

**Agriculture Union National Human Rights Committee Meeting
Ottawa – December 10 & 11, 2024**

Attendees:

- Gus Mardli (Director)
- Tramaine Brown (Southern Ontario)
- Krysty Thomas (1st Alt Director – recording)
- Amanda Jorgenson (Alberta)
- Angie Williams (Alt_Sask)
- Jim Prendergast (Alt_Atlantic)
- Yong Tan (BC & Yukon)
- Taye Zaygege (Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario and Nunavut)
- Imola Matyas-Balassy (Québec)

Call to Order: 9:07 AM

Land Acknowledgement: Gus

Harassment Statement: Read by Krysty

- Harassment Coordinators: Krysty and Gus

Housekeeping:

- Emergency exits
- Washrooms (gender-inclusive washroom on the 3rd floor)

Round of Introductions

Group Dinner: Scheduled for 5:00 PM Royal Oak on Kent St.

Agenda:

- Presented by Gus
- No new items were added

Terms of Reference:

- Presented by Gus

Updates from Agriculture Union President – Milton Dyck

- **Welcome:** Thanked the committee for their work over the year.
- **Purpose of the Human Rights Committee:**

- To create an organization within the Union focused on Human Rights.
- Human Rights work is political action work and can face pushback.
- **Connection to PSAC:**
 - Encouraged committee members to apply for Human Rights conferences and events.
- **Key Workplace Equity Issues Discussed:**
 - **Krysty:** Exploitation of term employees and end-of-term employment disproportionately affects equity-seeking groups.
 - **Response:** Issues with COVID, foreign workers, lack of PPE, laying off terms, and hiring casuals.
 - **Taye:** Division within the Union; concerns about donations to Gaza and slow rollout of Social Justice Fund applications.
 - **Response:** Krysty committed to faster rollouts and clarified the Middle East conflict stance—supporting aid, not war.
 - **Amanda:** Challenges with new hires being classified lower and poor communication of member rights.
 - **Response:** Raise the issue at UMC.
 - **Tramaine:** Impact on mental health and physical injuries among equity-seeking term employees.
 - **Response:** Departments are struggling with effective mental health measures. Need updates to Form 1070 to include mental health concerns.
 - **Taye:** Questions about hiring freeze and term rollovers.
 - **Response:** Hiring freeze is unofficial; some hiring continues.

Presentation by Denis St-Jean (PSAC National Health and Safety Officer)

Topic: Mental Health at Work

- Common causes of overwork
- Strategies to manage overwork for local presidents
- See attached presentation

Discussion: Communication Plan

- Current model isn't effective; members are unaware of committee work.
- **Plan:**
 - Use Google Drive for better organization.
 - Schedule a webinar to reach members.

Regional Seminar Presentation:

- Mission statement
 - Follow-up from previous campaigns
 - Photos of committee members in their communities
 - Social Justice Fund information
 - Black Class Action lawsuit update
 - Training on filing a Human Rights Complaint
-

Finalization of Terms of Reference (TOR) – see attached

Reports

Written Reports: See attached documents.

Verbal Reports:

- **Yong Tran:** Attended two BC Regional Seminars and the PSAC National Equity conference in Montreal. Participated in workshops on Advocacy and Representation for workplace racism.
- **Jim Prendergast:** Member of the steering committee for the National Access Convention—described it as an eye-opening experience. Also attended the Atlantic Access Conference.
- **Tramaine Brown:**
 - February 2023: Attended RV Conference and Building Leadership Knowledge (B.L.K.) Summit.
 - April 2024: Participated in AG Union Regional Seminar focused on mobilizing locals.
 - September 2024: Became a JLP seminar facilitator.
 - Attended Agriculture Prairie Regional Seminar.

Roundtable Discussion

1. **Feedback on Days of Recognition:**
 - No feedback at this time.
 - Gus to confirm the recipients for these recognitions.
2. **Suggestions for Next Face-to-Face Meeting:**
 - Allocate time to review last year's goals:
 - Reflect on intended objectives.
 - Assess progress and completion.
3. **Sharing the Presentation Deck:**
 - Approved to share with locals.
4. **Support for Members in the Grievance Process:**

- Question: Do we have support for members who are on leave or whose Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claims are denied? Reach out to Clint Wirth for additional assistance on this matter.