



2019 General Secretary's Report

I appreciate the opportunity to again report on the business of your union and I hope you have a thorough discussion about the direction of GSU, including your suggestions for change.

GSU Bargaining in 2019

As we begin an all-too-early autumn, GSU is engaged or about to be engaged in agreement renewal collective bargaining with the following employers:

- The Western Producer – Local 5
- Heartland Livestock – Local 7
- Nutrien Ag Solutions Ltd. – Local 15
- Discovery Co-op – Local 17
- Prairie Co-op – Local 19.

As bargaining commences and proceeds, regular reports will be provided through GSU's *Tuesday Members' Memo* (TMM), direct reports and membership meetings.

Success at the bargaining table is directly linked to the involvement and support of members on the job. The best way to show your support for your bargaining committee is to keep up-to-date, share the information, talk it up in your workplace, and attend Local meetings when they are called.

As it has been at every other bargaining table, the dominant issue will be wage increases. GSU members expect to bargain wage increase that provide actual increases to purchasing power after inflation is taken into account.

It is time for change and the bargaining table is the place to begin changing the dynamics around wages.

The 2019 Federal Election

We are in the midst of a federal election and once again Canadians have an opportunity to vote for the candidates and parties who are vying to form our national government for the next four years.

As the options are being considered, I hope GSU members will dive into the issues and vote for candidates who best represent the interests of working people.

Ask yourself who has the best plan for progressive labour legislation. Who has the best plan for addressing climate change, transforming the economy, tackling inequality and implementing social programs that will benefit all of us?

When you've made your decision, be sure to vote. Elections matter.

Union Representation

Administering collective agreements and assisting GSU members is a big part of your union's daily work. We try to report on issues identified and resolved as part of our regular reporting to GSU members through the TMM and membership meetings. If there are subjects we are overlooking and should be including in GSU's communications, please let us know.

Representing employees in pursuit of a fair deal for all is unique to the employment relationships of employees represented by a union. Non-union employees do not have the benefit of contractual rights or an organization to represent them and communicate results.

Neither do non-union employees have the right to protection from unjust dismissal and reinstatement to employment when they are wrongfully fired. This protection is part of the bedrock of being unionized.

Recently, Viterra purchased the operations of ILTA Grain in Belle Plaine and 12 more workers joined GSU's ranks. We welcome this new group to GSU and Local 1.

GSU is eager to bring union representation to groups of workers who are looking for proven representation in their workplaces. We need contacts and/or an introduction. That's where you come into the picture. If you know someone who might be interested in being represented by GSU, don't be shy. Please tell them about us, and let us know.

GSU Administration

In August, GSU advertised for a part-time Accounting Assistant II position, and on September 4 Debbie Head joined the team in the union's Regina office. We welcome Debbie and wish her a long, happy and rewarding relationship with GSU.

Assessing the size of GSU's staff complement is a work in progress as we strive to provide the best service to members in the most economical way.

To date GSU is running a modest operating surplus, but we anticipate somewhat of a spike in expenses related to required repairs to the office building in Regina, the annual SFL convention, an arbitration on behalf of Local 2 members working at Viterra's service desk, and annual Local/Sub-Local meetings.

GSU is also planning to invest in educating the next generation of union leaders and your participation will be the most important part of the process.

GSU Defense Fund

At the end of the second quarter of 2019 the assets of the GSU Defense Fund stood at \$4.6 million.

Whenever GSU enters agreement renewal bargaining, union members can be confident that they have the resources to take on a collective bargaining fight if the need arises.

Each year, GSU members attending annual meetings of their Locals or Sub-Locals have the opportunity to debate and vote on whether to continue paying additional dues into the GSU Defense Fund. This year is no different, and GSU's Joint Executive Council is submitting the following resolution to be voted on at each annual membership meeting. The number voting in favour and against the resolution should be recorded and transmitted to GSU's general secretary.

"Be it resolved that the additional dues being paid into the GSU Defense Fund by members/employees represented by GSU shall continue until December 31, 2020, subject to review by members of the union at the 2020 annual Local and Sub-Local meetings."

A majority of 50 percent plus one of all the votes cast is required for the resolution to be carried or defeated.

GSU 2020 Policy Convention – March 19 to 21, 2020

GSU will hold its biennial policy convention from March 19 to 21 inclusive at Temple Gardens in Moose Jaw.

GSU is not immune from the constantly changing environment and challenges to its existence. As a result, we must constantly strive to reinvent the union in order to be relevant to new generations of workers and effective in responding to evolving political and economic challenges.

As with every policy convention, the 2020 convention will give every Local and Sub-Local the opportunity to send a full contingent of delegates and to put their ideas on the agenda in setting the policy direction of GSU.

Delegates to the 2020 convention will also elect the president, vice presidents, general secretary and directors of the GSU Defense Fund to two-year terms of office.

I urge every member and elected officer of GSU to seize the day and help lead the way to a rewarding future for every member of the union.

In my opinion, it is our responsibility to fearlessly promote the good that GSU and other unions do; not just for union members, but also for the broader community and society.

What we've accomplished together is remarkable, but we have much more to do. By supporting one another and standing up to our opponents we can shake the foundations of inequality.

Our democratic values are in peril as a result of apathy, cynicism and prejudice. Unions might just well be one of the last best chances for the survival of civility and progress. I urge everyone to get involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Solidarity,



Hugh Wagner
General Secretary