



**UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES - PSAC  
SYNDICAT DES EMPLOYÉ-E-S DE L'IMPÔT - AFPC**

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**CONGRÈS 2017 CONVENTION  
JULY 19 - 22 JUILLET  
OTTAWA, ON**

**REPORT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT TO  
THE SEVENTEENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION (2017)  
UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES**

After being re-elected to my position at the last Triennial Convention in July 2014 held in Windsor, Ontario, I have had the pleasure and the honour, over the past three (3) years, of again being your First National Vice-President. For the second time, I have the distinct honour of presenting my First Vice-President's report. It is now time to look back over that period and look ahead at the next three years.

Under the By-Laws of the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), my official portfolio is that of finance. This is the second convention that I have the opportunity to report to you on our financial position.

My functions, as described in the By-Laws, are as follows:

1. Ensure that the UTE funds are managed in a sound financial manner and in the best interest of the members;
2. Ensure that proper books, records and vouchers are kept and stored in accordance with UTE operations;
3. Provide each Executive Council meeting with statements and supporting documents, enabling the Executive Council to properly evaluate and control the UTE finances;
4. Include in the written reports to the Executive Council and the Convention the dollar amount expended by each member of the Council and the Alternates for the current period as well as the cumulative amount since the last Convention; and
5. Chair the Standing Finance Committee.

Over the last three (3) years, I have reviewed each expense claim that has been filed and ensured that it was in accordance with the UTE Regulation 13, "Reimbursement of Expenses". The other expenditures were approved either by the Executive Council or in consultation with the National President.

The Executive Council and the Locals were presented with the Union's internal financial statements on a regular basis.

At each Executive Council Meeting:

- I submitted the most recent financial statements for approval;
- I made recommendations to transfer funds among budget items in order to stay within the convention's proposed budget;
- The financial statements, along with notes explaining the changes, were included in the Executive Council minutes, which were forwarded to all Locals for their review;
- Each Council member was provided a copy of their current expenditures as well as a cumulative summary since the last convention;
- I submitted expense claims that were over 90 days old to the Executive Council for their review and approval, in accordance with By-Law 14, Section 4.

At the end of each calendar year:

- The Regional Vice-Presidents were provided with cumulative figures for the report to provide to their region.
- Our books and records are subject to audit by an outside accounting firm. I presented the completed statements to the Executive Council for approval, in accordance with By-Law 14, Section 2. These statements were then forwarded to each local for their review.

## **NATIONAL OFFICE**

### **Communications / Internet Site and Information Technology**

At the national office, I supervise the work of our communications officer and person responsible for the Website, Sister Susan Duncan, in addition to our information technology specialist, Brother Alex Thon.

Over the past three (3) years, several positive changes were made. In March 2015, we replaced the National Committee logos to make them more uniform and visually attractive. Furthermore, each logo allows the committee to which it is tied to be more recognizable.

Then, in June 2015, after almost one (1) year of development, we launched our new Internet site. Although we have experienced some problems, which is normal with such changes, I strongly believe that the site is more user friendly and allows everyone, particularly the Local representatives and our members to more easily find a wealth of relevant and interesting information, as a result of a more sophisticated search engine. We also replaced the Internet site server with a newly hosted platform to improve the stability and capacity (volume of traffic) on the site. I would like to thank Sister Duncan for her excellent work and unflinching dedication to completing this important project.

We would also like to highlight the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UTE with a logo and a poster. Furthermore, we have created a poster and a banner for the 2017 UTE Convention.

We also produced two (2) videos over the 2016 summer during our contractual negotiations with the CRA to properly inform our members.

From an information technology perspective, we continue to use the most recent technologies. We have upgraded our firewall to provide the latest security technologies to protect internal and external Internet communications and the internal wireless network to offer better coverage and increased security for our network. We have also upgraded our computer software to include the most current packages for our accounting and cheque writing systems (ACWS).

Furthermore, we have provided the Executive Council Officers with an improved version of Microsoft Office 365 to include OneDrive for Business storage solution and the Skype for Business platform.

We have also started to replace all the National Office computers, monitors and printers and the Executive Council Officers' iPads, mobile phones and printers.

Finally, we replaced the audiovisual equipment in our main meeting room.

## **Finances**

Evidently, I also supervise the work of the financial administration officers. An important change occurred over the last cycle. Sister Monique Desrosiers left us in April 2015 and accepted a promotion in another PSAC area. I would like to take the occasion to thank her sincerely for all she has done for the UTE over the years. In July 2015, we also had the pleasure of welcoming Brother Liam Merrigan to offer support to Sister Stéphanie Wolff, who is still faithfully with us.

The Finance section has not been idle over the past three (3) years. In addition to the regular activities such as processing thousands of cheques, paying invoices, reviewing investments and producing financial statements, sending advances and grants, transferring dues to the Locals, closing the books at the end of the year and, among other, we have also made some retroactive payments for our members and for the National Office employees after signing the new collective agreements (PSAC-UTE with the CRA and the AEU Unit V). To perform this task quickly and efficiently, we have created an effective tool to calculate retroactive payments. This tool has been very useful and we provided it to the Locals to help them perform the same exercise. I really believe that it was much appreciated and I would like to thank Brother Liam Merrigan for developing this tool in collaboration with our external service provider (ACWS).

We have also innovated during the previous budget cycle.

Indeed, we are registered with the CRA to benefit from a reduction in Employment Insurance premiums that the UTE pays for the National Office staff. Given the annual sick days provided for in the employees' collective agreement, we were able to benefit from a reduced rate to pay the government. There again, thanks to Liam Merrigan for having set us on this path.

I am extremely proud of the work we have accomplished over the past few years.

In addition, another important change occurred during the last cycle. The National Office created an "hybrid" administrative assistant position, that is, an assistant who supports not only the labor relations department, but also the First National Vice-President and the Finance section in their multiple tasks. The financial administration officers and I had the pleasure and the luck to be able to count on the valorous services of Sister Sylvie Bastien. Her help has proved invaluable and I would like to thank her, on my own behalf and on behalf of our two financial administration officers, from the bottom of my heart for all she does. I cannot ignore the hard work that Sylvie does in relation to the "UTE store", that is to say, all the purchases and sales of UTE promotional items as well as the warehousing and handling of the goods. Thank you very much Sylvie.

I would also like to thank all the National Office employees for their constant support, their professionalism and their excellent work. I truly appreciate all the knowledge they provide to the national officers and the all our representatives across the country.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Once again, I take great pleasure in chairing this committee. The work done by the Finance Committee is invaluable for the operational success of the UTE. Their work was always conducted in an impartial, professional and respectful manner.

I will also take the time to thank all the Committee members: Brothers Doug Gaetz, Gary Esslinger and David Webster. In addition, a special thanks to Sister Stéphanie Wolff, our Financial Administration Officer, and Brother Liam Merrigan, our Assistant Financial Administration Officer. Thank-you all for your outstanding work and dedication over the past three (3) years.

The Finance Committee has an extensive mandate. They completed the mandate with top marks. For example, we reviewed the UTE's Regulation No. 13 "Reimbursement of Expenses" on several occasions. The Committee discussed, reviewed and approved the most recent financial statements and the state of our investments at each meeting. It also reviewed the expenditure overruns.

Furthermore, the committee proposed to the Executive Council to review the annual grant for financing the data plan for the Locals' tablets. This recommendation was approved by the Council for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 years.

The committee also reviewed its mandate and the UTE Statement of Investment Policy. It also reviewed the "UTE Financial Statement Line Item Review Book".

At each of the meetings, the Committee also met with Howard Greenberg, investment advisor for the UTE from CIBC Wood Gundy, to discuss and review our investment portfolio. We have assessed the portfolio performance and also discussed future market conditions. It should be noted that the Committee adopted a proactive approach regarding our investments. Among other and in collaboration with Mr. Greenberg, we made the significant sale of assets of some companies in the summer of 2016. This sale earned us significant capital gains and allowed us to reach our objective regarding the return on our investments.

The Committee also had a more in-depth discussion regarding UTE travel practices, more specifically air travel. We discussed the potential benefits associated with opening a corporate account with Air Canada. After this discussion, the Committee recommended that such an account be opened and this initiative was implemented in the fall of 2016. This account offers us a rebate of 5% at all times on category "Flex" flights. I strongly encourage our national, regional or local union representatives to join this account and start saving immediately.

Furthermore, the Committee proposed that all UTE conferences, conventions and meetings be registered with Air Canada's "Meetings and Conventions" travel service in order to allow participants travelling by air to get discounts from the use of promotional codes. For each event, we obtain a Promotional Code that we will send to everyone. By using this promotional code, people travelling by air with Air Canada can benefit from up to 15% rebate on the airfare (Tango and Flex categories only). This initiative was also proposed in the fall of 2016. The first event that was registered was the National Equal Opportunities Conference.

In my opinion, these initiatives are very important. They allow the National Office and the Locals to save significant amounts and thus use our members' money more wisely.

In the fall of 2016, the committee prepared the budget for the next three (3) year fiscal cycle. The budget was studied, modified and adopted by the Executive Council in December 2016 and, at the time this report was written, it was ready to be studied and reviewed by the Convention's Finance Committee. After this examination, the final version of the budget will be presented to the UTE 2017 Triennial Convention to be reviewed and adopted by the delegates.

I believe that this budget reflects the UTE position for the next three years. It is a realistic budget.

Given that the UTE has lost more than two thousand (2000) members over the last cycle, the National President gave the Finance Committee the mandate to start a complete examination of the UTE expenses and an in-depth analysis of its costs structure.

In January 2017, the Committee met to undertake the process that will take time and that has only begun.

The Committee reviewed each of the line items included in our financial statements. The Committee also reviewed the UTE By-Laws and Regulations and the Resolutions of Record from a financial perspective. The Committee also started to compare different options regarding our rental situation, which is to know whether it is preferable to renew our lease for our current location on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the PSAC National Office, or if it is more advantageous to move, either by renting a local in another location or proceed with purchasing a building.

Throughout these deliberations, the Committee considered several scenarios that will allow our Component to save significant amounts of money without impacting our essential mission, which includes representing and defending the interests of our members.

Following this meeting, the Finance Committee proposed some recommendations to the Executive Council. Most were adopted. One of the recommendations will be presented during the 2017 Convention in order to be debated by the delegates.

As mentioned above, the review work regarding our expenses will continue and, inevitably, will require difficult but necessary decisions to be made to ensure the financial stability of our organization for the present and for future years.

I would again like to thank all the members of the Finance Committee for their exceptional dedication and their excellent work.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Over the past three (3) years, I have had the honour and pleasure of co-chairing this committee and working with very dedicated people who, like me, are passionate about occupational health and safety: Brother Doug Gaetz, Committee Chairperson, Brother

Mathieu Juneau, Technical Advisor, and Sister Debbie Ferguson, representative of the Locals' Presidents.

There is not a slightest doubt about the knowledge and skills of these people. They are equalled only by their intense desire to ensure that the employer meets its obligations under Part II of the Canada Labour Code. I am taking this opportunity to thank them for all their work and efforts over the past three (3) years.

I am also taking this opportunity to wish Sister Ferguson, who will leave us in 2017 to start a new chapter in her life, a wonderful retirement. Debbie, I wish you a long and healthy retirement! Thank-you for your tireless and remarkable work.

The Committee participates in National Health and Safety Policy Committee (NHSPC) meetings. A multitude of topics were addressed by this joint union/management committee: job hazard analysis for on-site employees and those in multiple environments, the effectiveness of the local occupational health and safety committees, workplace inspection, security incident reports, requirements for CRA emergency drills, psychological health and safety in the workplace, the prevention of violence in the workplace, etc.

We continually tracked the following training: health and safety training, workplace violence prevention training, WHMIS training. Some Committee members also attend regular sub-committee meetings with employer representatives.

The Committee also organized a National Health and Safety Conference in November 2015. The conference was very interesting, and the feedback gathered from the attendees was mostly very favourable.

## **OTHER DUTIES**

As the First National Vice-President, I attended nearly each meeting of the PSAC National Board of Directors (NBoD) as an advisor to the National UTE President, and sat as the UTE representative when the National President was not available. I also attended a number of informal NBoD meetings, including, among other, about the problems related to the Phoenix pay system.

During my mandate, I also visited a number of CRA offices and attended a great many annual general meetings (AGM) of the UTE Locals. These are privileged opportunities I particularly enjoy.

Indeed, it is a privilege to meet the presidents and other Locals' representatives on a more personal level than at the Presidents' Conferences or during a Convention. The Annual General Meetings are especially rewarding as I am able to hear first-hand what the members are thinking out loud and in what direction they feel the Union should move. Listening to the members is the foundation for keeping our Union strong. This is why I also value being able to make office visits. This enables me to promote the AGM

and meet with members who are unfortunately unable to attend. I also have the opportunity to speak with the employer's local management teams.

Over the past three (3) years, I also participated in different demonstrations. Whether for supporting our bargaining team and the work performed by the Locals, mainly in the National Capital Region, during distribution of flyers to their members or to the general public, or even during events organized by the PSAC. I also attended several meetings in the National Capital Region when the first ratification vote was held. I was the guest speaker for two (2) meetings, one in Québec and one in Rimouski, for the second ratification vote.

I also gave several interviews to various print and electronic media (radio and television) on several occasions, both in English and in French. Most often in Ottawa but also elsewhere in the country.

The National President also entrusted me with various duties and responsibilities, including representing the UTE on the National Steering Committee of the 2014 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES). I am also the UTE representative on the 2017 PSES National Steering Committee. During my mandate, I also presided over internal investigations on the misconduct of some members, including a significant fraud case. I was also a member of the National Capital Region's Ad-Hoc UTE Structure Committee as the Committee's co-president.

Furthermore, I also chair the PSAC's NBoD Special Committee on problems related to representation.

As part of my functions, I am responsible for funding requests under the Local Loan Regulation and under the Computer Loan Regulation, requests for donations and sponsorships, approval for Alternate Location Fund funding, requests to use the Local Translation Fund, approval for non-UTE events funding, requests to use the Members with Disability Fund, Family Care Expenses and approval for funding from the Membership Appreciation Fund. Some decisions are made only by me and others are made jointly with our National President.

Over the past mandate, we continued our efforts to promote our union in the workplace by selling UTE promotional items. We offered a wide range of items at each Presidents' Conference. We continued producing our own calendar and our own line of clothing as well as offering other items that are too numerous to list. Based on the sales and demand for items that we have provided, our efforts seem to be rewarded and UTE is still, and is becoming more visible.

As a member of the Council, I have had the opportunity to work with a group of very dedicated people. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank them all for the welcome they gave me, their great cooperation and the solidarity that they demonstrated. Through the nature and responsibilities of our work, it sometimes happens that we do not concur on a topic or major issue. This did not prevent us from remaining respectful and always working together for the well-being and best interest of our members. I would like to say that I learned many things from them and this has made me a better person and a more experienced union leader. I thank them.



There were some changes to the Executive Council since our last convention. Among others, Brothers Jean-Pierre Fraser and Denis Lalancette have decided to step down as RVPs and start their retirement. They deserve our utmost thanks and our respect for the work that they have accomplished over many years for our members and, in my personal case, for their unfailing friendship. I wish them a wonderful retirement. Thank you for everything.

Furthermore, other people have left their positions of Regional Vice President for other reasons. I would like to thank these people for the loyal service they gave to our members and our union.

I must absolutely mention the departure of Brother Sabri Khayat, who was, for many years, the Regional Vice-President for the Montreal region. He left us in November 2015 for a better place. Sabri was a person who was respected by all, from both the union and the management sides and at both the regional and national levels. He was an exceptional man. Strong defender of minority and human rights, he was brilliant, vibrant, ready to fight, generous and thoughtful. He had knowledge from many domains and had vast amounts of experience. He had a unique sense of humour that could defuse the atmosphere when a situation became too tense. Upon his death, I lost not only a colleague, but also a mentor and a friend. Sabri, your presence is sorely missed but you will always be present in my heart. May your soul have peace, my friend.

However, the UTE is lucky to have newcomers to fill the holes, and quality ones at that. The changes at the level of the Regional Vice-Presidents have brought new blood with the arrival of Brothers Daniel Camara, Jérôme Martel, Cosimo Crupi and Greg Krokosh. All have worked hard and have performed excellent work.

I would also like to mention the fact that Sister Madonna Gardiner, our outgoing Second National Vice-President, will be leaving us shortly after the Convention to benefit from a well-merited retirement. Sister Gardiner was called to the position during a very difficult period and I would like to warmly thank her for her excellent work and her sincere dedication to our members and our union.

Madonna, thank you for everything. I wish you a retirement filled with beautiful moments. May it be long and healthy.

Now I must talk about our National President, Brother Robert Campbell. Ever since I started in my position, Bob has shown me a great deal of respect and has continued providing me with his wise advice and sharing his vast experience and knowledge.

Robert Campbell has fought at the heart of our union for more than forty-two (42) years and is evidently highly respected in our union and among the members of the PSAC National Board of Directors (NBoD). Bob is often a man of few words, but he works hard and is a man of his word. He does what he says. As they say, "put your money where your mouth is". He leads by example.

Over the past five (5) years I had the privilege to be First National Vice-President, Bob Campbell has always provided help and support. I would like to thank him with all my

heart for his ongoing support, his assistance and tremendous cooperation and for his wisdom and friendship. Thanks Bob!

I can say without doubt that we have worked well together and during a difficult period of our history under the Conservative Government and throughout the last round of negotiations, which was hard and tedious, for both the union representatives and for our members. I believe that we were lucky to have a strong and experienced National President to count on for surviving this difficult time.

I want to mention that I worked hard and unfailingly to support and help Brother Campbell as much as possible. It was an honour to work with him and a pleasure to be his 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President over the past five (5) years. I used the time to learn from this great leader.

Bob, thank-you for all that you did for our members and our union over the past four (4) decades. Personally, I thank you for all you did to help me become a better leader at the national level.

I wish you a beautiful retirement (fully merited) filled with health and happiness. Solidarity for ever Brother Campbell!

This was a summary of my work and the activities I have been involved in over the past three (3) years.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past years, we have progressed in a very difficult context at two levels: as federal public service employees and as union representatives.

We fought hand and foot against Stephen Harper's federal government to save our members' jobs and protect their benefits acquired from long and hard work. With unfailing support from our Locals and from our members, we resisted the repeated attacks at the negotiation table from the Treasury Board and from our employer, the CRA, and have managed to reach a reasonable agreement. Furthermore, we had to literally fight to ensure the survival of the union movement in Canada.

This was very difficult for everyone. But, we have accomplished great things. For example, we were part of a movement that put an end to Stephen Harper's backward-thinking government.

And we came out of it stronger and more united than ever.

Thanks to all our Locals' representatives and to the Executive Council Officers for your continued support, dedication and persistence. We won many battles thanks to you and our members because we all stood up together.

Now, what does the future hold?

The current Liberal Government wants to restart discussions with the unions and the public service employees. This is good, but they must move from discussion to action. They seem to be preachers of privatization. And, it is not by tabling Bill C-27, which would allow crown corporations and private sector employers under federal jurisdiction to transform defined benefits pension plans into target benefits pension plans, that they will win the confidence and respect of the federal public service employees and their union representatives.

Are we going to let them do that without reacting? Of course not!

Our Locals, with the support of their members, are the key to our success.

This is why we need to continue working and fighting together in defence of the interests of our members and of all workers in general.

We must always try to improve and be proactive.

As union leaders, we must be open and preach by example.

It has been a great pleasure to work for the UTE and all its members, from coast to coast, for the last three (3) years and I hope to continue doing so for many years to come. It means being part of a large family.

Thank you all for letting me serve in this position. I hope that I have satisfied at least part of your expectations.

We have several challenges to meet: improve our relationship with the CRA management, current collective bargaining, protect the interests of our members, ensure the proper functioning of the PSAC structure and improve the relationship among the various components, lobby politically to restart the collective bargaining directly with the Canada Revenue Agency, protect our pension plan and ensure that the federal government corrects, or abandons, once and for all the Phoenix Pay System, etc.

For all these reasons, and others, I decided that it was time for me to move on to the next step.

After having spent the last five (5) years serving you as First National Vice-President, I now offer my services as your next National President.

It would be my pleasure to serve in this position for the next three (3) years if the Convention delegates decide as much.

Submitted respectfully and in all solidarity.

Marc Brière  
UTE 1<sup>st</sup> National Vice-President