

2019

Scholarship & Bursary Recipients

Katelyn Barsi
Austin Kearns
Sara Meyer
Kacie Morin
Jana Sasakamoose
Amanda Tetrault
Trevor Zentner



It takes a combination of hard work and educational funding for most students to achieve their goals.

Gsu is pleased to offer a \$2,000 scholarship or bursary to seven students who demonstrate an ability and a passion to inspire positive change in their community.

You can learn more about the Gsu scholarship and bursary program on our web page at gsu.ca.





Katelyn Barsi

2019 Scholarship Recipient

Local 1.2 GSU member – Viterro/Moose Jaw terminal

Studies: Public Fire Paramedic Program

Grain and General Services Union Scholarship 2019

When I think about my future employment and career as an emergency service worker, there are a number of things I would like to see in my future contract. Specifically, things like a pension, an option for sick time payout, coverage and easy access to mental health therapy, as well as partial or full coverage of a health facility or gym membership, and last but not least, a benefit plan including coverage for spouses and dependants. This essay will summarize my ideal choices to be included in a contract for my future career.

Firstly, to have a pension included into my future contract is important to me, because as the cost of everyday living goes up, sometimes it can be difficult to be able to save for retirement. Investing in a pension is an investment in my future, and being able to do so through paying into a pension is a way to save resourcefully and efficiently for life after work.

For individuals who tend to not get sick as often as some, there is no use for sick time hours. If sick time hours are accumulated and not used, I think it would be beneficial to have them paid out instead, acting almost as a reward or incentive. At the end of each year, I would like to see anything that has not been used payed out to the employee, because the days have been earned but not used, denoting that the time that could have been used as a sick day was spent at work instead.

In the emergency service field, sometimes teams or individuals have to deal with incidents that are less than ideal. Traumatic experiences can wear on a person's mental well being, and in light of those circumstances, it is important that fully or partially covered,

easy access to either a therapist or facility that can meet the needs of recovering one's mental health is very important. To go along with that, I also think it is important that stations and departments have the access and the ability to be able to bring in a professional within a set time frame after a severe incident that can aid in grief support in a group setting for the individuals who served on scene together.

Physical fitness is an important requirement of emergency workers, and those who can not keep up to the demands of the job can be considered a liability. I think it is incredibly important to have a gym membership covered through a contract because of the constant training that needs to be done. Personally, in getting prepared for my schooling and ultimately my future career, I am in the gym at least four but as many as six days a week. The work I put in now will need to be maintained and built on, and that is why coverage of a gym membership can be especially helpful and useful to those in the emergency field specifically.

Last but not least, I would like to see a benefit plan in place for coverage of things like dental work, medications and eyewear, and coverage of chiropractic work and massages. Respectively, this would be optimal considering the physically demanding aspects of being an emergency service worker and the amount the services would be used.

In conclusion, although this essay does not represent everything I would like to see in a future contract, it does state what I believe is most quintessential for building a contract in my future career in the field of emergency service work.

Katelyn Barsi



Austin Kearns

2019 Scholarship Recipient

Local 2 GSU dependant [Raelee Kearns] – Viterra Head Office

Studies: Combined Bachelor of Education /
Bachelor of Science Mathematics

As a second year education university student, I know it will not be long until I am out in the real world looking for full-time employment after I graduate. I want to stay in Saskatchewan, and therefore know that I will be applying for teaching positions within the province. This field of work has a provincial collective bargaining agreement that is agreed upon between the Board of Education and the Government of Saskatchewan and the Teachers of Saskatchewan. When I think about my future employment, this essay question really made me reflect long and hard on what I would consider to be the most important items that I would want included in a collective agreement or contract.

There are many important items in a collective agreement or contract. The specific ones that I feel would be important to me are benefits, job security, & wages and hours worked. Benefits are probably one of the more important things on my list. Every kid wants to land a dream job that pays a lot of money so they can buy their mansion in the hills, expensive cars to drive, etc. For myself, landing a teaching position is my realistic dream job. Benefits would mean a lot to both my bottom line and my health wellness. It would also give me much comfort and assurance. Health insurance which includes medical, dental, and vision care are very important especially once I want to start a family.

Vacation and paid sick days or personal leave is another benefit that is crucial to one's mental and physical health. My dad's youngest brother is currently battling terminal cancer. He has been fighting the disease for the past five years. He was able to work through part of it in the early stages but now he is too sick to work. He is employed with a company that is unionized and his benefits have helped him to be able to afford to keep his current way of living uninterrupted as he deals with treatment and not being able to work. It is already so very stressful on my uncle just having to deal with this terrible disease, that at least knowing he does not have to worry about financial needs on top of that at least helps lessen the stress levels for both him and his family.

On a positive note, vacation is an added bonus or perk to any job. With a collective agreement, you know the exact amount of vacation you will earn after each number of years working with a company. Vacation is something everybody looks forward to taking. It is the time spent doing anything other than work that makes you happy. I think spending time with family and friends is the best opportunity to use that time.

A pension plan is probably one of the last of the benefits that would be important to myself. Everyone needs to save for their future and possible chance of retiring before the age of sixty five. Inflation is the word that works against the value of a dollar today. We all need to have some sort of nest egg available after we retire, so we can enjoy our retirement with following a passion or hobby, travelling, or just not worrying about where our next dollar is coming from. If a company contributes a certain percentage towards your pension plan along with your own contributions, then that's an additional funds to your regular wages earned.

Job security is another item that is important to me and with a collective agreement or contract, this can help in that area. Unions typically work with employers to keep jobs, especially during hard economic times when layoffs may be necessary. As well, employees in a union don't have to worry about management firing or laying them off work without "just cause". You cannot be fired for no reason and if it does happen, the union is there as a support system and has representatives that can file a grievance and will fight for their rights as employees. Some collective agreements have sections which include options for when jobs change and require retraining. The agreements allow for employees to learn and adapt to the job changes as required. When jobs are eliminated, there are usually terms in the agreement for severance packages and/or a reasonable amount of notice before the job actually ends.

All of these examples make me feel that unions are providing its members some stability and security with our jobs. In today's world, with everything changing so fast, it's nice to know that the union is there for us and on our side. All of my part-time jobs have been ones without a collective agreement and I can see first hand how easy it is for managers to take advantage of their employees or mistreat them in some ways.

Wages and hours worked are also important to me. It has been shown that most workers can benefit from collective agreements. Unions set pay standards as they can negotiate and have bargaining power with the employer. Studies have shown that union employees tend to make more in wages than non-union workers. The fact that I am doing a job that I like and have the means to make more money makes me very happy!

Unions work to ensure that employment hours are suitable to the liking of the members. They also work to ensure that employees receive extra pay for any overtime hours that their members work. I think this is very important as employees should be compensated for when they are working more than their agreed upon hours. Otherwise, it wouldn't take long for employees to start to burn out if they were overworked and not being compensated somehow for it. Now that being said, my field of study in education does not work quite the same. Teachers are required to put in extra time either coaching, tutoring, grading exams, creating curriculums, etc. but do not get paid overtime. Teachers are exempt from overtime regulations but on the upside of that, they do get a few more days off than most.

In conclusion, the most important items that I would want included in a collective agreement or contract are benefits - more specifically - health insurance, vacation, sick leave, and a pension plan, along with job security, wages and hours worked. I applaud all those who work so hard every day within the many unions in our country. They are the ones helping us to excel in our jobs to the best of our abilities.



Sara Meyer

2019 St. Thomas More Bursary Recipient
Studies: Degree in the St. Thomas More Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and the Common Good program

There is no essay requirement for the GSU St. Thomas More (U of S) bursary. Our recipient is chosen by the university board. The eligible STM Critical Perspectives on Social Justice & the Common Good Minor student must demonstrate financial need with preference given to single parents who are union members or single parents who are dependent children (age 25 or younger) of union members, of any union recognized by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour or Canadian Labour Congress.



Kacie Morin

2019 Scholarship Recipient

Local 15 GSU member – Nutrien Ag Solutions, Regina
Studies: Education BEd Middle Years (6-9)

2019 Grain & General Services Union Program Essay

Important items in a collective agreement or contract

Kacie Morin

May 15th, 2019

Introduction

My name is Kacie Morin and I am honored to apply for the 2019 Grain & General Services Union Scholarship program. I have just completed my third year of my four-year degree at the University of Regina. I am working towards becoming a teacher and have been focusing my studies on teaching middle years. Throughout my university degree, I have had the privilege of working at Nutrien Ag Solutions while I am not in school. These last 3 years at Nutrien has given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge about agriculture in Saskatchewan. Working in a great team environment has given me an introduction to aspects of a career I admire and has helped me to determine what important items I would want in a collective agreement or contract in the future.

Education opportunities

Becoming a future teacher, professional development will always be one of my top priorities. In signing my first collective agreement or contract, I would hope that I would have to opportunity to further my own learning and education in order to better myself as a professional. An employer and contract that would allow me to attend seminars, support a second degree, participate in conferences and be apart of further education towards my profession is extremely important to me. In the end, I believe I need the opportunity to

have continuous lifelong learning and a contract that supports continuous education is essential.

Health Benefits

Another item I deem important when signing a contract or collective agreement is a full range of health benefits. Good health benefits are important to me because in order to be the best teacher I can be I have to be at the top of my health both mentally and physically. In saying this, I need the access to seek medical attention when needed throughout my career. Many teachers struggle with their mental health because of the stress of the day-to-day responsibilities and the work load. Because of this I would have to make sure my contract included health benefits for both my physical and mental health. Making sure my overall health is good can help me to be able to focus on my students and succeeding in my career.

Closure

Although health benefits and educational opportunities are my most important focus when signing a contract or collective agreement, there are many other items I would want on a contract. For example, I would want job security once signing a new contract so I could not lose my job for reasons unjust. I would also want on my contract an annual budget so I could spend money on my students so I can continually plan and deliver meaningful educational experiences for my students that they will remember forever. These benefits on my contract or signed agreement would help me to succeed in my future career as an educator.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this scholarship opportunity.



Jana Sasakamoose

**GSU's First Nations University
of Canada bursary**

Studies: Business Education Degree

There is no essay requirement for the GSU First Nations University of Canada bursary. Our recipient is chosen by the First Nations University scholarship board based on credit hours, financial need, leadership, participation and involvement in on-campus and student activities.



Amanda Tetrault

2019 Scholarship Recipient

Local 5 Dependant [Sharlene Tetrault] – Western Producer
Studies: Medical Administration

My Future
Amanda Tetrault
May 30, 2019

When I think about my future career, what would I like to see in a collective bargaining agreement?

I believe an important part of future employment, is fair and reasonable treatment for everybody involved. There are things that I need and feel should be in my collective agreement to make it fair and reasonable for everybody, employee and employer. They are things such as: hours of work, wages, benefits, and a fair work and home life.

I think my CBA should cover my hours of work. It should address overtime and the generic 8 hours per day as well as 40 hours per week. Including 2 paid coffee breaks and a paid 30-minute lunch break within a shift. As for overtime, I feel that it should be time and a half per hour of extra work. This overtime could be paid out, or put into an overtime bank in order to be used in lieu of time off. A five day work week, where possible should be a Monday to Friday set of days. If the career has shift work, I believe that the later shift should be paid the same as early day shift as they are doing the same hours and tasks as each other.

The next major portion of the CBA is wages. I feel like the starting wage for your first year should be no lower than \$15/hour. Upon completion of your first year I personally believe that it is fair for an annual increase based on a certain percentage per year. Starting out I think that 5% annually is a reasonable wage raise. As for bonuses, I think that a bonus should begin after you have been working for 5 years. After the 5-year bonus I feel like there should be an increase in the bonus. For example, if after 5 years you get a 5% bonus after 10 years it would be reasonable for a company to increase the bonus to 7.5% so forth and so on. If a person were to go and get extra training beneficial to their current position I think that they should get an addition wage increase as they are going above and beyond for their company and their job.

Benefits are a very important component for a lot of people. I believe benefits could be a huge feature for different people to work for a company or not. Benefits would include medical, optical, dental, and a flex health account. These benefits should cover a minimum 80% for medications and dental as those are medical expense that are often expensive and necessary for everyone. For paramedical services like chiropractor, massage therapy, and physiotherapy it wouldn't be unreasonable to seek coverage of up to 50%. As for services like optical checkups and optical prescriptions it would be more reasonable to have a dollar value for coverage as they can get very expensive quickly. It wouldn't be unreasonable to cover up to

\$500 for these services every 2-3 years. A flexible health account is a lump sum of money that could be used for additional health related cost. These costs could be the employee portion of payments or equipment used to improve and maintain employee health like a gym membership.

Pension is another very important component of a lot of people's CBA as it is crucial in order for you to retire. I feel like a reasonable amount to put away into your pension would be 5% contributed by both myself and my employer per pay period. That way there is 10% being put away every paycheck which will surely be enough once you retire after a certain number of years. Another way you could do this if you don't want to do it per paycheck is you could do it monthly or annually. But either way it is definitely something that you should put into your CBA.

Fair work and home life are another major component in your CBA. I personally think that this is a huge component because your home life is just as important as your work life and everybody needs their personal time. However, if you have worked your regular eight hours shift you go home and then your employer calls you saying that somebody can't make it in you have an option to accept or decline the option to go back in or not. This also includes personal leaves such as vacation, sick, or parental leave. For each of those leave I believe that there should be a general time period for each of them. Personally, I believe that 2-3 weeks for vacation and sick paid leave annually should be plenty for everyone. When it comes to parental leave I think that 12 months of leave should be paid but any extra time you take should be on your own expense.

All of these components that I have mentioned should be included in my CBA.

Because we all do better when we all do better!



Trevor Zentner

2019 Scholarship Recipient

Local 5 Dependant [Lila Zentner] – Western Producer

Studies: Masters in Finance

Effective Benefits of a Collective Agreement

Trevor Zentner

With a world that is constantly changing, collective agreements must also change to serve employees to the best of their ability. This does not mean the fundamental benefits of unions must be disregarded, but the weighting among them must be altered. With this in mind, I will provide four different areas in which unions should focus on going forward. These also happen to be the areas I hope my future terms of employment follow. The first I will mention is a focus on job security. Another on developing a tuition assistance program. The third aspect will be a focus on strong health coverage. Lastly, I will suggest the importance of developing a strong pension program.

Job security has always been a hallmark of unions. This is one of the main reasons for the rise of unions to date. But what exactly does job security mean? To me it includes two components. One, it provides stable wages, and two, it stands up for employees who have been fired without just cause. It is a well known fact that unionized employees receive a higher salary. It is also well known that unionized employees feel more safe in their positions. Unions are particularly strong on delivering these benefits because they are able to accomplish what an individual employee cannot do alone. Unions allow employees to be heard as a collective, as opposed to separate individuals. Thus employees gain more bargaining power, and are able to attain stronger benefits. From the history of unions to date, we can see that job security is fundamental to what employees desire and need. Thus, unions today must remember these core values of employees.

A newer benefit negotiated by some unions is tuition assistance programs. These types of programs can come in many forms. They can provide members and their family with tuition reimbursements, whether directly or in the form of scholarships. The cost of secondary education in Canada has increased by more than forty percent in a decade (Cain, 2016). This leads to stress among union members struggling to pay off their student debt, or struggling to put their child through school. This stress often impacts the employees health, leading to a decline in work performance. Thus employers should not see this type of program as a sunk cost, but an investment. It is a win for employees and a win for employers. It is also important to mention that providing tuition assistance to current employees can encourage them to increase their education, which would also lead to higher job performance. As times change, and secondary education becomes a more integral part of society, unions must adjust to help employers pay off these large costs.

Strong health coverage is also a key benefit that employees seek. A survey published in the Harvard Business Review found that 88% of employees would like better health, dental, and vision insurance. Health coverage ranked number one among 17 different benefits (Jones, 2017). These types of benefits make employees feel secure and looked after. It should also be mentioned that according to the World Health Organization the increased health of employees increases the productivity of the workforce. Once again we see benefits to both the employer and employees with these benefits (WHO, 2019). Its hard to argue against more healthy and productive employees. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 57.3% of prescription drugs are paid for out of pocket or through private insurers (CIHI, 2019). This goes to show that a large amount of the prescription drugs needed are largely left to the individual. These drugs can be expensive but mandatory. This is one reason why better health coverage is preferred by employees.

Lastly, a well developed pension plan would be essential to an agreement. Saving for retirement is an aspect often neglected today. People tend to realize they should have saved more when it is too late. Therefore it is critical that a strong savings plan is stressed to employees. A poll conducted by CIBC showed that 32% of Canadians nearing retirement have not saved any money for retirement. It was also shown that 53% of Canadians don't know if they are saving enough for retirement (Reid, 2018). This is a big problem for Canadians. Employers must help their workers develop a plan to overcome these struggles. One great way to do so is by matching a percentage of what employees put aside for retirement. The percentage matched is just as important as making employees aware of these programs. As mentioned before, many Canadians need to be more aware of their savings for retirement. Thus, for the benefit to be appreciated and effective for employees, the importance of saving must be brought forward.

In conclusion, unions would best serve their members by providing the traditional benefits of job security. Tuition compensation would also best serve members in collective agreements by reducing the financial stress put on their shoulders. A well rounded health coverage plan is also important, as employees put a great value on these benefits, and it is essential to create a productive workforce. Lastly, with the growing problem of lacking retirement savings, a collective agreement should include a strong program that allows employees to be aware of and take advantage of saving for retirement. It is critical that unions adopt to serve the needs of their members as the members' needs change. The four benefits covered above are not only a summary of what I believe collective agreements should cover, but they are benefits I hope will be included in my future terms of employment.

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GSU scholarship

GSU is pleased to offer \$2,000 scholarships to five students who demonstrate an ability and a passion to inspire positive change in their community.

The scholarship competition is open to GSU members, their spouses, and dependent children who have not previously won.

Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in a diploma, degree, or certificate program at a community college, university, trade school, or technical institute as a full-time student in any country.

GSU's First Nations University of Canada bursary

This \$2,000 bursary is open to an Aboriginal student enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours at the First Nations University of Canada.

Applicants must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 credit hours (not including ENGL 90/91 and AMTH 001/002/003 classes) to a maximum of 60 credit hours in any area of study leading to a degree.

Financial need, leadership, participation and involvement in on-campus and student activities will be considered in the selection of recipient.

GSU's St. Thomas Moore College (U of S) bursary

Our \$2,000 bursary is awarded annually.

The eligible student must demonstrate financial need. Preference is given to single parents who are union members or single parents who are dependent children (age 25 or younger) of union members, of any union recognized by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour or Canadian Labour Congress.

Given to students who are completing the STM Critical Perspectives on Social Justice & the Common Good Minor.

Information on GSU scholarships and our bursary are available on GSU's web page at www.gsu.ca.