

## Executive Summary

At Convention 2008, OPSEU membership passed a resolution to conduct a Social Mapping Project. The Social Mapping Project (SMP) arose from an increasing awareness of the importance of recognizing the changing demographics of Ontario. OPSEU partnered with TWI Inc., a global full-service consulting firm in the area of diversity and inclusion, to work on Phase 1 of the Social Mapping Project. This is a precedent setting initiative in the Canadian labour movement as the first member census conducted by a union, and meets OPSEU's obligations as prescribed in the SMP Phase 1.

The report findings are designed to help OPSEU build a stronger union that understands its members more fully. The collection and analysis of data on various social identity characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity/cultural, dependent care, and language informs OPSEU about the changing needs of its membership. The information collected will create a profile of union attributes, and the skills and assets of OPSEU's membership. This essential information can be used as the foundation for planning, monitoring trends, priorities and programs, to improve the way that OPSEU serves its membership.

### Reliability of the Results

The membership was invited to participate in the census, which resulted in 26,768 members who provided valuable demographic information. It is important to remember that like any survey, the respondents make up a portion of the population and the results should be interpreted with care.

Steps were taken to assess the degree of alignment between the members who did and did not respond. Analyses by region, gender and age indicate that the differences were not found to be considerable. Analyses by division and measures of activism indicate underrepresentation by BPS and non-activist members. These differences are not unexpected based on union history, structure and norms, and we recommend that this be considered when assigning meaning to the results. With this said, it is reasonable to suppose that there are corresponding similarities between the patterns of data from respondents and non-respondents.

As a precedent setting initiative for the labour sector there are no established benchmarks to be used for comparison. One in four members is a sizeable segment of the membership and will provide invaluable information about the current state of OPSEU today.

The findings from the survey tell a compelling story about the union, its members, and their needs. This points to areas for action that can benefit all members in the union and will ultimately make the union stronger in its services.

### Key Findings

Some of the key findings of OSPEU's Membership Survey include:

#### General Demographics

- OPS accounts for 32% of the actual membership compared to 55% of respondents, while BPS is 53% of the actual membership compared to 29% of respondents.

This discrepancy is not unexpected based on union history, structure and norms. The pattern of responses from both divisions is similar on many survey questions, which minimizes any effects of under- or overrepresentation. The proportion of respondents from each region is similar to the actual membership, though Region 6 (and to a lesser degree Region 3) is somewhat overrepresented and Region 5 is underrepresented. These discrepancies in participation raise questions about how the union can better mobilize and engage members in both the BPS and Region 5.

## Personal Demographics

### Retirement

- Roughly 35% of respondents plan to retire within the next ten years. These figures are highest in Region 7 with 41%, CAAT-A with 45%, and in the leadership with 38% planning to retire in the next ten years.

This has significant implications for the growth of the union and for succession planning as a large portion of the union aims to retire within a relatively short time frame. The transition of such a significant portion of the union will impact on the Union's funding and their ability to adequately provide future programs, services and policies.

### Income

- 81% of respondents have an annual income at or above the average income in the general population (which is \$39,386). 37% of respondents have an annual income of \$60,000 or higher. When the figures are broken down they show that CAAT-A reports the highest annual incomes, and BPS reports the lowest levels of income.

At an overall glance, these income levels indicate a skilled and experienced membership and the success of previous bargaining by OPSEU. The higher than average income levels are also a strong point of endorsement toward the goal of being a union of choice. At the same time, the BPS numbers are growing steadily and comprise the majority of the union. OPSEU will need to examine this trend in relation to future revenues and bargaining strategies.

### Disabilities

- 83% of respondents with disabilities have a disability that is not visible, suggesting there may be persons with disabilities of whom the union may not be aware and are likely to require access to programs, services and policies.

This may have significant implications for future bargaining priorities and increasing legal obligations as they relate to facilitating members' accommodations with their employers.

### Aboriginal Ancestry and Race

- 5% of respondents are of Aboriginal ancestry, either First Nation or Métis – with the highest concentration in Regions 6 and 7. 10% of respondents consider themselves to be a racialized person compared to 23% in the Ontario population. By 2015, 100% of net labour force growth in Ontario will be due to immigration, which will lead to increased ethnocultural and racial diversity in the workforce.

The above findings suggest that OPSEU will have two critical roles to play in the future – organizing more of the growing workforce to ensure labour density, and ensuring that OPSEU's own programs, services and policies foster a welcoming environment for the increasing level of diversity.

## Education

- 42% of respondents have college-level credentials, 30% have university undergraduate-level credentials, and 10% have graduate-level credentials.

This tells us that increasing membership participation in union activism will depend on being able to provide learning and development opportunities that properly align with OPSEU's membership's skills, education and abilities.

## Communication

- 81% of respondents expressed a preference for communicating with the union electronically, either through work and/or home e-mail or the OPSEU website; there is a strong minority of respondents who prefer communicating via letter mail or the telephone.

This highlights that the union may need to focus on and explore how best to use this rapid, wide-reaching and inexpensive electronic means of communication with a larger proportion of its membership; also the possible need to educate members about the increasing perils of using work email for non-work related purposes.

## Children and Other Dependents

- 62% of respondents have dependent care responsibilities. However, 17% of respondents with dependents care for other immediate family members, 16% support elders, and 4% care for dependents with disabilities, persons who are often not recognized as “dependents” in support policies.

This suggests that traditional support policies that focus primarily on child dependents may not be relevant for a sizable segment of the membership. With the growing diversity in Ontario to consider, diverse definitions of family or diverse norms about caring for persons outside one's immediate family are also growing. The concerns associated with dependent care affect a large portion of the total membership and speak to the need to ensure that members have the resources and support they require to provide proper care for their dependents (e.g., child care, health benefits, stress-management, flexibility in leave, etc.). This is likely to be an important area of focus for OPSEU's future bargaining strategies.

## Member Activities

- 43% of respondents work unpaid overtime hours. 31% of respondents spend at least two hours per day on housework. 26% of respondents devote at least two hours per day caring for dependents. 31% of respondents spend an hour or more a day commuting to and from work.

Bargaining policies and programs that target work-life balance and focus on more flexible work arrangements may help members better manage such demands. At the same time, the Union may need to consider taking innovative measures, such as offering courses and programs aimed at managing stress and health, to ensure a higher level of engagement from and interest in the union.

## Union Demographics

- 78% of respondents have never attended a union learning opportunity.

If the union aims to increase participation in union learning opportunities, areas to target include examining the degree of availability of opportunities in terms of timing, cost and/or location, identifying barriers to equitable access, assessing the sufficiency of reimbursement programs, enhancing promotion and communication, evaluating the types of learning opportunities offered, and investigating reasons why members choose not to attend union learning opportunities.

The detailed findings contained within the full report provide a strong information base from which to strategically plan OPSEU's next steps. This report provides OPSEU with TWI Inc.'s recommendations to meet and support the objectives of Phase I and to inform Phase II – A Systems Review. There is a substantial amount of valuable data from Phase I that can be further explored in Phase II.

OPSEU has made significant steps toward completing the Social Mapping Project and becoming a union of choice for all. Phase II, examines OPSEU's membership policies and programs to identify and eliminate actual or potential barriers that impede the full participation of every individual in the membership, with the goal of improving member access and participation. The Social Mapping Project will have an ongoing impact by helping to inform OPSEU's future membership strategies.

OPSEU is leading the Canadian labour movement in this initiative with a professional spirit of transparency and foresight.