



EXECUTIVE REPORT

1st NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

DOUG GAETZ

UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES

NATIONAL CONVENTION

JULY 2021 - VIRTUEL



2021 NATIONAL TRIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES

REPORT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT TO THE EIGHTEENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION (2021) OF THE UNION OF TAXATION EMPLOYEES

After being elected to the position of First National Vice-President at the last Triennial Convention in July 2017 held in Ottawa, Ontario, I have had the pleasure and the honour, over the past four (4) years of serving you and the members in that capacity. I present to you for your consideration my First Vice-President's report.

Looking back over the last four (4) year period, and looking ahead at the next two years, I would be remiss if I did not speak about the Covid-19 pandemic, and the effect it has had on all of us, our members, and on our families and friends. This pandemic has brought about major changes to our work and personal lives. The impact to the way we work, live, and conduct our business has changed dramatically. How we interact with each other, conduct our meetings, hold our conferences, and socialize with each other had to be re-evaluated and implemented and delivered in different formats. The interaction, or lack thereof, has taken its toll on all of us in different ways, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. We just need to continue to follow the health authority guidelines, get our vaccinations, physically distance, wash our hands, not gather in large groups and continue to look out for each other. In no time, we will be back together in person. Keep the faith.

Under the By-Laws of the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), my official portfolio is that of Finance. This is the first 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 they submit to their regions.
- 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 and Web Officer, Sister Susan Duncan, and our Information Technology Officer, Brother Alex Thon.

Some of the highlights over the last four years completed by our Communications and Web Officer, Sister Susan Duncan, consist of the following.

- We produced two videos (in both languages) in the last quarter. The first was an introduction of UTE's Executive Council. The second video was recorded during the Presidents' Conference and featured conference participants commenting on their

favorite part of the conference. The videos were produced using our new video and teleprompter equipment,

- We now have a section of the website to display the items we have for sale (Doug's Digs). Orders are still being placed as usual and members wishing to purchase items should see their local,
- We have created registration forms for the regional Equal Opportunities Conferences and the National Health and Safety Conference.
- We created the original version of the My Contract, My Voice poster and created a video with speeches from Marc Brière, Morgan Gay and Adam Jackson,
- Following the National Day of Mobilization, we were busy putting up all the photos received from the Locals,
- We created and delivered videos concerning the following:
 - **the CAS demonstration,**
 - **a CAS update,**
 - **information on the PSAC Change File,**
 - **updates on bargaining.**
 - **a thank you to members for their support during bargaining**
 - **updates on the Phoenix demonstration,**
 - **membership mobilization.**
 - **update on Phoenix compensation and one on mobilization actions,**
 - **administrative conversion of term employees,**
- We recently purchased a green screen and used it with the latest video we produced. The green screen allows us to customize the background for our videos and photos,
- We have recently added the participant's manual of two of our courses to the "For Locals" section of our website,
- We produced our first edition of Union News for the year 2020, delivered in November,
- In November we worked on December's edition which included the 2021-2022 UTE calendar. Members were pleased to receive their UTE calendars with the December newsletter. After the calendars went out, we received a request for calendars in an alternate format for those who are visually impaired. We investigated the feasibility of creating braille and large print calendars and contacted the locals to find out how much of a demand there would be. I am very pleased to report that we were able to provide the printing of these calendars for the first time ever and will continue to do so in the future.

Along with the above Sister Duncan maintains and keeps our social media page current and helps locals with their social media pages by providing suggestions and direction when asked. She also looks after maintaining our UTE web page. We will be updating the web platform after Convention. I would like to thank Susan for her dedication and hard work to ensure our members are getting the most up to date information through our communication section and the technical work she performs on the Communication Committee.

On the information technology side, which is handled by our in-house expert, Alex Thon, we have made a number of changes, updates, and improvements, especially during the pandemic.

One of the major changes we made in early 2020 was to introduce Microsoft Teams to all locals, RVPs, and staff. Relatedly, Alex provided on-line training across the country to assist the locals in becoming more comfortable and familiar with this tool. From May 2020 to May 2021, there has been a total of six hundred thousand audio minutes used via Teams. This has significantly reduced the usage of our telephone conference system service, which has produced a cost savings to UTE.

Instead of purchasing a new server(s), we extended our warranty, and used server virtualization to reduce server cost, based on sound recommendations by Alex. These changes have been determined to be working well.

We returned a leased Xerox printer at the National Office due to low utilization, thereby reducing our yearly leasing cost, with no impact to service to the membership or staff.

Our phone system was upgraded to 3CX which reduced our monthly phone bills.

The National Office purchased Microsoft Defender for Office 365 to provide advance email protection. As well, we are always looking at ways to protect our internal and external security networks and using technology to our advantage.

I want to thank Alex for his suggestions and recommendations when it comes to our information technology and encourage his continued recommendations to make our networks safe and reliable. One of the larger projects we dealt with in our information and technology section was dealing with a way to conduct Annual General Meetings (AGM) virtually to replace in person AGMs. Alex worked on this and provided us with different recommendations and suggestions. Once we decided the path we would follow, Alex took the responsibility to roll this out to the locals, with the help and support of Susan Duncan. They did it with professionalism and energy. At time of writing this report, there has been almost forty (40) AGMs completed to date and Alex was required to put in countless overtime hours to provide the expertise in order for these to be successful. Alex was also invaluable in contacting each local that held an AGM to conduct a practice run prior to the actual AGM so that any bugs could be worked out. I am proud to report that we have received only positive feedback about the technology used or the service provided by Alex for these meetings. On behalf of myself and the locals, I want to thank Alex and Susan (Susan was behind the scenes doing the background work) both for all the work they did to make this a success for the locals and their members. A job well done by both!

FINANCES

I also supervise the work of the Financial Administration Officers. An important change occurred over the last cycle. Brother Liam Merrigan was appointed to a Financial Administrative Officer on April 30, 2018, by way of a staffing process. Prior to this appointment Liam was an Assistant Financial Officer. Congratulations to Liam on this appointment.

Both Stephanie Wolff and Liam are an asset to the organization and to me personally. Both have provided sound recommendations and advice within the Finance section and a number of those recommendation have been implemented, which I will touch on shortly.

The Finance section has not been idle over the past four (4) years. In addition to the regular activities such as processing cheques, paying invoices, reviewing investments, producing financial statements, sending advances and grants, transferring dues to the Locals, closing the books at the end of the year, we have also made some retroactive payments for our members and for the National Office employees after signing the new collective agreements with the CRA and with staff union. To perform this task quickly and efficiently, we have created an effective tool to calculate retroactive payments.

Some of the changes we made over this cycle produced through suggestions to improve efficiencies and out of necessity due to the Covid- 19 pandemic. We now have direct deposit of claims for staff, Regional Vice Presidents (RVP), and members, who have opted in. This has increased the efficiency in processing claims and getting payments to the individuals much quicker.

Another change was the direct deposit of local dues wherein a deposit notice is now generated with details of the payments directly to the locals.

Recently, within the last year, working with our financial institution, CIBC, we now offer locals the capability to sign on with CIBC and enable locals to leverage UTE's bank account balance so that they benefit higher interest rates based on what aggregate monies UTE has in our operating account, combined with what the local has in their account. This has increased the amount of interest locals can get, as well as nationally. Signing onto this CIBC platform has decreased the amount of fees we now pay for banking at the national level.

At the suggestion of our bank, we have enhanced our internal controls, and have implemented procedures now requiring dual approvals of transfers, as well as dual signatures on all our cheques. Just recently, we made it possible for our office to accept email transfers from locals and members, which has reduced the administrative burden for our Finance staff, and for our members in making payments to the National Office.

In 2019 I asked the Finance staff to develop a financial course so we could provide training to local Treasures. We ran the pilot course at an inter-regional held in Halifax in February 2020 and it was well received by the participants. We also had it scheduled as the next National Course, which due to the pandemic, we had to postpone. No new date has been selected at the time of writing my report. A huge thanks to Liam and Stephanie in developing this well-prepared course.

In relation to our UTE promotional store, Doug's Digs, I need to recognize the great work that Connie Nunez has done in maintaining the store over this last cycle. She has done a fantastic job, ensuring inventory is correct, ordering the promotional items, and verifying that they are sent to the locals in a timely and accurate fashion. Thank you for all you do for me Connie in keeping Doug's Digs organized and running smoothly. I also want to thank Susan Duncan for her contributions to Doug's Digs by designing and incorporating our products onto the UTE website.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

I have been Co-chair of the Finance Committee since May 2007. This is my first term as the Chair. Although I enjoy chairing this important committee, not one person can work alone. The work done by the Finance Committee is invaluable for the operational success of the UTE and was always conducted in an impartial, professional, and respectful manner. I would respectfully like to take the time to thank all the Committee members: Brothers Cosimo Crupi, Gary Esslinger and David Webster. In addition, a special thanks to Sister Stephanie Wolff, and Brother Liam Merrigan, our Financial Administration Officers. Thank- you all for your outstanding work and dedication over the past four (4) years.

The committee is responsible for preparing the normal three (3) year budget, which we did originally and presented it to Executive Council. However, due to the pandemic, we had to revisit the budget and present a one-year budget for 2021 which was approved by Council. We then also had to prepare a two (2) year budget for 2022-2023. Once completed it was presented to Executive Council and was approved for presentation to go to the Finance Convention Committee, who also agreed and passed it at committee meetings held at the end of April 2021. The next step is for the delegates at the 2021 Convention to review and pass it.

I thank the committee(s) for its hard work in preparing the convention budget, not once, but twice!

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. 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 its 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. Due to the pandemic, investments worldwide have not performed as expected, but working with our investor, our investments have been performing satisfactorily and we have made safe secure investments throughout the pandemic.

Due to no face-to-face meetings, we have made substantial savings, but everyone agrees that in-person meetings are important, and we all look forward to the time when we can meet in person. Due to our positive financial position, we are able to propose a sound budget, with a proposal to Convention of no dues increase.

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.

Another positive note was that PSAC Holdings agreed to a no rent increase for 2021-2023 for our office space at Alliance Headquarters.

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

The UTE Health and Safety Committee held a National Conference on October 12-14, 2018 in Ottawa. Among other sessions, Health and Safety Committee members and representatives took part in a workshop on de-escalating potentially violent situations. The feedback from participants was extremely positive.

UTE Health and Safety Committee members participate in National Health and Safety Policy Committee (NHSPC) meetings. A multitude of topics were addressed by this joint union/management committee: the effectiveness of the local occupational health and safety committees and training, workplace inspections, security incident reports, requirements for CRA emergency drills and psychological health and safety in the workplace, among others.

In the context of the workplace violence working group, Committee members, in collaboration with the CRA, co-drafted the CRA's Procedures in Response to Workplace Violence, which were released in 2018. The aim of the procedures was to prevent workplace violence in all its forms, and to provide a complaint mechanism when members suffered workplace violence. In the course of these consultations, the UTE achieved an important win by securing the right to represent our members during the complaint process.

With Bill C-65 and changes to the Canada Labour Code, including the addition of harassment under the Code and the coming into force in 2021 of the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations, Committee members again consulted with the CRA to co-draft revised procedures, new policy instruments and training. This resulted in many changes, including a new team of officers—UTE members—under the purview of the CRA's National Occupational Health and Safety section.

Beginning in March 2020, Committee members have been actively collaborating with the CRA to ensure our members remain safe during the pandemic, by advocating for the reduction of the number of employees who must work at a CRA site, the implementation of safety measures for those accessing and occupying CRA sites as well as ongoing consultation on new pandemic-related documents with a view to keeping the membership abreast of this fluid situation.

Other milestones since the last Convention include the ongoing work performed by the Multiple Environment Job Hazard Analysis and Job Hazard Analysis for Field Employees working groups, on which the Co-chair and Presidents' representative of the Committee sit. Their work was instrumental in assessing health and safety risks to employees relating to the pandemic and to workplace harassment and violence at the CRA, among others.

Since last Convention, our Committee has welcomed a new and dynamic co-chair, Brian Oldford (taking the baton from Marc Brière), the departure of long-time Presidents' representative Debbie Ferguson, as well as Annick Lamoureux and Tracy Marcotte, two other long-time local health and safety committee members who briefly served as presidents' representative on our Committee. This past March, the Committee also welcomed a new Presidents' representative Jennifer Macpherson, a local health and safety committee member of many years, who is already proving to be a great asset to the Committee. Mathieu Juneau remains Technical Advisor to the Committee, a role he has occupied since 2015. His work since becoming the Technical Advisor is second to none. The knowledge and professionalism he possesses is greatly appreciated by the Committee and me.

As Chair of the Committee, I wish to thank all these Committee members, both present and past, for their time and dedication to promoting health and safety in the workplace on behalf of our membership. Being on this Committee since 2007 gives me great pleasure and I enjoy this work very much and have a great bunch of dedicated people working to improve the health and safety of all our members at all levels, including our local health and safety committees.

OTHER DUTIES

As the First National Vice-President, I attended most meetings 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 several informal NBoD meetings.

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

Indeed, it is a privilege to meet the Presidents and other Local representatives on a more personal level than at the Presidents' Conferences or during a Convention. The Annual General Meetings are especially rewarding as I get to hear first-hand what the members are thinking 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 have also had the opportunity to speak with the employer's local management teams.

The National President also entrusted me with various duties and responsibilities, including representing the UTE on the National Steering Committee of the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) that are now completed each year.

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.

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 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 interests of our members.

It has been a pleasure working closely with our National President, Marc Brière. We are both in our positions for the first time and as with any new job there are learning curves and I thank Marc for sharing his knowledge and experience acquired when he was First Vice President. He has been a great help to me.

We also work very well together discussing issues related to UTE and sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions with each other prior to Marc making his decisions. I appreciate the fact that he does take the time to solicit and consider my viewpoints.

We have a great group of staff at the National Office, which includes the four employees that report to me, as well as Labour Relations Officers, and Administrative Support personnel who all do a fantastic job. Without this great group of people, Marc and I would not be able to do our job, nor would we be able to represent and provide the services we do to the membership. Thank you to all of you for your dedication and professionalism.

I also would like to thank our Senior Labour Relations Officer, Shane O'Brien. He has been there for Marc and I since we were elected at the last Convention. His knowledge of UTE is second to none, the information he has shared with us and advice he has given me personally, truly cannot be paid back. I am proud to call him a co-worker but more importantly he is a close and dear friend. Thank you, Shane, for all you have done for me!!!

I would also like to take the time and reflect on my brother and friend, Bob Campbell. We lost him in November 2019. It was a heartbreakin loss and I miss him dearly. Bob provided me advice and guidance since I started with UTE about 35 years ago. I like to think that with all his wisdom he shared with me, it made me a better leader, a better person. You are missed Bob, but never forgotten.

It has been a privilege serving the last four (4) years as your National Vice - President and I hope I met your expectations while serving in this position.

I have reoffered for another term and I hope I can count on your support, as you can count on my continue support. I will continue to work as hard as I believe I did for the last four years.

Stay safe and we will get through this pandemic and at some point, we will all be together again.

Submitted respectfully and in solidarity,

Doug Gaetz
UTE First National Vice President