



President Debi Daviau's address to members – AGM 2020

Wow. It has been a crazy year!

But you have been there for Canadians – and for each other. When the COVID-19 crises began, PIPSC members responded quickly to meet the needs of fellow Canadians.

We built the systems to get them the money they desperately needed quickly. We helped thousands of stranded Canadians to return home. Laboratories were converted to make hand sanitizer. Our members worked miracles to get personal protective equipment to those who needed it. We built the technical infrastructure to allow other public servants to continue their work from the safety of their homes. Our health care professionals took on the frontlines. And, our scientists pivoted to important research to find a cure for COVID-19.

I am truly impressed and proud of you all, as public servants, and as union members.

Thank you for joining us for the first-ever virtual PIPSC Annual General Meeting!

We all look forward to this annual gathering to discuss, debate and plan the direction of our union. I certainly miss seeing you all in person, but I appreciate this opportunity for us to connect digitally.

This is just one more way that we have all had to pivot and adapt to our new context. In so many ways it feels like we didn't even miss a beat. I applaud each of you for that, as well as our excellent staff team.

In the early days of the pandemic, we responded quickly to get many members sent home right away, and we advocated to ensure that members who were needed in the workplace were safe.

We cancelled, rescheduled and moved online our most important union meetings. And we never stopped keeping our members informed of our every move.

Our team worked in daily meetings with the federal government and other employers to address challenges in the move to remote work. And our employment relations team worked tirelessly to support members in your individual challenges.

We held telephone town halls for all groups to address COVID-19 and your workplaces. This allowed us to answer members' questions about health, safety and other pandemic-related issues live on the call.

We fought and continue to fight to make sure federal public service workers have access to Code 699 leave – when they couldn't work due to technological or other barriers, and now when it is needed; to care for children, ill family members or themselves. We know that this

crisis has forced many women out of the labour market and we will not accept this for our members.

More than ever Canadians need a strong public service!

There will be some voices saying that the COVID-19 recovery plan requires austerity. At this point, these voices are in a clear minority as people across our country are calling for governments to ensure that no one is left behind.

We have already begun to fight austerity measures attacking the jobs of our members. We are prepared for this fight and we know it is not over.

We fought to protect our MAGE group members in the face of COVID-19 cutbacks. And we continue to push the federal government to provide emergency funding to NAV Canada to support our members facing job losses there. We need to retain air traffic control professionals so that we have the skills and experience we need to keep air travel safe.

We are prepared to fight for all members in the face of any COVID-related austerity. And we will call on each of you to do your part if this threat intensifies.

We are looking toward brighter days, and we are working with many employers to ensure safe return to workplace plans. When it is time for many of us working from home to return to our offices, we will ensure that will only be done in the safest way possible. All of our members are delivering the highest quality work, so we see no reason to rush these plans or take unnecessary risks.

For those members in the federal public service, we are pushing hard to stop the conversion to open offices. We questioned this change in office design and the associated health risks even before the pandemic, and now there is nothing to justify the additional risks our members would be exposed to in open offices.

We will all continue to pull together for each other and for everyone in Canada.

I want to thank each and every PIPSC member. Members of every group and in every region right across the country. I am astounded by your dedication and commitment.

I want to thank every member in an elected role in our union. Every member of the board of directors, every constituent body president and executives, every Consultation team and every bargaining team member and every steward.

I want to thank every union activist. Those of you who have attended webinars, trainings and taken action to make our campaigns so effective. You are the heart of this union and in the year ahead we are going to need you to double down so that our influence is felt by all decision-makers.

I want to thank our PIPSC staff who take our decisions, direction and goals and make them a reality. Your energies and commitment to PIPSC and the Canadian labour movement are crucial to our success. Thank you.

It is all of us pulling in the same direction that makes our union great.

It is why, even in a global crisis, our bargaining efforts have successfully continued.

Our groups at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency have been hard at work. CFIA-IN, S&A and CM have all ratified new collective agreements.

Our IT Professional members at the University of Ottawa ratified their new collective agreement in October. And early in the year, our members at the Yukon Hospital worked hard to come to a deal with their employer as well.

Our members at the BC First Nations Health Authority along with our Radiation Therapist members at Sunnybrook and Juravinski are all in bargaining now, working for fair, collective agreements.

It is no easy challenge to take on the bargaining process in the current climate and so I especially applaud these bargaining teams. Well done.

Our CS group continues to be at the table fighting for a good deal in the face of a challenging employer. We stand with you in full solidarity – the strength of our entire union is behind you.

While it has faded to some degree from the current news cycle, the challenges of Phoenix remain front and center in our union's work.

I can tell you that the work on developing and piloting NextGen has been delayed to some degree by the pandemic, as resources have been directed to the crisis response. That said, we continue to push to see progress more quickly. Every public servant deserves to be paid accurately and on time. And we are making sure our members' voices continue to be heard.

The first pilot department has taken steps toward designing, building and testing a viable alternative to Phoenix. This pilot will be developed over 6 months.

We fought hard this year to keep our new RCMP Civilian Members off of the failed Phoenix pay system. As a result of our work, Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos and Minister of Public Safety Bill Blair recommended that the Treasury Board not to proceed with the planned RCMP deeming date of May 21, 2020. Deeming continues to be delayed indefinitely, keeping our civilian members at RCMP off the disastrous Phoenix system.

We know that issues with Phoenix are being resolved more quickly than in the past. And we know that this is because the federal government has allocated the resources necessary for this to work to be done. We remain vigilant against any cuts to this work, as we know PIPSC members would be directly and negatively impacted.

The PIPSC Phoenix Help team continues to provide one-on-one support for members with new or ongoing pay errors.

We continue to use our collective voice to influence the national political landscape. We are pushing as hard as ever to see an end to outsourcing, to ensure tax fairness and to defend public science.

In January of this year, we released an important report, The Real Cost of Outsourcing which showed that between 2011 and 2018, the federal government spent \$11.9 billion on outsourcing. That's more than the budgets of 5 departments and agencies combined.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to look at this report on our website. I think you will be astounded to see the immensity of the wasted government resources. We've got more to come on this report in the year ahead as we make a case against outsourcing in the federal public service. These are measures that need to be taken now if we are to avoid future cuts due to austerity!

We are also working with members on thousands of outsourcing grievances to protect Canadians against this costly outsourcing.

We continue to participate in the OECD Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative to put an end to tax avoidance. We are fighting to end beneficial ownership practices by pushing the federal government to create a publicly accessible registry of company beneficial ownership information. The federal Speech from the Throne showed promise on tax fairness – our work with partner organizations like Canadians 4 Tax Fairness is paying off.

We are pleased with the reappointment of Dr. Mona Nemer as the government's Chief Science Advisor. This is a position that exists because of our collective hard work.

Our Science Advisory Committee is working diligently for public science in Canada and for the restoration of science-based departmental funding.

The PIPSC Women in Science initiative continues excellent work on equity and inclusion in the workplace. You can expect to see their new toolkit with information and resources on how to take action in your workplaces soon.

Thanks to the leadership of Black PIPSC members, equity and inclusion work is front and center in our union.

In May 2020, police in the United States killed George Floyd which triggered global protests in support of Black Lives Matter movements. The American experience forced a similar recognition of anti-Black racism in Canada. There is now a renewed focus that has encouraged organizations to proactively fight anti-Black racism.

The PIPSC board voted unanimously to create the PIPSC Black Caucus. The Black Caucus is leading and implementing strategies against anti-Black racism; at PIPSC and in your workplaces. Their work immediately got rolling with an impactful webinar. We are here for Canadians, and we are here for each other! The Black caucus brought together PIPSC members to learn about anti-Black racism and how the labour movement can take action.

Following this, our Board then voted to create five equity caucuses – the Indigenous Caucus (dis)Ability Caucus, Workers of Colour Caucus, LGBTQ2S+ Caucus and Women Caucus – to work collectively toward the Human Rights and Diversity committee's overarching objectives.

It is the engagement of members from equity seeking groups that has made this work happen. And I look forward to rallying with these leaders within our union to make sure there is a place for everyone in our union and in every workplace we represent.

White supremacy, sexism, homophobia, ableism and all forms of systemic oppression exist within our society and so exist within our union as well. This will only change when each of us take up the work for justice. Thank you to the members who have spearheaded this work.

As always, we are taking our lead from members across the board.

In our last membership survey you let us know that you were worried about your pensions. And so, we launched a new campaign to protect your pensions.

Thousands of members in all groups participated in our first Understanding your pension webinar series. These sessions provided the information you need to understand your group's specific pension and to prepare for any political attacks against your pension that may come up. This is the first step to ensure a secure retirement for all members.

We have also established a PIPSC pension advisory committee, with representation from various members' plans to ensure we are well placed to advocate for your pensions.

Negotiations for the new Employee Wellness Support Program continue but have also been slowed as a result of diverted resources for the pandemic response.

We are at the table now with the Treasury Board and continue to negotiate. There are still some sticking points but we continue to push hard for a strong result. We will keep you informed as this develops over the coming months.

Delegates, it has been a wild, unexpected and challenging year.

I commend you, again, for your excellent work for Canadians. And for the way we have all pulled together as a union.

We will continue to pull together to deal with all of the challenges of the pandemic and the recovery that will follow. We will continue to pull together to get a Phoenix replacement. We will continue to pull together at the bargaining table. And, we will continue to pull together to ensure our country has the public service that it needs and deserves.

No matter what challenge we face, together, we will get through it.

We are here for Canadians, and we are here for each other!