership position if they knew that there was ongoing support made available to them.

The Task Force recommends a two-tier Leadership Development Program.

One for those seeking leadership positions and the other for members who hold elected leadership positions. Although some of these topics may be similar to that of the training and education program listed above, these will be more advanced courses.

a) Leadership Development Program for those aspiring to be Leaders

- Effective Public Speaking
- Budgets 101
- Lobbying 101
- Campaigning strategically
- Strike Process
- Grievance Handling
- IGBA training
- Anti-Oppression
- Self-Care 101

b) Leadership Development Program for Elected Leaders

- Facing Management
- Budgets
- Leading a meeting and/or conference effectively (including Rules of Order)
- Advanced Lobbying techniques
- Negotiations Training
- IGBA Training
- Leading Strategically
- Leading with Empathy
- Anti-Oppression
- Self-Care 101

The leadership program would take an intersectional approach to curriculum, programs design, and the selection of participants.

5. Mentorship Program

Consultations with women members across the country, overwhelmingly indicate a need for a program that would provide ongoing support, guidance and mentorship for women who wish to assume leadership positions or who already hold such positions. Therefore, **the Task Force recommends the NBoD create a Women's Mentorship Program** that would connect women members seeking skills or knowledge to further their union activism with women who have those skills and knowledge.

6. Women and Bargaining

Regulation 15A, 15B and 15C set out the process for selecting delegates to bargaining conferences and the election (and selection) of the bargaining teams. While PSAC has put in place measures to ensure equity representation on bargaining teams, there is still more that needs to be done to connect women members (and other members) with the bargaining process. **The Task force recommends the following:**

- Preparing and distributing membership materials explaining the bargaining process and encouraging all the ways to get involved
- Collaboration between the Collective Bargaining and Programs section to ensure that Intersectional Gender Based Analysis (IGBA) is applied to the development of bargaining proposals.
- A review of the equity measures outlined in Regulation 15 and their application to determine whether they require amendments.
- A review of collective bargaining proposals over the last 10 years to better conceptualize equity issues that have come to the table over the years.
- Encourage the participation of all women PSAC members at Bargaining Conferences rather than limiting it to only Regional Women's Committees.

7. By-laws, Constitution, Policies and Regulations

The Task Force recommends that PSAC National, DCLs, Components, and Locals undergo a **review of their, By-laws, Constitution, Policies and Regulations using an IGBA lens.**

8. Awareness

PSAC can do more to build a connection with and to women members. The Task Force recommends the development of a comprehensive awareness program that would include the following components:

- PSAC Orientation Package – Provided by Locals to PSAC members, this package would explain the structure of the PSAC and provide information on current campaigns, courses and programs available for members. The package would also include Component or DCL specific information including ways to get involved at the Local level.
- Information for women by women specifically highlighting the successes they've had being union activists (for example, with respect to personal and profession growth as a result of union involvement).
- A one-page explanation of what PSAC has put in place to respond to and advance the particular issues facing women members (eg. regional women's committee, women's conferences, Women's Working Group of the National Human Rights Committee, policies, etc.)

9. Campaigns

PSAC has continued to fight for gender equity and the advancement for women's rights through campaigns and organizing for years. **The Task Force recommends that gender equity campaigns such as:**

- Pay equity,
- Domestic violence leave
- Building Trans-Inclusive Workplaces; and
- Child Care

continue as a way of engaging women in our union.

Furthermore, the Task Force recommends that gender equity campaigns be designed deliberately to engage members, to help build a more inclusive and participatory culture, and to serve as opportunities to develop and shine the light on women's union leadership. During consultations, women indicated that campaigns on gender equality often encouraged them to get more involved in the union. Therefore, we need more campaigns that inspire our women members to mobilize and take action and to build solidarity and connection with community partners and allies.

10. Data Collection

There are multiple problems with data collection in PSAC. UnionWare data is not always up-to-date, and there are important information gaps related to gender-identity among other identities. The Membership Poll is not necessarily the best tool to get accurate demographic information because non-active members are under-represented in survey samples. Furthermore, the current methods used in data collection are so

convoluted that by the time the data has been inputted; the information may no longer be relevant.

The Task Force recommends:

- A PSAC membership wide optional self-identification survey distributed by Components and Locals to help alleviate some of the data gaps that currently exist.
- The National Board of Directors agree on a strategy to ensure that Union Ware data is accurate and up-to-date.

11. Create a Women's Network

Although PSAC's regions have active women's committees and there are national and regional women's conferences, many women members feel that these venues are inaccessible. Meeting times and locations are often difficult to access due to working hours and/or living in remote locations which in turn impedes on their ability to meet their family care obligations. Furthermore, participants in consultations indicated that the ways in which rules of order are used and the general organization and structure of meetings and conferences are often intimidating and exclusionary. Lastly, although the National Women's Conference establishes a specific criterion to select delegates, Regional Women's Conferences have autonomy around the way delegate selection is done and as a result, some women may not get selected to attend these conferences. There is a desire and need for a less formal structure that doesn't limit the number of women PSAC members and will also allow women living in central and remote locations to connect.

Therefore, **the Task Force recommends establishing a PSAC Women’s Network.**

This would be an open (primarily) on-line forum dedicated to connecting all PSAC members who identify as women. The Women’s Network’s on-line organization would be supported by PSAC’s Program Section. Members of the network could also choose to hold their own in-person meetings or education sessions in communities not served by regional women’s committees. However, such meetings or sessions would be self-organized. This Women’s Network would be a grassroots, self-organized forum without the concern of adhering to any specific formal meeting format.

12. Implement Intersectional Gender-Based Budgeting

PSAC’s budget is the most comprehensive statement of the unions’ priorities and goals. Gender-Based budgeting takes into consideration the potentially differing impacts of policies and processes on women and men. The process involved in Gender-Based budgeting is not uniform and varies based on the needs of an organization. This budgeting process is often looked to as a method of potentially correcting structural biases and impediments. It does not seek to create a separate budget for women or solely increase spending on women’s programs, but rather ensure that the collection and allocation of membership dues is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equity and women’s empowerment.

The Gender-Based Budgeting process for PSAC would go one step further and ensure that intersectionality is at the forefront, because systemic barriers can

differ for racialized women, Indigenous women, lesbians, bisexual women, trans women, non-binary people and women with disabilities. Thus, **the Task Force recommends the implementation of Intersectional Gender-Based Budgeting.**

13. Evaluation

The Task Force recommends the NBoD enact an annual review of the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the National Board of Directors. Such a cyclical review would allow Components, Locals, DCLs as well as PSAC National and Regional departments to monitor and evaluate their progress in meeting the recommendations produced by the Task Force. This review process would also help identify any gaps that exist and/or persist and seek methods to bridge those gaps.

These recommendations will be instrumental in the advancement of gender equity for all women and cannot be done without the cohesive work of all structures at PSAC. This review would allow PSAC to measure progress and to ensure that the work of the Task Force lives on into the future, to address the needs identified by the thousands of women who participated in the consultation process.

CONCLUSIONS

The Task Force led important conversations around gender equity, while also recognizing the intersectional identities of our membership. Women are the largest demographic of members within PSAC and yet, they continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions. The recommendations provided in this report are the result of rigorous research done using a vast array of research methods over several months.

Improving gender equity within PSAC requires a multi-faceted approach, which will only be attained through action. We must recognize and accept that the union culture and systems in place are patriarchal and much of the negative perceptions expressed by women members are as a result of this culture. Improving gender equality requires a concerted effort and commitment by all structures of the PSAC to bring about the systemic change required in dismantling the patriarchal values that have been so deeply ingrained for years.

Research conducted by the Task Force clearly demonstrates that tackling the systemic issues identified by women members of PSAC, would not only shift the way we organize within the union; but also change the face of elected leadership bodies to better reflect the needs and interests of PSAC's membership.

Appendix A

GENDER EQUITY TASKFORCE SURVEY

*This survey will aid the work of the Gender Equity Task Force.
All responses are anonymous. Responding to any question is voluntary.*

The Gender Equity Task Force’s objectives are:

- a. Objectively assess the participation of women in PSAC at all levels of the union, giving special attention to the participation of women from equity-seeking groups
- b. Identify barriers to women’s participation in the union, including the particular barriers faced by women from equity-seeking groups
- c. Evaluate the impact of existing PSAC equity initiatives with respect to the participation of women and the inclusion of women from equity-seeking groups
- d. Use the work of the task force to engage PSAC women members in the union
- e. Make recommendations to improve gender equality and women’s participation within PSAC

UNION PARTICIPATION

1. Have you ever participated in any union organized events or activities?

Please select one:

a. Yes

b. No

2. If you have not participated in union organized events or activities, why not? (Please select all that apply)

- a. I do not hear about union events and activities
- b. I do not have the time
- c. I do not feel confident attending union events or activities
- d. I do not feel that my participation at union events or activities makes a difference
- e. I do not support union activity
- f. I have family obligations that make it difficult to participate
- g. I am concerned that getting involved in the union will impact my relationship with my employer
- h. Unions events or activities are not usually accessible to me *(please explain):*

- i. Other *(please specify):*

3. If you have not participated in union organized events or activities, what would make you more likely to participate?

- a. Receiving more information about the event or activity
- b. Being asked by a co-worker to participate
- c. Being asked by a shop steward to participate
- d. Having the event or activity during working hours
- e. Having the event or activity outside of working hours
- f. Having child care available at the event or during the activity
- g. If the events or activities were more accessible to me
- h. Other *(please specify):*

4. Do you currently, or have you in the past, been involved in any of the following union committees? *(Please select all that apply):*

- a. Health and Safety Committee
- b. Education Committee
- c. Women’s Committee
- d. Human Rights or Equity Committee
- e. Young Workers’ Committee
- f. I have never been involved in a union committee

5. If you have been involved in a union committee, what first motivated you to get involved? *(Please select all that apply):*

- a. A co-worker invited me to join
- b. There was a particular issue I wanted to work on
- c. I wanted to support the work of the union
- d. I wanted to meet people
- e. I was dissatisfied with the committee’s direction and wanted to make changes
- f. I felt that the experience would be valuable for my work or career
- g. Other *(please specify):*

Of those you selected above, what was primary motivator (most important reason) for you to get involved in a committee?

6. Have you ever been on a member of a bargaining team for your union?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. If you have never been a member of the bargaining team, why not?

(Please select all that apply)

- a. I do not have the time
- b. I do not know how to become a member of the bargaining team
- c. I do not feel I have the skills to be a member of the bargaining team
- d. I trust other people to bargain effectively
- e. I believe I can have input into the bargaining process in other ways
- f. Elections intimidate me
- g. I do not support the union
- h. The people who are on the bargaining team are not like me
- i. I am concerned that being on the bargaining team will impact my relationship with my employer
- j. I have family obligations that make it difficult to be on the bargaining team
- k. I sought a position on the bargaining team and was not successful
- l. Other *(please specify)*:

LEADERSHIP

8. Do you currently, or have you in the past, been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council? (NB: This could be a position held at the local, regional, or national level.)
- a. Yes, I am **currently** a steward/serve on a union executive or council
 - b. Yes, I **was** a steward/served on a union executive or council in the past, but do not now
 - c. No, I have **never** been a steward/served on any union executive or council
9. If you are or have been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council, do you want to seek a more senior position within the union than the one you had or have now?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 10.1 If you have never been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council, why not? (Please select all that apply)
- a. I do not have the time
 - b. I do not know how to become a shop steward or member of council or executive
 - c. I do not feel I have the skills to be a shop steward or member of council or executive
 - d. Elections intimidate me
 - e. I do not support the union
 - f. The people who hold those positions are not like me
 - g. I am concerned that a shop steward or a member of council or executive will impact my relationship with my employer
 - h. I have family obligations that make it difficult to be a shop steward or member of council or executive
 - i. I sought a position as a shop steward or member of council or executive and was not successful
 - j. Other (please specify):

10.2 Of those you selected above, what is the primary reason (most important reason) that you have never been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council?

10.3 If you have never been a shop steward or served on your union executive or council, what could motivate you to seek a position?

(Please select all that apply)

- a. If another steward or member of executive or council encouraged me
- b. If I did not have to run in an election
- c. If I had more information about the position
- d. Other *(please specify)*:

- e. I do not want to be a shop steward or serve on my union executive or council

UNION EDUCATION

11. Have you ever participated in a workshop or training put on by your union?

- a. Yes
- b. No, but I would like to
- c. No and I do not want to attend union workshops or trainings

12. Please list which, if any, union workshops or trainings you have attended in the last 5 years:

13. Are there workshop or training topics you would like to see the union offer? If so, what are they?

HARASSMENT

Harassment is normally a series of incidents, but it can be one severe incident that has a lasting impact on the individual.

Harassment is any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another individual in the workplace, including at any event or any location related to work, and that the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises objectionable act(s), comment(s) or display(s) that demean, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. It also includes harassment within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act (i.e., based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics (including a requirement to undergo a genetic test, or disclose the results of a genetic test), disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered).

14. Having carefully read the definition of harassment, have you experienced harassment at a union event or activity?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

15. If you have experienced harassment at a union event, from whom did you experience harassment? (Mark all that apply.)

- a. Other members in my union or component
- b. Elected representatives
- c. Other

16. Please indicate the nature of the harassment you experienced. (Mark all that apply).

- a. Aggressive behaviour
- b. Excessive control
- c. Being excluded or being ignored
- d. Humiliation
- e. Interference with work / withholding resources
- f. Offensive remark
- g. Personal attack
- h. Physical violence
- i. Sexual comment / gesture
- j. Threat
- k. Unfair treatment
- l. Yelling or shouting
- m. Other

UNION CULTURE

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

17. My union is inclusive of people like me

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

18. My union makes an effort to be inclusive of racially visible people

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

19. My union makes an effort to be inclusive of LGBTQ2+ people

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

20. My union makes an effort to be inclusive of indigenous (Inuit, Metis, First Nations) people

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

21. My union makes an effort to be inclusive of women

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

22. My union makes an effort to be inclusive of people with disabilities

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

23. My union values gender equality

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

24. My union values human rights

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

25. I am aware of policies and initiatives that my union has in place that make it easier for women to participate in the union

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

26.1 For the most part, leaders in my union take harassment concerns seriously

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

26.2 Is there anything you would like to add about harassment in the union?

27. Leaders in my union should be doing more to achieve gender equality within the union

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

28. Leaders in my union should be doing more to advance human rights within the union

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

29. Is there anything you would like to add about inclusion in the union?

DEMOGRAPHICS

30. What is your gender:

- a. Woman
- b. Man
- c. Non-binary
- d. Other: _____
- e. Prefer not to say

31. How old are you?

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-34
- c. 35-44
- d. 45-54
- e. 55-64
- f. 65 or older

32. Do you identify as...?

(please select all that apply):

- a. A person with a disability
- b. Indigenous
(Inuit, Metis, First Nations)
- c. Racialized
- d. Lesbian, gay, bisexual,
queer and/or two-spirit
- e. Trans
- f. Prefer not to say
- g. None of the above

33. What is your current marital status? *Please select one:*

- a. Married
- b. Divorced / Separated
- c. Common-law
- d. Single, never married
- e. Widowed

34. How many dependent children are living with you?

- a. None
- b. One
- c. Two
- d. Three or more

Appendix B

Methodology

The Task Force set out to engage as many women identified PSAC members as possible to better understand their perspective on representation and equity within PSAC, as well as barriers women face in participating within the union. Members were also asked about ways in which improvements could be made to increase participation of women members of all equity seeking groups within the union.

In understanding that engagement within the union happens in a variety of ways, and that perspectives can differ due to this; the Task Force ensured that consultations were executed with PSAC members involved in the union through varying degrees of participation. As well as members who are not active within the union structures.

The phases of research carried out by the Task Force can be broken down in the following ways:

Phase 1: Preliminary Research

Preliminary research included an initial scan of gender equity representation amongst leadership bodies (NBoD, Components, Locals, Area Council, etc.), as well as responses to the membership survey. Additional research was done with the assistance of the UnionWare team to understand the equity data that is currently available and where there are gaps that need to be filled.

Phase 2: Consultations

Consultations with members took on various forms, including: Gender Equity Task Force forums at regional women's conferences, focus group sessions, town halls and online surveys. A wide array of consultative measures was used to ensure that data collected was from women PSAC members with varying degrees of participation level and experience with the union.

Phase 3: Internal Research

Internal research included interviews and consultations with internal departments of PSAC (i.e. bargaining, membership, etc.) to understand their work in facilitating gender equity representation in PSAC. As well as, additional systems and/or measures that have been put in place to harness equity throughout our work. Internal scans and research were conducted to analyze the PSAC Constitution, Policies and Regulations. By-laws of all Components were also analyzed to understand any initiatives they have undertaken to improve gender equity representation.

Phase 4: Analysis and Recommendations

The research conducted by the Task Force provides an opportunity to fill the gaps that exist, gain insights and understanding, and develop solutions for gender equity within PSAC. Analysis of all data gathered was conducted by the Task Force over several days and recommendations included in this report reflect the Task Force's determinants of ways in which these gaps can be addressed.

Consultations:

Regional Women's Conferences

Consultations began with in-person Task Force Forums that were held at regional women's conferences across the country (Quebec, National Capital Region, British Columbia, Ontario, Prairies and the Atlantic). Participants at these forums were women identified members ranging from first-time conference attendees to seasoned conference attendees; which provided space for a broad range of views, experiences and input.

The forums utilized a mixed method which allowed for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data sets. This method not only assisted in identifying patterns, but also provided the space to gain in-depth understanding into specific concepts and/or phenomena that arose from the sample of participants present. The forums were designed as a workshop led by the PSAC Women's and Human Rights Program Officer, and required the involvement of all attendees to garner discussion as well as conceptualize the information being shared. Workshop activities included a 'bus stop' exercise, a spectrum exercise and group discussions.

Once the forum was complete, participants were asked to fill out the Gender Equity Task Force Survey. The survey consists of a mix of multiple choice, rating scale and fill in the blank questions. Upon completion of the survey, participants returned the survey to the Women's and Human Rights Program Officer. The survey was anonymized.

Gender Equity Task Force Telephone Town Halls

In order to gather data from women who may not have been able to participate in the regional women's conferences, PSAC held telephone town hall sessions. The Task Force enlisted Stratcom to host a series of telephone town hall sessions with women identified members in the Atlantic, Quebec, National Capital Region, Ontario, the North, the Prairies and British Columbia.

The following was the schedule for the telephone town hall sessions:

November 12th:

The North – 4:30 pm MT (6:30 pm ET)

Prairies – 7:00pm CT in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; 6:00pm MT in Alberta (8:00 pm ET)

British Columbia – 6:30 pm PT (9:30 pm ET)

November 13th:

English Atlantic Canada – 6:00 pm AT 5:00 pm ET)

English NCR – 6:30 pm ET

English ON – 8:00 pm ET

November 20th:

French Atlantic Canada – 6:00 pm AT (5:00 pm ET)

French NCR – 6:30 pm ET

French Québec – 8:00 pm ET

Peak attendance statistics gathered by Stratcom demonstrate that the town halls engaged 1,614 callers. Participants on these sessions were a mix of active and non-active women identified members. Members were given the opportunity to learn more about the work of the Task Force, as well as its objectives. Elected officials, Magali Picard (Nation Executive Vice-President) and Sharon DeSousa (Regional Executive Vice President – Ontario) led the discussions with callers by posing the following two questions:

- 1. What issues do you feel the Task Force should pay particular attention to when addressing gender equity?**
- 2. What do you think gender equity would look like when achieved at PSAC?**

These questions garnered much discussion on the line and was intermittently joined by the following poll questions that participants responded to via their telephone keypad:

- 1. What would make it easier for you to get involved in the union?**
 - a. Getting more frequent information about upcoming activities and events
 - b. Being asked by a co-worker to get involved
 - c. Having flexible meeting times
 - d. All of these
 - e. None of these

2. What, if anything is keeping you from being more involved in your union?

- a. Child care or family care obligations
- b. Lack of knowledge or training
- c. Fear of reprisal from management
- d. All or a combination of the above
- e. None of the above

Throughout the telephone town hall session, participants were encouraged to partake in the online Gender Equity Task Force Survey that was made available on PSAC's website. This survey was the same as the one which was filled out by participants at regional women's conferences. Members were able to fill out the survey by logging into their member portal and self-identifying. This ensured the data was secure and reflective of women identified members of PSAC.

Gender Equity Task Force Focus Groups

The Task Force enlisted Environics Research to host focus group sessions to specifically reach out to PSAC women identified members who do not consider themselves to be active members within the union.

The specific objectives of the focus groups was to explore:

- Perceptions of PSAC in terms of awareness of its functions and assessment of its performance;
- Levels of activity and engagement in PSAC;
- The extent to which women members feel represented and reflected by PSAC;
- Barriers to participation in PSAC; and
- Measures PSAC could take to make women members feel more represented.

A series of five in-person focus groups were conducted in November 2019 in the following locations:

- Toronto (November 6) English
- Vancouver (November 8) English
- Montreal (November 18) French
- National Capital Region (Two groups: November 19) One English and one French

Ten women were invited to each session and were randomly recruited from lists of PSAC members in each city. Since the purpose of these focus groups was to explore the opinion of 'non-active' women members of PSAC, those who were past or present stewards or council members or who self-identified as 'active' were not invited to participate. The participants represented a wide range of occupations and were from a variety of PSAC components or directly chartered locals. Women who were members of other equity seeking groups (e.g. racialized, Indigenous, living with a disability or LBTO2+) were encouraged to participate. Each focus group was scheduled for two hours.

Gender Equity Task Force Survey

The Gender Equity Task Force Survey was created to gather quantitative data. The Task Force recognized the need for quantitative data in order to understand patterns and gaps that may exist, which can only be identified through the analysis of data sets.

Questions for the survey were drafted in consultations with Task Force members to ensure there was a mixture of broad and pointed questions. The questions were created in a variety of formats: multiple choice, ranking, fill in the blank and exploratory. The survey garnered responses in-person at regional women's conferences and online through the PSAC membership portal.

The data gathered through the survey at regional women's conferences and that which was gathered through the online survey were analyzed distinctly; in recognition that involvement and knowledge of the union would vary greatly between participants of both surveys even though the questions remained the same.

Appendix C

What is GBA/GBA+?

The *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*¹ was introduced in 1995 as a result of the 1995 Beijing Conference in which the international community formally acknowledged and recognized Gender Mainstreaming (GM) as the most effective strategy for gender equality in policies and programs.

In 2004, Status of Women Canada (SWC) published a report – *An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Analysis*² – in which GBA is described as “a tool to assist in systemically integrating gender considerations into the policy, planning and decision-making processes. It corresponds to a broader understanding of gender equality using various competencies and skills to involve both women and men in building society and preparing for the future”.

GBA was later adapted to include a ‘+’, hence GBA+: to highlight that this analysis goes beyond gender and includes the examination of a range of other intersecting identity factors (such as age, sexual orientation, disability, education, language, geography, culture and income). Critics of GBA+ feel that all other identities were included as an afterthought and that intersecting identities should be at the forefront in all work related to policy, planning and decision-making processes.

¹ SWC, (1995), *Setting the stage for the next century: The Federal plan for gender equality*. Ottawa: Status of Women Canada

² Status of Women Canada, (2004), *An Integrated Approach to Gender-based Analysis*, 2004 Edition, (www.swccfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbainfokit/gbainfokit_7_e.html).



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