

Committee Reports

Advocacy 2023

Committee members

Jerome Francis
Steve Frost
Mike Peragine,

Arlette Stewart
Michelle Tri
Laya Behbahani
(previous chair)

Staff Support:

Andrew Boden
Tracey Ferris
Angela Vass

I want to thank, first of all, all the APSA volunteers on our Advocacy Committee for their dedication to serving our members in times of need. Thank you to Mike Peragine, Laya Behbahani, Jerome Francis, Andrea Barbera, Michelle Tri, Steve Frost and Arlette Stewart. I'd especially like to thank Laya Behbahani for her three years as chair of the committee—her insight, leadership and assistance for our members was beyond superlative. Our Advocacy work simply couldn't be as robust as it is without our dedicated volunteers. Thank you!

This year, we saw approximately 700 members for advocacy issues, predominantly issues related to medical accommodations, sick leave and other health matters. Our members, certainly during and following the pandemic, have felt very acutely the SFU workplace stresses, including those related to budget matters and resourcing. We also dealt with several issues related to overtime and adequate compensation for both managers and non-managers faced with overtime issues.

Our members, who are managers, especially, have reported difficulties being able to take time in lieu away from work as compensation for overtime and also adequately ensuring their reports are compensated, especially during times of inadequate resourcing. We continue to work on these issues on behalf of our managers at any level we can.

We filed four grievances this year, the themes of which were related to pension issues, sick leave aggregation, inappropriate classification of an APSA position outside APSA and a bullying and harassment issue. We're pleased, especially for a group of our 65+ members, that we've made good progress on resolving their pension grievance outside arbitration.

Of course, no advocacy program for our members could succeed without solid legal advice and representation. Three mediation/arbitrations accounted for the bulk of our legal expenditures this year.

Grievances for these matters were related

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to adequate overtime compensation for three APSA members, inappropriate termination and a Basic Agreement grievance related to the 2021 round of bargaining. While we always prefer to resolve matters outside of legal hearings, we're pleased that the issues were successfully mediated, resulting in healthy settlements for our members and also certainty for APSA's negotiators at this year's round of bargaining.

We're also pleased that Christine Palak, who now has a leadership position in Labour Relations, has brought some new approaches to resolving advocacy difficulties. This has led to more amicable resolutions to critical issues.