



CUPE 4163 Union News

Spring 2005

Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4163
University of Victoria's Educational Employees' Union

Cultural Assistants Make A Move!

At the Annual General Meeting in March, CUPE members decided to move Cultural Assistants from Component One to Component Two of CUPE 4163. This decision reflected the wishes of the Cultural Assistants. What is a Cultural Assistant you ask? Well, they offer program support to the work done by Second Language Instructors in the English Language Centre and the French

Language Program. Most of them work full-time in the summer, organizing cultural activities and providing workshops to the students in the English Language Centre and French Language Program. In our union, the Second Language Instructors are members of Component Two. Now, cultural assistants are with them instead of Component One (TAs, RAs, computer workers, etc.). Good luck!

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Equity Matters

By Soma Morse
April 12, 2005

EQUITY AT UVIC FOR STAFF?

Currently on UVic's campus, there are two working groups reviewing equity issues, with one group focusing on employee equity and the other on student equity. The development of the equity review arises from recommenda-

The most recent data provided by UVic is from 2003 and these statistics suggest that for employees with disabilities a large gap exists between available workforce and those working at UVic.

nation based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. Additionally, the Charter Section 15:(2) notes that Section 15:(1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups.

Through its membership to the Federal Contractors Program, UVic benefits from

tions made by the Federal Contractors Compliance Review Report from June of 2004. Organized by the University Equity and Human Rights (UEHR) office, the working groups rely on representatives from constituent groups on campus (including faculty, human resources, CUPE locals 951, 917 and 4163). While both working groups are reviewing equity matters that affect those working and studying on campus, this article focuses on developments stemming from the employment equity working group.

BACKGROUND

As a member of the Federal Contractors Program for over a decade, UVic must comply with equity rights laid out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982). The Charter 15:(1) states that as equals, each individual has the right to protection and benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimi-

access to federal funding dollars such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (or SSHRC) and National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (or NSERC). In addition to these benefits, UVic has several obligations to the Federal Contractor: to maintain and develop its own employment equity program, including equity policy, planning and review; to work towards employment equity for designated groups: first nations, people with disabilities, visible minorities and women; and to report to the Federal Contractor on the status of employment equity at UVic for these designated groups at all levels of employment.

THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY WORKING GROUP

My involvement with the employment equity working group began in November of 2004.

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May 17
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For voting info visit:
elections.bc.ca

Some Employees to Get More Money

Some Teaching Assistants and other employees who use timesheets to log their hours will be receiving extra cheques this month. After a drawn out debate with the University, CUPE 4163 won its case to include timesheet appointments on the list of employees receiving the Graduate Teach-

ing Assistant Fellowship (GTAF) and the Undergrad Teaching Assistant Fellowship (UTAF). (Please note that this does not include casual employment). However, due to the nature of 'time sheeted' hours, the GTAF and UTAF cheques can not be cut until the end of the term, when the hours have been calculated. This will still leave students vulnerable when tuition is due at the beginning of the term.

CUPE 4163 has long argued that all em-

ployees in real appointments should not be forced to use timesheets. Timesheets add an extra level of bureaucracy, delay payments, and (until now) left employees without access to some benefits. Both the union and the University's Human Resources Department will pressure departments to reserve timesheets only for casual hires, where the number of hours cannot be determined before hand. To date, there are only a few rogue departments that are still using timesheets.

Unions in the Community

by David Millar

I recently saw aspects of social unionism in several Victoria projects.

1. Child labour in BC: The Sooke branch of BC Teachers and Victoria Labour Council sponsored an information evening at Camosun College, with the videos *Lost Youth* (interviews with

BC teens injured for life) and *Life Quilt* (stories of Canadian kids killed on the job) which we will try to get for the UVic media

library. In the last 3 years, child labour law in BC has been deregulated to the point of non-existence. 36 young workers are killed on the job in BC every year, and hundreds injured, due to lax or non-existent safety training by employers. Cheating on wages, illegal deductions for uniforms and dead-beat customers are common, and there is no enforcement but "self-help" kits. Right, just ask your 12-year old to see the boss with one of those, no union or government inspector for backup. S/he will be unemployed, fast. Dairy Queen is a notorious offender, but far from the only one. Refusals and delays of compensation by WCB is part of the government plan to pay for its tax cuts for the rich. We heard reps from the BC Federation of Labour and the Cana-

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dian Auto Workers, who have been visiting high schools to alert young workers.

2. "Success by 6": a literacy, child health & development program similar to "Head Start," sponsored by unions, business and United Way, is getting underway in selected Victoria schools. UBC's Dr Clyde Hertzman reported significant improvements in child health and literacy, independent of socio-economic background, by this program in Vancouver.

3. "Poverty in BC" forum organized by Faith in Action (a multi-faith grassroots group) heard eyewitness testimony by pastors of the Upper Room and Open Door, the physically and mentally disabled, their caregivers, and organizers of street people, on the terrible impact of government cutbacks over the past four years. The recent survey on a winter night found over 700 people sleeping on the street – probably a huge underestimate since it was raining hard, and many "shack up" in any space they can find off street. With help/pressure from notorious right-wingers, cities have been trying to use by-laws to push squeegee youth and beggars off the street and out of sight, to avoid disturbing tourists and business owners, but with no real jobs or accommodation. The "job plan" condition for welfare recipients

WORKERS



TOGETHER

is a travesty; it provides no real skill training, and serves as an excuse for cutoffs. FiA invited representatives of all parties in the coming election. Discussion was intense and heated, as street people, the elderly, mothers and the disabled contradicted bland government statements that "people have got off welfare" and that "the situation is improving." Faith in Action, mobilizing ordinary church congregations, was largely responsible for the Campbell government's retreat last month from its threat to cut 16,000 disabled people and single-parent families off assistance forever. For more info on FiA call Marcia 383-7169.

Heads Up! Sessionals to Begin Bargaining

The collective agreement for Sessionals in our union expires on April 30, 2005. They expect to begin negotiations with the University in early May. Their top issues at the bargaining table are pay and workload, health and leave benefits, job security, expenses, and respect for professional status.

CUPE workers in the University Sector: Report from the Universities Coordinated Bargaining

What is the Universities Coordinated Bargaining Committee (UCBC)?

The Universities Committee consists of the President or designate of each CUPE Local at BC Universities. Meetings provide an opportunity for the committee to share ideas and strategies on a sectoral basis both as a small group and as part of a larger sectoral council funded by the Locals. Overall, the committee represents more than 7000 CUPE workers in the sector, including clerical and secretarial, early childhood educators, food services, library assistants, maintenance and custodial, second language instructors, sessional lecturers, teaching assistants, technicians, trades workers and others.

Fighting Back Against Privatization and Contracting Out

Following the lead of UBC, employers at most of B.C.'s universities have been contracting out CUPE work with the Provincial Government's encouragement. Print-shop positions at UBC have been lost and janitorial positions at UVic have been singled out for attempted privatization, however the CUPE Locals affected fought back with the support of the Universities Committee and we will continue our fight.

Fighting to Protect our Members

The freezing of university budgets by the BC Liberals and the downloading of benefit costs has seen a tightening of university departmental budgets in spite of massive tuition fee increases. The Universities Committee shares information on a regular basis about trends in employer cost-cutting that impacts on our members, and develops strategies to fight back to protect our jobs from layoffs.

Fighting for Accessible Post-Secondary Education

Skyrocketing tuition fees have made post-secondary education less affordable and CUPE members' jobs as teaching assistants considerably more burdensome. During the last round of contract negotiations that ended in the BC Liberals' back

to work legislation, CUPE 2278 members demanded tuition remission.

For their members, and more than 95% of CUPE 4163's component one members, paying tuition is a condition of employment. When you consider that teaching assistants top out at about \$10,000 a year and then have to give almost half (over \$4000) back to their employer in tuition, it is no wonder that TA Locals across the country are seeking various forms of tuition relief in their collective agreements, including tuition rebates.

All the University Locals in BC have open collective agreements in 2005 with expiry dates ranging from March 31 to August 30.

The labour movement has long advocated for free public education. Expensive tuition fees are of concern to all workers as post-secondary education becomes a less affordable dream for our families. Teaching Assistants are leading the fight against rising tuition fees for academic workers and for all students. The Universities Committee supports their fight and has worked year after year in coalitions with students to protest against increases to tuition, feeling that the real problem is under funding by all levels of government.

Fighting for Better Contract and Protecting Against Concessions

All the University Locals in BC have open collective agreements in 2005 with expiry dates ranging from March 31 to August 30. The Universities Coordinated Bargaining Committee (UCBC) has worked closely with the Universities Committee to discuss strategies for bargaining this round, with various options for working towards settlements should money become available before the provincial election, or should this be a protracted

round of bargaining under a new government. In either case, political action and bargaining are linked inextricably and the committees have a huge role to play in the possible outcomes.

With public sector wage controls over the past decade most member Locals have received less than a 4 per cent wage increase in the past three rounds of bargaining and we are looking to catch up and put money in our members' pockets this time. Obviously bargaining in other areas of the public sector is of keen interest to us, and through the staff coordinators we are monitoring progress and settlements in the sectors represented by CUPE, and also those represented by other public sector unions who may have an influence of establishing settlement patterns.

We are expecting a tough round of bargaining with employer demands for concessions, particularly at UBC as the employer feels that they did not succeed in getting as many concessions as they wanted last round even with the government on their side. The major issues for the Locals are wage and benefit increases and protecting against contracting out. Sectoral coordination has taken different forms in every round of bargaining but one thing is for sure – the CUPE Locals at BC's Universities are ready to fight and through the Universities Committee and UCBC we will make sure that every Local is offered support and no Local stands alone.



(Continued from page 1)

Meeting once a month, the working group has been involved in several aspects related to equity changes on campus. Thus far, the working group has been responsible for reviewing UVic's employment equity and human rights policy, an assessment of issues surrounding the Federal Contractor's recommendation for a complete workplace survey of all UVic employees, examining the need for increased representation of people with disabilities within the UVic workforce and the benefits of mentorship programs.

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

The revised equity and human rights policy is moving through the final stages of approval, including the Board of Governors during the month of April.

WORKPLACE SURVEY

Details surrounding the workplace survey have yet to be finalized. These details include how the survey will be put into action, the exact questions that will be asked in the survey, whether respondents will be allowed to remain anonymous (or not), and how data

will be shared and protected. What is known is that the workplace survey entails comparing the percentage of designated groups at UVic (within the 15 occupation categories laid out by the Federal Contractor) to the percentage of workforce available. The comparison to available workforce depends on the occupation category, and may be representative of national, provincial or local statistics. Service jobs for example, are advertized locally and are compared to local percentages of available workforce; senior management positions are advertized nationally and these positions are compared to national percentages of available workforce. The somewhat complicated system of employment equity is based on meeting existing percentages of designated groups in each occupation category.

EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

The most recent raw data provided by UVic is from 2003 and these statistics suggest that for employees with disabilities a large gap exists between available workforce and those working at UVic. A presentation to the working group by Rose Mariana Robb (Access UVic) looked at ways to increase the

profile of disability on campus through the employment and retention of people with disabilities.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Mentorship programs were discussed as a simple method of increasing employee happiness, staff retention and productivity. How such a program might be implemented remains a topic for review and discussion. At the very least UVic seems open to supporting such a program, both in terms of funding and administration.

LAST COMMENTS

For me, being involved with the working group represents a positive challenge. As the CUPE 4163 representative to the working group I am learning about the lived experience of equity and the administration of equity through the development of policy (and sometimes the distance between the two). **If you have any questions or concerns, please direct responses to Soma Morse (soma@islandnet.com) or to the CUPE 4163 alternate for the employment equity working group Susan Turner (suturner@shaw.ca).**

OTHER RELATED POLICY WEBSITES

CUPE's Equality Statement: <http://web.uvic.ca/~cupe4163/equality.htm>

UVic policy #1150 Discrimination and harassment policy and procedures
<http://web.uvic.ca/uvic-policies/pol-1000/1150HPP.html>

In the event that your security becomes compromised, UVic has guidelines pertaining to personal safety, threats and obscene phone calls. Should such an event occur contact CUPE 4163.

<http://web.uvic.ca/security/safework.htm> <http://web.uvic.ca/security/threbeha.htm>
<http://web.uvic.ca/security/obsphon.htm>

UVic policy #1125 Violence and Threatening Behavior
<http://web.uvic.ca/uvic-policies/pol-1000/1125vtb.html>

Some tips for classroom teachers
<http://www.educ.uvic.ca/eplsfaculty/rowles/3022.htm>



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Do you want to write something for the CUPE 4163 newsletter? Please email your submission to Melissa at talk4163@uvic.ca

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