



The PQP Guinea Pigs

Do you find the word *guinea pig* too strong?

Save your answer for the end of this article. It would take an entire volume to dissect and pinpoint the pitfalls of PQP, especially its demoralizing effect on our members.

Those who have had to go through it, those who have refused to apply to competitions because of it, can testify to that. Managers who have implemented it in their competitions seem surprised at its poor results.

Management is aware of the problems with the PQP.

The question is why aren't they doing something about it?

It is time for senior management to step in and put an end to the foul-ups of the system and those of the people running it.

It is unbelievable that CCRA employees are being used as cannon fodder for a process that has yet to prove itself. Even laboratory rats receive better care and are treated with greater regard than our members who are going through the hardship of a process that is "under development".

And we haven't forgotten that the PQP that is currently being used is not the **real PQP!!!**

The PQP in use now, if we can trust the CCRA's promises, is only a pale reflection of what the much-vaunted PQP should be. The latter would be used to manage human resources and build a resource and career management system for the CCRA. That is what the real PQP promises to bring. But what about the PQP currently implemented?

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Season's Greetings

UTE REGIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCES

The Union of Taxation Employees views Health and Safety of workers in the workplace as a fundamental and basic right of all workers. UTE is committed to Health and Safety in the workplace and funds a National Standing Committee comprised of two National Executive Officers and a Local President's representative to oversee Health and Safety of all members across Canada. Delegates at our Triennial Convention in 2002 adopted a resolution mandating UTE to hold Regional Conferences and a National Conference on Health and Safety.

The first Regional Conference was held in Calgary on May 30th to June 1st. Participants from the Quebec, Rocky Mountains, Pacific and the Northern and Eastern Ontario Region's were in attendance. The second conference was held in Toronto, on October 17-19 with participants from the Greater Toronto, Montreal, Prairie and South Western Ontario Region's.

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SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ AVOIR CE COMMUNIQUÉ EN FRANÇAIS, VEUILLEZ VOUS ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE

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- Developing careers or mutilating them?
- Pre-qualifying or qualifying (badly qualifying??) competencies?
- Terrible success rate.
- High level of dissatisfaction among both employees and managers

If the PQP has succeeded in one area, it is in generating consensus among employees and managers on its faults and vagaries.

What is the CCRA waiting for? Why have they not taken action?

Who will dress the wounds and erase the pain left by the PQP among the employees? Stress, low morale, disillusionment, *you name it.....*

Let's not talk about redress; the CCRA is looking forward to the future. To ask it to look back and see the damage is too much.

This was before experiencing the interviews.

Interviews (called **TBI**, or Targeted Behavioural Interviews), suffer from *theoretical anorexia*. The selection committee, which should have two to five people, consists of only one person!!! (Is this for the sake of savings, efficiency or doing more with less?) Anyone who would challenge the evaluation should beware.

The stakes are high.

That person will have to show that his/her version is better than the evaluator's. A little further and it becomes a duel between the employee and the evaluator to prove, to the manager who is right. What about the manager in all this? The one who is empowered to "review the decision"? In whose favour does the manager decide? **Who is right?** Other than using a lie detector, what can we recommend to the manager if the format of the interview remains unchanged? And what recourse is there?

How can we talk about recourse when the rules of evidence are biased by the very format of the process? The employee can never present his/her evidence, and the manager does not have the means that would allow him/her to render a decision!!!.

Do you really believe that the word **guinea pig** is an exaggeration?

To our members who are going through the PQP, whether in the selection process, TBI interviews or the preparation of competency portfolios, and those refusing to participate: Don't despair. **Take your "horror stories" to your union representatives. We will need them in the coming weeks.**

To our managers: make your voices heard. Speak to your policy-making authorities. Remember: **Together we're better.**

Sabri Khayat

UTE
UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 16 – 18

Regional EO
Conference
(Vancouver)

Feb 6 – 8

Regional EO
Conference (Windsor)

Mar 29 – Apr 4

Executive Council &
Presidents'
Conference

Many Thanks

In the aftermath of the **Firestorm** that ravaged a residential area in Kelowna in the Southern Interior of British Columbia, on August 22, 2003, the thoughtfulness and generosity of our fellow staff members have poured into the Southern Interior Tax Services Office. All felt the losses suffered by the staff members who lost their homes.

Thanks must be extended to the UTE locals of Bathurst, N. B. and Toronto North York: the TSO's of London, Burnaby- Fraser, Vancouver, Victoria and the Edmonton TSO Social Committee.

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The final conference was held in St John's Nfld. November 14-16 with participants from the Atlantic and National Capital Region's.

The theme of the conferences was "Our Rights, our Roles, our Responsibilities". The objectives for the participants were to:

- learn the general legislative requirements, regulations and policies that govern health and safety in CCRA
- learn and understand the primary functions and powers of a workplace committee
- learn the appropriate enforcement mechanism for resolving health and safety issues
- learn the techniques of problem solving
- learn how to improve health and safety through collective bargaining
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Participants appreciated the various presentations, workshops, exercises and the sharing of information. Guest speakers, at each conference impressed all with their knowledge and experiences. The question and answer periods proved to be a highlight at each conference.

Letters received from participants confirmed the conferences to be very informative, useful, educational, interesting, excellent and fun.

Chris Aylward & Lina Ruel

the president's corner

Welcome to the "President's Corner" a space where current issues or membership queries will be addressed.

The "Term Employment Study" and the automatic roll over to indeterminate status after a specified period of time, is an important issue to our term members.

Upon becoming an Agency we lost the application of an Exclusion Order, which allowed Term Employees to automatically become permanent or indeterminate employees, after 5 years of continuous employment. CCRA has a "3-Year Review Policy" concerning the status of Term Employees. It has few guidelines, and absolutely no requirement to roll any employee over to indeterminate status.

Through Collective Bargaining, our counterparts in the Treasury Board conducted a Joint Term Employment Study, which resulted in a Policy of automatic roll over to indeterminate status after 3 years of continuous employment. This Policy is currently being put into legislation through the passing of Bill C25. Our Union and CCRA, have now completed a joint study and your employer refused an automatic roll over for our term members. What they want is stronger guidelines surrounding the 3-Year Review Policy. On September 24, 2003, your Union made representation to the Commissioner Alan Nymark, and other Senior Management to meet and write a Policy specific for CCRA. The Policy would include an automatic roll over to Indeterminate status after a specified period of time. To date the CCRA has not agreed to either an automatic roll over, or to meet and discuss developing a CCRA Policy for Automatic Roll Over.

It is a sad commentary, when the CCRA cannot even keep up with the Treasury Board, yet we hear the claim from them that *CCRA is the "Employer of Choice"*.

The issue of automatic roll over of Term Members is at the bargaining table and is a most important issue in the eyes of the Union.

Betty Bannon

The Presidents' Conference Experience

Presidents' Conference is a unique UTE experience, held semi-annually bringing together all of the Presidents of UTE Locals to exchange ideas and information. Locals have the opportunity to fund observers, our local has always sent as many observers as is fiscally possible to these forums. The educational content is so great and the networking possibilities unlimited.

Attendees have the opportunity to observe Executive Council proceedings that transpire immediately before and after the Presidents' Conference. This is a rare opportunity to observe the debate and discussions that shape the course of this union.

Rules of order are employed during the conference. This not only facilitates the debate, but also serves to familiarize the participants with parliamentary procedure when attending other functions, like PSAC convention.

Most of the time allocated to this conference is given over to the Presidents of the 49 Locals. This forum allows the opportunity to voice their concerns to other Presidents and members of Council with a view to continue servicing and representing their members.

Information is disseminated and solutions are formulated.

This conference also affords Presidents a greater opportunity to have input into the operation of the organization, and to form educated opinions about the National Officers that they elect every three years at the UTE Convention.

Time is allotted to workshops, guest speakers and National Committee Reports. Past workshop topics included current issues such as staffing, workforce adjustment and health and safety. Guest speakers have included PSAC and various Federal and Provincial Federation of Labour officials. The National PSAC President usually addresses the delegation. This experience is invaluable, as it is one of the only opportunities that Local Presidents have to personally address their concerns directly to her. In an effort to draw attention to our own political action campaigns or to assist other unions with theirs, participants are often called upon to perform demonstrations, information pickets or to provide assistance on actual picket lines during the conference.

Attending the hospitality suite at conference provides an excellent venue to network and further discuss common interests and issues in a relaxed social setting.

A well-informed, educated activist is a better activist. This conference not only affords attendees the opportunity to build relationships that continue long after the close of the conference, it also serves to motivate participants in their day-to-day struggle of protecting membership rights.

Annette Melanson
President, UTE Local 60005

Debbie Ferguson
Steward, Local 60005

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Additionally, the National offices of the PSAC and the UTE have made significant donations to the various charitable organizations that assist the B.C. Fire Victims. Countless individual staff members and union executives also assisted. The money was raised through numerous activities in local offices and at Union Conferences. Goods were sent to assist school-aged children.

Thanks again to all who have opened their hearts and wallets, you are a great bunch of people and I am proud to work in your midst.

Joy Harrison,
President UTE LOCAL 20026

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Sylvie Bastien (basties@ute-sei.org) at the National Office. If you do not have access to an e-mail, please pass it on (with your PSAC ID) to a local representative or mail it directly to the National Office at 233 Gilmour Street, Suite 602, Ottawa ON K2P 0P2.



Application of Overtime Provisions

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A number of members have asked that the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) provide some direction on the employer's practices with respect to the application of the Overtime provisions (Article 28) of our collective agreement. More specifically, the first issue centers around the practice of working overtime hours at straight-time rates. It appears that in some offices, the employer is encouraging employees to work additional hours outside of their normal working hours, but maintain that they are unable to pay the overtime rates prescribed in the collective agreement due to, amongst other things, budget restraints. Instead, they are advising employees that should an employee choose to work overtime hours, they will be allowed to accumulate time at straight-time rates. In making this offer, they attempt to make it enticing for employees who may wish to take additional time off during the December holiday season or other times without utilizing vacation or compensatory leave already accumulated.

Article 28 of your collective agreement clearly outlines the prescribed rates for overtime work and by authorizing the performance of work during periods of overtime, but paying at straight-time rates, it is UTE's position that the employer is in violation of article 28. Additionally, we suggest that by agreeing to this arrangement, employees are also in violation of their own collective agreement and are placing in peril a hard-earned right acquired for all of our members. Consequently, we recommend that if you are asked or required to work overtime by the employer, you insist that you be compensated at the rates prescribed in your collective agreement.

The second issue evolves around the employer's practice of choosing the form of compensation for overtime worked. In some offices, the employer has indicated that it will only compensate employees for overtime worked in cash while in others, compensation shall only be in the form of compensatory leave. Clause 28.08 of your collective agreement states:

28.08(a) Overtime **shall** be compensated in cash except where, **upon request of an employee and with the approval of the Employer**, overtime may be compensated in equivalent leave with pay [**emphasis added**].

A reading of the above noted article reveals that the normal method of compensation is cash and consequently, such a request for this form of compensation may not be refused by the employer. Additionally, an employee who would prefer to acquire compensatory leave in lieu of cash must make such a request. Employees must be cautioned, however, that any such request is subject to the approval of the employer.

Members should endeavour to be aware of the provisions of their collective agreement in order to ensure that their rights and benefits are respected and satisfied. Should you require any further information about the overtime provisions, or in fact any other provisions of your collective agreement, we suggest that you speak with your local steward or executive officer.

D. Shane O'Brien

ACS-SP Update

Work descriptions and the new format.

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Although the new ACS-SP is not finalized the work has already begun in converting work descriptions into a new format. On September 15, 2003 the ACS-SP working group met and the unions were advised Work Description Writing workshops on ACS-SP have taken place and they have already begun the conversion of our work descriptions into this new format. To write work descriptions under the new format, the employer now has 43 individuals trained in English and 10 in French. The training sessions, based on the June 23rd, 2003 version of the standard, were developed to incorporate changes as required. The UTE Staffing Committee was provided the training October 28th and 29th.

What is this new format?

The work descriptions of the future will not look the same as those of the past. The employer has announced that it is their intention to write a description of our duties to the four factors identified in the Canadian Human Rights Decision on Pay Equity:

Skills Responsibility Effort Working Conditions

as opposed to the current format of writing exactly to the classification standard.

The employer has undertaken a review of key activities that should be listed in each description. A key activity must be directly related to the major aspects of the position in question, minor or sub activities should not be listed. The union questioned the employer on the fact that our collective agreement under article 56 states we must be provided with a complete and accurate description of our duties and does the employer believe that this will be achieved under this format. The employer's response was " Yes we believe we will be providing a complete and accurate description of your duties." The union will hold off comment on this until we begin receiving final copies of the new work descriptions.

A workshop has been developed to train individuals in how to write work descriptions in the new format. **It is not meant to train individuals in how to classify descriptions.** The writing of the descriptions has been centralized. The employer intends to send the descriptions first to the respective Branch for approval and then they will be sent to the union for our input.

A meeting was scheduled for October 27th to provide the union with an update on the status and a copy of the Gender Neutrality Review of the proposed standard.

At the last minute the employer postponed the meeting and tentatively rescheduled it for some time in November, to conduct an analysis of the review.

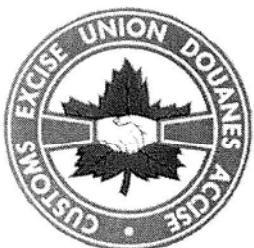
The union will continue to update you on the status of the ACS-SP as information becomes available.

Kent MacDonald & Linda Cassidy

Even Mom Said...



**"Don't leave the table
'til you're done!"**



**We Support Our
2003 Bargaining Team**



Recipe for 'THE BARGAINING TABLE'

Appetizer: Two-Part Soup

INGREDIENTS:

(1) An open and competent bargaining agent (2) components in solidarity (3) A fair-minded employer who respects the workers (4) employer's bargaining team with a mandate (5) union's representative, committed bargaining team (6) Members' bargaining demands (7) Support of the members

PREPARATION:

Bring together, uncovered, the bargaining agent, the components, and the employer. Ensure that the bargaining process is discussed with firm commitments made on how the process is to unfold. When you have a nice clear liaison, add the employer's bargaining team members and mandate, the members of the union's bargaining team to give it a creamy consistency. Bring to simmer on low heat for 5 to 6 weeks. To finish and to bind your soup, add the bargaining demands.

Serve your Two-Part Soup in a large serving dish for all members and immediately get their opinion.

Main course: Membership Flavoured Collective Agreement Roast

INGREDIENTS:

(1) 49 dedicated, active Local executives (2) 10 committed, active branch executives, Executive Council members from devoted united components (3) Appropriate, timely information with an effective communication process (4) The support of informed, active and united members with a strong strike mandate (5) Successive, intensive bargaining sessions (6) Conciliator or conciliation board and its report (7) A right to strike (8) Different pressure tactics used by 100% of the members

PREPARATION:

In a large pot, place the 49 dedicated, active Local executives and the 10 committed, active branch executives. Stir in the Executive Council members from the devoted, united components. Cover it all with appropriate, timely information and be sure to blend in the effective communication process at the same time. Set on the element and cook at medium heat. When the mixture is simmering, add the support of the informed, active and united members To ensure that the dish meets your expectations, support the mixture with a strong strike vote from the members Your mixture will react immediately and you can stir in successive, intensive bargaining sessions. If the mixture does not have the consistency of a stew, you should remove the pot from the heat and add the conciliator or the conciliator's board and its report, to reach the desired thickness and obtain your right to strike. Serve on a large platter.

To garnish your main course, you can sprinkle it with various pressure tactics .

Dessert: Worker Respect Pudding

INGREDIENTS:

(1) Offers that match the members' expectations (2) A tentative agreement, with a recommendation from the union to accept (3) A ratification vote leading to satisfied workers, happy in their work environment

PREPARATION:

In a serving dish, place the satisfactory offers. Refrigerate until you can announce a tentative agreement. On top, add a union recommendation to accept and sprinkle with explanations. Cover it all with a ratification vote. Put the finishing touch on this tasty dish with a glaze of satisfied workers, who are happy in their work environment.

Bon appétit!

Denis Lalancette

**SUPPORT YOUR BARGAINING TEAM
DISPLAY THE PICTURE "Even Mom Said"
AT YOUR WORK SITE.**