



**ASPA ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS
PRESENTED FOR THE AGM
APRIL 17, 2024**

ASPA STAFF REPORT

General Office

Our Administrative and Financial Assistant, Angeline Hainstock, will be taking her maternity leave on May 1, 2024 – May 1, 2025, and there will be a temporary fill in for this period. The Administrative and Financial Assistant is on campus Monday – Friday in Kirk Hall, room 304 from 8:00am – 4:00pm. You can contact us any time on 306.966.2471 or by email at aspa@aspasask.ca or, if you are in the area, please feel free to pop by the office and say hi!

ASPA Awards

If you were a recipient of an ASAP service awards and could not attend the AGM to pick it up, please contact Angeline directly at angeline@aspasask.ca to arrange a time to pick it up.

Member Services

If you have any questions or would like information regarding what your union can do for you, please contact Glenn Billingsley. His office is in Kirk Hall room 302 and can be reached at glenn@aspasask.ca or 306.966.7392.

Respectfully submitted by,
Angeline Hainstock
ASPA Financial and Administrative Assistant

BARGAINING TEAM

Following mediation in May 2023, the Bargaining Team met, and the University Team came to a tentative agreement as of July 12, 2023. Information sessions were held on July 20th and 26th (hybrid), and the membership was asked to vote online from August 2nd-9th. The agreement was approved by a significant majority.

The team appreciates the support of the membership during the bargaining process and in ratification of the agreement. Thanks again to everyone who completed surveys, participated in the Bargaining Town Hall, submitted questions, attended the information sessions, and voted! Your participation contributed significantly to preventing losses and making positive changes to our agreement.

I would like to personally thank the other members of team: Glenn Billingsley, Candice Pete-Cardoso, Alexis Dahl, Ken Glover, Kerry O'Shea, Hugh Wagner, LaVina Watts, and note outstanding support provided by Angeline Hainstock. The work done by each, and every person was remarkable, and necessary to our success.

Respectfully submitted by,
Alexis Dahl
Co-Lead ASPA Bargaining Team

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Education Committee is a subcommittee of the Engagement committee and is made up of executive members Angela Ryde and Karen Mosier as co-chairs, and ASPA members: Garry Drake, Kacia Whilby, Patrick Hauser, and Carolyn Hoessler.

The major focus of this committee this year was to work, alongside the other subcommittees that comprised the Engagement Committee, to create new Terms of Reference. This was a time-consuming project but was much needed. The change allows us to focus more on our shared goal of increasing member engagement and working as a larger team.

We also re-established our framework for choosing attendees for conferences to make it a fair process for everyone to take advantage of these opportunities!

Throughout the year we were busy informing you about Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) Conferences as well as other Lunch and Learn opportunities.

Most recently we advertised the SFL Spring School in Moose Jaw, which will be held in April 28, 2024. We will be sending four ASPA members to take part in this incredible learning experience.

In September, we supported a record number of participants to attend the SFL OH&S Conference with 20 members in attendance. It was exciting to see so much interest, and we hope this momentum continues!

The Committee, along with the Members Services Officer and Administrative Assistant, plans and organizes Lunch and Learn Sessions to share information on items in the Collective Bargaining Agreement and services on campus, as well as other topics of relevance.

The following sessions were offered:

- Discrimination and Harassment Office – January 12, 2023
- Article 9: Assignment and Assessment of Duties – March 15, 2023
- Ergonomics and How to Avoid Chronic Musculoskeletal Injury/Disorders – May 16, 2023
- Duty to Accommodate – October 11, 2023
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace – December 12, 2023

If you have topics you would like to see offered, please contact the ASPA office with your suggestions, we'd love to hear from you. Thank you to the amazing volunteers on the committee

Respectfully submitted jointly by,
Angela Ryde and Karen Mosier
ASPA Education Co-Chair (2023)

EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)

The EFAP Board consists of representatives from the Employer and from the unions on campus of ASPA, USFA, CUPE 1975 and CUPE 3287. The Board meets quarterly and provides oversight of the University's EFAP program. All University of Saskatchewan employees and their family members, or those living within the employee's household, are eligible to use the EFAP program **free of charge**. In-person EFAP counselors are located at the U of S Saskatoon campus as well as in various locations across Saskatoon, Canada, and the world.

Respectfully submitted by,
Alain Fafard
EFAP ASPA Representative (2023)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Audited Financial statements have been posted to the ASPA Website and are available for viewing.

JURISDICTION AND NEW POSITIONS COMMITTEE

Jurisdictional Review Meetings

Jurisdictional review meetings are held on an “as-needed” basis to review newly created positions at the University of Saskatchewan and ensure these positions are placed within the appropriate bargaining unit. These meetings are also used to discuss the employer’s request to have a position, new or incumbent, be made exempt. Representatives from ASPA and CUPE 1975 meet with People and Resources and unit SBAs from across campus to determine the jurisdiction for each position. And to determine whether a position should be deemed exempt.

Research Positions

ASPA monitors the posting board on an ongoing basis. As we have noted several positions placed in the “research” grouping that would more, appropriately fall within the scope of ASPA. We bring such positions to the employer’s attention and have had some success in having a number of them brought into the scope of ASPA.

In the 2023-2024 calendar year, the Jurisdictional committee reviewed a total of 18 positions. Seven of those positions were agreed to on a One Year Provisional status, and seven were agreed to as Exempt. Four positions were in dispute, out of which three were stalled due to staffing and removal, leaving one position in dispute.

Respectfully submitted jointly by:
Aditya Manek, ASPA Vice-President
Philip Hitchings, ASPA Vice-President
Glenn Billingsley, Members Services Officer

PENSION COMMITTEES

Academic Defined Benefit Pension Plan

This last year has continued to be challenging due to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing war in Ukraine, but it has improved compared to 2022. One ongoing issue, there was rarely quorum since faculty engagement has been very poor. I will briefly summarize each quarter for the year.

Quarter One – Interviews for a New Global Equity Manager

GQG Partners – Chulantha De Silva, Meredith Richardson, Leah Brock (Bridgehouse)

Meredith introduced the firm and investment team at GQG (Global Quality Growth). Their investment philosophy is embedded in their name: forward-looking quality and growth investment style. GQG has an AUM of US \$88.1 billion as of December 2022 across four investment equity strategies: US, Emerging Markets, Global and International. The investment size is diversified with about \$40 billion funds coming from institutional clients.

Chulantha explained the firm’s investment approach and process; simply put, it begins with idea generation, which leads to research and price analysis, and ends up in portfolio construction. The process is built around the forward-looking quality concept, which is less reliant on backward-looking statistical measures and places a heavy emphasis on qualitative assessments. The investment objective is to achieve an annualized outperformance of 200-300 bps (net of fees) over a full market cycle with less volatility.

GQG has strategically assembled a diversified and thoughtful research team, with the intention of having differing perspectives. For example, the research team includes investigative journalists and accounting specialists, which supports their analysis in developing a comprehensive view.

The firm generally takes a defensive approach to growth and prides itself on protecting in down markets. They can also be quite rotational, making impactful changes to the portfolio as opportunities present themselves, which has largely contributed to their success.

GQG Debrief

The committee was intrigued by GQG and appreciated the unique make-up of the research team as a differentiator. The nimbleness of the firm and their ability to make sweeping changes when opportunities present themselves is also viewed as a positive by the committee. However, the committee did recognize the portfolio is somewhat concentrated with only 3570 holdings, thereby increasing the risk of getting something wrong.

Arrowstreet Capital – Peter May, Anne Luisi

Peter introduced the firm, noting that Arrowstreet is a Boston-based private partnership that began in 1999. The firm currently has an AUM of \$187.3 billion at the end of 2022 with diversification across different geography, investment strategy as well as client domicile. He presented the investment objectives, philosophy and valuation process that are necessary in building a portfolio.

Anne presented Arrowstreet's investment process. The firm has one team and one fundamentally oriented quantitative process that is used to manage all strategies and securities. The process consists of an alpha forecasting model, a risk model, and a cost forecasting model for companies. The firm uses these models to determine linkages among different stocks and exploit these linkages to deliver alpha. She provided more details of the process with an example stock.

At its root, the process seeks to identify "relevant," but "less obvious" information that may provide early signals about a prospective company. Once they have set up these information linkages between related companies/countries/sectors, the quantitative model allows them follow tens of thousands of companies simultaneously. The process is largely the same as what a conventional manager would apply, but on a much larger scale, and instantly. For quantitative managers, the time and effort of the portfolio manager team is not buying and selling holdings but is in the continual analysis and adjustments to the forecasts/models.

Arrowstreet Debrief

The committee found Arrowstreet's process interesting, and clearly successful. They drew comparisons to GQG, noting that one manager (Arrowstreet) is nimble by using technology, a high number of stocks, (150-775 holdings) and very active trading, while the other (GQG) is nimble by making big rotational changes to their portfolio. Performance is quite similar between the two managers over the long-term, though Arrowstreet has more year-to-year consistency.

The committee inquired as to how fees compare between the two managers. Garret noted that Arrowstreet is about 16 basis-points (bps) more expensive than GQG (75 vs. 59 bps), so this consideration could come into play as a tiebreaker if the committee is undecided.

The committee would like some time to digest the information and would like to schedule a follow-up meeting in coming weeks. In preparation for this meeting, the committee would find it helpful if Aon could prepare some simplified graphs and charts to compare the two managers, more concisely. The Pensions Office will coordinate and schedule this follow-up meeting.

Quarter 1 Special Meeting – Selection of a New Global Equity Manager

Committee Update

Garett informed the committee that Trevor Batters, Controller of the University, will fill the vacant Board appointed committee position. Trevor is also a committee member on the other pension plan investment committees, as well as for the trust and endowment investments.

Global Equity Manager Search – Discussion and Selection

Garret provided brief overview of search history and noted that the purpose of today's discussion is to answer any additional questions and, ultimately, decide on a global equity manager. In addition to the selection of the manager, the committee will also need to decide what proportion of the total global equity mandate should be allocated to the successful manager.

Garret provided an overview of the two managers being considered and presented a side-by-side comparative prepared by Aon. Garret summarized some key comparatives, as follows:

	GQG	Arrowstreet
Style	Quality growth	Core
Portfolio makeup	30-50 names	600+ names
Differentiator	Nimble and rotational	Quantitative
Fees	59 basis points (approx.)	75 basis points (approx.)
Historical Value Add	Downside protection	Upside capture
Volatility (since 2018)	Low	Low-medium
Performance Consistency	Good	Very Good

Garret noted that both are high conviction, buy-rated managers and Aon believes either one would complement the existing portfolio.

The committee discussed the benefits to each, noting that both managers bring something unique and beneficial. While some committee members favoured the rotational style and more concentrated portfolio of GQG, others expressed a preference to the low-concentration, quantitative style of Arrowstreet. After some deliberation, the committee put it to a vote. The result revealed a 3-2 vote in favour of the Arrowstreet strategy. The committee unanimously agreed to a 50/50 allocation between Arrowstreet and TD Epoch.

Quarter Two

Update

The committee received the document package from Arrow Street and we are working on it. Trust Endowment also chose them so we are following some of their work. Legal review is ongoing, and we hope to transition by the end of July 2023.

Aon Presentations

A new member of the Aon team, Maciek Kon, worked in the pension office at UBC.

The Going Concern Valuation Results were released on Dec 31, 2022, and was filed August 2023. Assumptions in the plan, discount rate changed to 5.65% from 4.4% last year. Inflation estimate has stayed the same at 2.25%, estimate salary increase of 2.75%, plus 1.5% for seniority, merit, and promotion. Assumption that YMPE is stay at 2.75%. Indexing for first five years after retirement, assumed it will be at the cap of 2%.

Solvency Evaluations/Assumptions have all increased due to bond years.

Going Concern Results

This is on a best estimated basis, so no margins in the assumptions. Assets dropped by 29 million from 2021, but total liabilities dropped by around 21 million. The funding ratio dropped by 4% to 107%. The Best Estimate +5% adds predictions for adverse events, in this case it is 102% funded, and still in a surplus.

Solvency Results

The solvency ratio is at 99.7%, not at 100% but close enough that it wouldn't hurt the members of the plan. It has increased from the year before when it was 94.9%. Contributions are fixed at 8.5 % each for the employer and members.

The current membership of the plan are 30 active members and 200+ retired members.

Quarterly Investment Review

Markets have started to recover, partly based on assumptions that interest rates will drop. Bonds are also up as well, but still volatile due to interest rate uncertainty. Equity market 12 month returns, Canadian market down 5%, unlike last year when energy drove it up. A lot of the Canadian drop is due to currency, so S&P in Canadian dollars is at 0% but down 7.5% in USD. 2023 markets are driven by IT growing over 20%, with a strong recovery, only a few names getting most of the positive gains. Overall, the total fund is up 4.4% YTD. Recommendations continue with Arrowstreet agenda. Due to changes in the glide path, and the time it takes to move real estate assets, we are overweight there and underweight low volatility equities so this will take time to resolve.

Policy Reviews

Several small housekeeping changes are needed to be made. JF is leaving and needs to be removed. Arrowstreet will be replacing them. Minor changes are due to updates in evaluations etc.

Motion to recommend the changes. Approved.

Financial Statements

The statements have been reviewed by provincial auditors and there are no issues. We must recommend them to the Board so they can approve them at the July 2023 meeting. This differs from the AON report we just saw as we don't include the margin in the financial statements. Big news investment returns of -9.6%, so that wasn't great. Loss of fair values of investments -20 million. Eight retirements during the year causing payouts to increase, and payment into the plan has decreased.

Motion to recommend financial statements. Approved.

Motion to recommend the expenses. Approved.

Annual Newsletter

The current newsletter is a regurgitation of the last newsletter with the inclusion of what was in the Annual General Meeting newsletter.

Motion to approve the Newsletter as presented and distribute to members. Approved.

Quarter Three

Appointment of Chair (Board representative)

As per Article XVIII (1-d.) of the Plan Document, the Chair is to alternate on an annual basis between the Faculty Association (Association) and the Board. For 2023/2024, the Chair is to be a representative of the Board. The Board's nominee for Chair is Sandra Baptiste.

Committee Membership

The committee welcomed Doral Johnson, Manager of Pensions, to the committee. Doral has replaced Trevor Batters in the Board appointed committee seat. The committee was also reminded that Gord Sarty has taken a temporary leave from the committee for a one-year sabbatical, which began July 1, 2023. The Faculty Association is in the process of selecting an active member from the Association to fill this vacant seat on the committee.

Quarterly Investment Review to June 30, 2023 – Maciek Kon & Garret Gaetz, Aon

The committee was provided with the June 30, 2023, quarterly investment review report and discussion guide.

Maciek presented an overview of capital market performance for the quarter, noting that global equity market performance remained positive except for emerging markets, which were negatively impacted by slowdowns in China. Market performance was driven largely by a handful of large technology stocks which propped equity markets up in an otherwise bleak quarter. Volatility is expected to remain as high inflation remains a threat to the economy. While future interest rate hikes cannot be predicted, markets appear to be reflecting an environment in which interest rates will remain higher for longer.

Plan Performance

Plan performance was slightly positive in the quarter, with the most significant contribution coming from Jarislowsky Fraser's (JF) equity performance. JF held meaningful positions in a handful of top performing technology stocks, contributing to their positive performance. The TDAM low-volatility equity fund, however, detracted from overall performance given its value-oriented positioning. Bonds' performance was flat and remained consistent with benchmark, while real estate added slight value in the quarter. The total fund investment performance is summarized below:

	2nd	One	Four	Ten
Fund Performance (gross)	Qtr	Year	Years	Years
Total Fund	1.5%	9.0%	3.2%	6.8%
Benchmark	1.3%	8.9%	3.5%	6.8%

The committee received the report as information.

Investment Manager Presentation: TD Global Investment Solutions (TDGIS) Real Estate – Loren Gee, David Tallman

Loren provided an overview of the firm, including firm updates, an overview of the alternative investment team, and an update on assets under management (AUM).

The TD Greystone Real Estate Fund is the largest Canadian real estate fund, with over \$23 billion in assets. As of June 30, 2023, the plan's investment in the fund totaled \$26.7 million. Performance has been strong, realizing an annualized return of 6.83% since the plan's initial investment in 2018. The longer-term performance of the fund has been 9.37% since its inception, in 2003. One-year performance has lagged, however, as the Fund's allocations in office space and retail have struggled since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tom discussed the recent performance in office space and retail which make up 26% and 16% of the total fund value, respectively. While headwinds exist, particularly in the office space sector, 80% of the office space assets are considered Class A and above, and core occupancy has been approx. 82%, with a strong loan-to-value ratio on office properties of 36.9%.

Tom also discussed the valuation process of the fund, noting that third-party valuations are performed quarterly. Recent sales have indicated that sales are in-line with appraisal values, however, sales have been slower in recent quarters, especially in office space. Overall, TDAM believes that the fund is positioned well, and that their properties are well located, well occupied, and well-funded.

Post Presentation Discussion

Following the presentation Maciek and Garret reminded the committee of a \$6.5 million redemption request that was placed with TD Asset Management (TDAM) several months ago for re-balancing purposes. While the fund's redemption queue remains long, TDAM has recently made available a redemption policy which allows investors to redeem up to \$2 million per quarter. Given the uncertainty of the \$6.5 million redemption timing, Aon believes it may be advantageous to cancel the \$6.5million redemption and, instead, fulfill this redemption in multiple \$2 million tranches, over the next few quarters. This will likely allow for quicker rebalancing, as well as reduce the risk of any unfavorable valuations to real estate over the next year. Aon currently has a negative outlook on real estate over the short-medium term.

Other Business

Custodial Review – Results

As was previously announced, the Pensions Office and Treasury Department had undertaken a review for joint custodial services. Garrett informed the committee that this review has been finalized, and the search committee selected CIBC Mellon as the successful candidate. As CIBC Mellon is the current custodian for the plan, no changes are required that will impact the plan.

Arrowstreet Update

Garrett informed the committee that the full redemption of investments managed by Jarislowsky Fraser was completed on September 8, 2023, and the initial investment in the Arrowstreet Global Equity Fund has been funded. Further funding of the Arrowstreet Global Equity Fund will be required to reach the target allocations specified in the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) but will await the partial redemption of the TDAM Real Estate Fund.

Committee Education Guideline

Doral informed the committee of the existing Committee Education Guideline, which was most recently updated in 2016. The purpose of the guideline is to specify the importance of committee education to ensure committee members are qualified and equipped with the knowledge to make important decisions. The guideline specifies that the University will pay up to \$3,000 annually (or, \$6,000 every two years) to fund committee member education opportunities (webinars, conferences, courses, etc.).

Committee members recalled from years prior an agenda item for “Committee Education” and they were provided with a list of education opportunities in the pension space. The committee has requested this practice be resumed to ensure they are provided with up-to-date education offerings and opportunities.

Recalculation Period for Commuted Values

Doral informed the committee of a recently proposed change to the recalculation period for commuted value (CV) payouts. CV payouts occur when a member terminates prior to early retirement age, or when an active plan member dies, and their beneficiary is entitled to the CV lump-sum payout of the pension benefit. The current process outlines that, where a member does not return forms within 120 days, a recalculation of the CV is to take place. While there is a fee associated with the recalculation, the main consideration is that the lump-sum CV payout can be materially impacted by fluctuations in interest rates. CVs are negatively correlated with interest rates and, as interest rates rise, the CV benefit payment decreases (and vice versa).

Through consultation with Aon, the plan’s actuaries, 120 days is defined as the minimum amount of time to require a recalculation according to Saskatchewan pension legislation. However, legislation does not define a maximum. The Canadian Institute of Actuaries (CIA) suggest this recalculation period could be as long as nine months, and most of Aon’s defined benefit clients use a six-month recalculation period. Given this information, Doral proposed to the committee that the recalculation period of the CV payouts for the plan, therefore, be increased from 120 days to six months.

Quarter Four

Aon Presentation

An update with ongoing real estate rebalancing with TD, we are over weighted in it currently, but it takes a while to rebalance since it is not very liquid with having a \$1 million per quarter redemption to slowly bring it into balance.

Quarterly overview of investments

Fixed income, long bonds had a very difficult third quarter, losing 10%, Universe Bonds (Mid-term) lose 4%, short term bonds have strong returns though. Equity markets negative returns for the quarter, but mostly still in the positive for the year to date, but the positive returns in year to date are not broadly positive. So far, the fourth quarter is an improvement. Bond markets affected by the large increases in interest rates, which drove the negative returns in bonds. The impact of these on our overall plan is a drop of about -4 % for the quarter, but still slightly positive YTD.

TD Epoch

Quantitative Investing team has had some people leave, but the team has grown in resources as it has been further integrated. Low volatility is their main way that they choose investments. In many ways this has been a challenge for them during the last few years as volatility from COVID and the companies that have flourished over the last few years are not the type they typically invest in.

Community Education Guideline

The University will pay up to \$3,000 annually for committee members' education on governance, but that is not for the ASPA members of the committee since they have observer status.

Governance

To follow the University guidelines there are noninvestment parts of the role of the committee that should be looked into in a little more detail. To confirm that we are following best practices. Our governance documents should be updated since it has been a while since they have been updated. Aon should be able to help us with this. It would need to be approved by the Board of Governors.

Respectfully submitted by,
Michael Cuggy
ASPA Representation on ADBPP

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The ASPA Research Committee consists of the following members:

- Tanya Robertson-Frey
- Marla Rogers
- Patrick Hauser

ASPA staff support: Angeline Hainstock

I am grateful to all members of the Research Committee for the time and efforts to make this a successful committee.

Committee Purpose

The main role of the ASPA Research Committee is to create and implement a member feedback strategy to support the changing needs of the ASPA Executive, Bargaining Team, and ASPA standing committees on request. This helps ASPA to make evidence-informed decisions that accurately reflect the membership's needs and priorities. The second role of the APSPA Research Committee is to educate the membership and to facilitate transparency of non-confidential results with the membership, where possible.

Meeting Frequency

The committee meets as needed, every four months on average, or more often during a pre-bargaining year. Outside of formal meetings, the Research Committee members carry out work and communicate by email.

Outputs

Between April 2023 and April 2024, the Research Committee created and administered an ASPA satisfaction survey to collect information about the membership. These results will be used during ASPA's upcoming strategic planning session to help the Executive align their priorities with our members' needs. Thank you to all ASPA members who took the time to respond to this important survey.

Future Priorities

The Research Committee remains committed to supporting the future needs of ASPA. To do this, three main priorities have been identified:

- 1) Remain responsive to the needs and requests from the ASPA Executive, Bargaining Team, and ASPA standing committees.
- 2) Administer the APSA Satisfaction survey every year. This plan can help guide effective decision making by measuring changes in member perspectives over time.
- 3) Explore more inclusive research methods. By using diverse and culturally appropriate data collection strategies, the Research Committee can help ensure that all members are heard.

Respectfully submitted by,
 Brianna Groot
 ASPA Research Chair (2023)

Scholarship Committee

2022-2023 ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund

The ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund was established in 2008 and has been administered for fifteen consecutive academic years: 2007-2008 to 2022-2023. Every year the ASPA member and the family member are each required to complete an application form which must be submitted by April 30.

Applicants

There were 116 applications received for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Undergraduate Applicants

Number of Undergraduate Applicants	96
Number of Ineligible Undergraduate Applicants	5
Total of Undergraduate Recipients	91

Graduate Applicants

Number of Grad Studies Applicants	20
Number of Ineligible Grad Studies Applicants	1
Total of Graduate Recipients	19

110 applicants were successful in receiving partial tuition reimbursement for at least one University of Saskatchewan course, completed between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023.

Funding

In the past, funding for the ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund came from the unexpended Accountable Professional Expense Fund (APEF) balances of ASPA members who have left University employment and 50% of the unassigned APEF funds over the individual account maximum of \$6,000. The annual allocation was at ASPA's discretion. This funding arrangement expired on April 30, 2011, with the previous Collective Agreement and the first allotment of the funding agreement was received on May 1, 2012.

According to Article 12.12 of the new Collective Agreement, "Effective May 1, the university will provide an annual allotment of \$180,000 to the TRF." \$177,127 was available for the 2022-2023 tuition reimbursement. Per the guidelines, the pool of applications was reviewed, and the eligible number of credit units was tallied. The annual contribution was then divided by the number of credit units' eligible applicants successfully completed during the academic year (May 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023). In the 2023-2024 academic year, applicants received \$65.00 per eligible credit unit for a total payout of \$175,756.00.

Scholarship Payments

Applicants were emailed regarding the status of their application. The ASPA Tuition Reimbursement was applied directly to the applicant's U of S student account. If the student had a credit on their account and had set up direct deposit with the university, a refund could be requested.

Taxation

In 2009, because of a Tax Court of Canada case, the taxation requirements for the ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund changed. The revised taxation requirement is that scholarship amount(s) paid to an employee's family member are taxable to the family member. Thus, any family members who received a scholarship (tuition reimbursement) for the 2022-2023 academic year will have received a T4A by February 29, 2024. Details on this taxation policy are available from the Canada Revenue Agency website (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/bnfts/dctn/ttn-eng.html>).

2023-2024 ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund Application Form

The 2023-2024 ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund online application form was made available March 10, 2024, for students. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2024. The application form is in the Scholarships and Bursaries channel in PAWS. The application form must be completed by the student. Once the student applicant has completed the application, an automated email is sent to the identified ASPA family member, who confirms or denies the indicated relationship to the applicant in PAWS (through the ASPA/USFA Award Relationship Verification channel). Applicants can expect a notification email (sent to their university email address) by late August.

It is expected that, in accordance with the last Collective Agreement, the fund will receive a transfer of \$180,000 in May 2024 from the university.

The \$180,000 plus money left over from 2023 results in \$183,234 available for the 2023-2024 ASPA Tuition Reimbursement Fund.

Respectfully submitted by,
Alex Beldan
Awards Coordinator

SASKATCHEWAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR (SFL)

ASPA contributed financial support (amounting to \$2.32 per member, or \$3234.08) to the SFL's "Speak Up Saskatchewan" campaign (<https://www.speakupsask.ca/>), which was launched on July 27, 2023. This is a digital marketing and worker mobilization campaign for workers, by workers, to mobilize and demand action on key issues facing regular people. In 2023, 335,000 Saskatchewan people saw 1.7 million ad impressions, and to date over 13,000 people have "endorsed" the campaign via signatures for petitions or by joining mailing lists.

The campaign also included promotion of a "Rally For Our Rights" event at the Saskatchewan Legislature on October 10, 2023, which focused on the government's use of the "Notwithstanding Clause" (S.33) to circumvent the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. This was in response to a controversial new policy dictating how schools deal with gender-diverse students. The "Speak Up Saskatchewan" campaign extends into 2024 as the provincial election nears, and with upcoming bargaining rounds for several public sector unions (including SFL teachers, SUN nurses, and SGEU government workers) expected to be contentious.

The ASPA Executive had a visit from SFL president Lori Johb and Secretary-Treasurer Kent Peterson at our meeting on November 9, 2023. We used this meeting to discuss concerns shared by workers across Saskatchewan as well as those particular to ASPA

members and workers in the postsecondary education sector – including the stagnant state of provincial postsecondary funding in recent years.

Members of ASPA (Executive as well as general members) attended SFL events and learning opportunities throughout the year, including

- Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)/SFL Spring School (Apr 2-6, 2023);
- Prairie School for Union Women (June 12-15, 2023);
- Mobilizer School (June 23, 2023);
- Occupational Health and Safety Conference (Sept 13-15, 2023);
- Unions Supporting Unions (Sept 28, 2023).

Respectfully submitted by,
Julie Maier
ASPA SFL Representative (2023-2024)