

NewsRelease



Public Service Alliance of Canada | Representing 160,000 workers

For immediate release

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New page in labour history

LONDON —The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) is writing a new page in Canada's labour history by defending the rights of Postdoctoral Fellows and Postdoctoral Associates to form a union at the University of Western Ontario in London.

"It is with great pride that we stand by these workers," says PSAC National President, John Gordon. "Workplaces constantly evolve as workers from a variety of sectors and professional backgrounds recognize the gains that can be realized by joining a strong national Union."

The PSAC filed a certification application with the Ontario Labour relations Board (OLRB) on February 29, 2008 requesting a vote by the 250 Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) and Postdoctoral Associates (PDAs) employed by the university.

Western challenges the right of the workers to unionize, arguing that they don't meet the legal definition of employees under the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*. The Employer contends that the PDFs are independent contractors who are not entitled to join a Union.

OLRB proceedings to determine whether or not the workers are employees will begin on March 26, 2008.

Gerry Halabecki, PSAC Executive Regional Vice-President for Ontario, feels the university should adopt a more enlightened attitude towards the rights of its employees to form a union.

"The PSAC is already a dynamic force at the University of Western Ontario through the Graduate Teaching Assistants Union (PSAC Local 610)," says Halabecki. "The Postdoctoral Fellows and Postdoctoral Associates have the same rights to be represented by a union and to bargain collectively."

Halabecki says the PSAC has significant experience representing teaching and research assistants in universities in Quebec and Ontario and he is confident that Western's Postdoctoral Fellows and Postdoctoral Associates will soon be part of the PSAC family and therefore better positioned to improve their working conditions.

PSAC's campaign was supported by the Postdoctoral Association at Western which is an uncertified Association that has advocated for better working conditions for PDAs and PDFs.

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