

Report on Human Rights and Diversity Committee

Madeeha Choudhry, May 8, 2024

Background

I attend the Human Rights and Diversity Committee (HRDC) as the BC/Yukon representative. This is my second year as member of this committee. I am also Chair of the Workers of Colour caucus, which was established by last year's committee. Caucus discussions and recommendations are reported to the HRDC for further discussion and action.

Meetings

Members from last year's committee met in January 2024 to have a final wrap up of our accomplishments from the 2023 term and discuss any items to bring forward to 2024. The current committee has met twice so far – March 2024, April 2024, with plans to meet at the end of May, and then resume meetings in the fall.

2023 Accomplishments

- One of our goals for last year was to establish the equity caucuses. The following equity caucuses were established – Workers of Colour, Black, Women's, Indigenous, Workers with Disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+.
- The HRDC had a positive presence at last year's AGM. We organized several workshops related to diversity and inclusion that were well-attended and received positive feedback. We also had an information table in order to engage with members and provide attendees with information on the committee.
- The HRDC met with various individuals and groups to learn about topics relevant to the committee, including the Muslim Federal Employees' Network (MFEN), a session on Anti-Asian Hate, and discussions on Steward Representation and Mental Health
- The committee held webinars on Black Mental Health and Finding Your Voice that received positive feedback.

2024 Update

- At last year's AGM, the HRDC put forward a resolution to extend the term for this committee from 1 year to 3 since by the time a new committee starts their term and gains momentum, a good portion of the year has already passed. We are often dealing with long-standing, systemic issues, so a longer term would ensure continuity and a sustained effort. Unfortunately the resolution was never heard, so it will be put forward again at this year's AGM.
- The committee held a Virtual International Women's Day event with guest speakers, and have discussed future educational events or materials, with potential topics being Islamophobia, supporting trans youth and adults, anti-Semitism.
- HRDC released a statement on the crisis in Gaza. It was approved by the board and published on the PIPSC website in late March 2024.
- We plan on growing caucus membership and engagement by putting a renewed call out for members, since the last one was sent over 3 years ago. The committee is also working on developing a communication tool for the caucuses so members can connect with each other and continue discussions outside of caucus meetings.
- We have heard from many members about the challenges they encounter when filing grievances related to discrimination, racism, bias, including encountering stewards that are dismissive, not getting adequate support from the union, similar issues being resolved in isolation, the amount of time and effort it takes to reach a resolution, etc. In response, our primary goal this year will be to develop and propose a streamlined process for these types of grievances so the process is consistent, more supportive and less stressful.