

# In Session

Newsletter for CUPE 4163, Component 3  
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4163  
University of Victoria's Educational Employees' Union

Summer, 2007



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# Good News Worth Repeating

## The Strategic Plan, Pro-D, & Pensions



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At this year's Annual General Meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>, I had a few items of good news. Since good news is always worth repeating, here are the items again:

**SESSIONALS ARE IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN:** If you haven't seen *A Vision for the Future – Building on Strength*, made available in February 2007, check out Objective 6 on page 18 (you can view the document online at [web.uvic.ca/strategicplan](http://web.uvic.ca/strategicplan)). The objective is "To recruit outstanding sessional instructors and recognize the integral role they play in supporting a high-quality learning environment." Key strategies name career opportunities, professional development, an orientation program, and effective communication with sessionals. I believe that the reason we're in the document at all is due in part to a meeting of about a dozen sessionals with members of the Planning and Priorities Committee in February, 2006. Thank you to Susan Turner (Past President of Component 3) for organizing that meeting and to all those sessionals in attendance who spoke frankly, articulately, and passionately.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR CONTINUING SESSIONALS:** As per Article 16.03 of our collective agreement, there is a Central Pro-D fund for Continuing Sessional Lecturers for amounts up to \$1000 or \$500 (depending on level of participation in a Pro-D event). The guidelines and application form are available through the Learning and Teaching Centre ([web.uvic.ca/terc/teaching\\_grants/index.htm](http://web.uvic.ca/terc/teaching_grants/index.htm)). The next deadline is July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 for professional development activities that take place between August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009 (18-month window).

**TIP:** Keep all your receipts and boarding passes! You need to submit proof of travel (e.g., boarding passes) as well as proof of payment (a receipt that shows you paid for your travel ticket, a stay in a hotel, etc.). I found out that a hotel bill was not enough – I needed proof of paying that bill.

### UNIVERSITY PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS ON EXTRA TEACHING:

The 2006-07 Orientation Package for Component 3 Members stated that for Continuing Sessionals, the University would only contribute to your pension account (Money Purchase Plan) based on your unit allocation. If you were to teach extra courses above your unit allocation, but below the full time level of 15 units per year, you could contribute to your pension plan (3% of earnings) but the University would not make its contributions on the extra teaching. Human Resources reversed this decision, due to the hard work of your office staff. The University will make its contributions to your pension account (8.37% of earnings) based on your total teaching, up to the full time level of 15 units. Pension statements for the calendar year are sent out in late March. Be sure to check it over when you get it, as this is your record of the University's contributions.

As we head into summer teaching, be sure to promote your courses and those of your colleagues. Many of the courses offered in the summer are taught by sessional lecturers, and these courses are often "subject to enrollment", meaning they only go ahead if there is a certain number of students registered by a certain date. So go ahead and promote your courses – announce them in classes, put up posters, take out an ad in the Martlet. Have a great summer, everyone.

*Dave Mc Kercher is a Continuing Sessional Lecturer in Linguistics. He has served on the executive of CUPE 4163 since October 2005 and is currently President of Component 3. He is also the CUPE 4163 representative on the University Health & Safety Committee (see bio on page 7).*

## In Session

Newsletter for CUPE 4163  
University of Victoria's Educational Employees' Union

Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 4163  
University of Victoria, Business & Economics Building, Room 396  
Box 1700, Stn. CSC, Victoria BC, V8W 2Y2  
Tel. (250) 472-4778; Fax: (250) 472-4806  
[cupe4163@uvic.ca](mailto:cupe4163@uvic.ca); [www.cupe4163.ca](http://www.cupe4163.ca)



*This newsletter was produced with both volunteer and union labour. CUPE 4163 staff are members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, local 467. The newsletter is printed at UVic by CUPE 951 members.*

### Submissions

Please submit letters, comments, ideas and articles for "In Session" to our e-mail address at [cupe4163@uvic.ca](mailto:cupe4163@uvic.ca).

### About CUPE 4163

CUPE 4163 is made up of approximately 1500 members and represents: Specialist Instructors (Teaching Assistants, Lab Instructors, Computer Lab Assistants, Academic Assistants, Cultural Assistants and others), Second Language Instructors, Sessional Instructors, and Music Performance Instructors. Together, CUPE 4163 members perform about two thirds of the instruction at the University of Victoria. The local is made up of three "components." Component One is made up mostly of Teaching Assistants, Lab Instructors, and Computer Lab assistants. Component Two is made up of Second Language Instructors and Cultural Assistants. Component Three is made up of Sessional Instructors and Music Performance Instructors.

# The Limited Term Contract at UVic?

## Contrast between Sessionals and LTCs

As a sessional instructor at UVic, I've asked myself on more than one occasion during the past year why I'm being paid somewhere between one quarter and one half the salary of my tenure-track colleagues in the Department of Political Science. Considering the fact that I'm teaching at least two more courses than they are, and pursuing an active research agenda, this appears to be a legitimate question. Part of the answer lies in the fact that my department (and the rest of the University I've been told) only offers Limited Term Assistant Professor Contracts (LTCs) in very exceptional circumstances. Instead, they pay people like me on a per course basis in order to fill vacancies and/or holes in the department.

From my experience searching for jobs at other universities in Canada, a Limited Term Contract (LTC) entails teaching a regular course load (compared to tenure-track faculty), and being compensated at the base level for an Assistant Professor at the university in question. I've applied for such jobs at St. Mary's, Dalhousie, St. Francis Xavier, Trent, Laurier, and Laurentian. This was also the case at Queen's, where I did my PhD. Often they even provide research funds and relocation expenses. Thus, when a tenured/tenure-track professor is on leave (maternity/paternity, for example), or sabbatical, or when a professor unexpectedly leaves his/her position, the universities mentioned above normally advertise a LTC to replace this person. This person is then treated the same as an Assistant Professor for the length of the contract.

This, however, is not normally the case at UVic. For example, a professor in Political Science left UVic last year for another job. In order to fill this vacancy the University decided not to advertise a LTC, but rather to search for a sessional instructor to teach the courses at a bargain rate. This is where I emerged from the reserve army of labour to serve my time as a sessional instructor at UVic. With very few jobs available in my field, I was forced to accept literally anything I could find, including this sessional appointment at UVic. I'm now working 60-80 hours per week for the pittance that sessionals are paid at this university. This is a conscious decision taken by the University in order to save money; yet it comes at the expense of people's livelihoods, dignity, and well-being. Furthermore, my students are also paying the price, as they are forced to sit through Power Point lectures where my six-year old (and failing) laptop malfunctions, largely due to the fact that I can't afford to buy a new computer.

The rationale for paying me such an abominable wage is that I'm simply teaching, and not engaged in research that contributes to the profile of the University (like tenure-track faculty); however, this is not the case. I've published two articles this year (March 2007 and May 2007) in reputable academic journals, with a third currently under review. All of these articles have, or will have, the University of Victoria's name on them. Furthermore, this is not merely a hobby that I enjoy doing in my spare time, but a mandatory activity if I ever hope to escape the sessional dilemma and secure a tenure-track job. With a freshly minted PhD. (Dec 2006), I would be pre-emptively destroying any hope of a career in academia if I did not publish this year. The University knows this, and yet makes no effort to compensate me



accordingly. This is 'free' publicity for UVic

Although sessionals are being exploited at every institution across the country (see the Maclean's article on the

www.cupe4163.ca website), at least some universities make more of a concerted effort to fill vacancies with LTCs, rather than sessionals. Furthermore, the fact that UVic fails miserably on this front appears to be met with very little resistance. We can only blame ourselves for this, which leads me to a few brief comments on the possible ways forward for those of us who find any of this to be problematic. First, it must be stated clearly that this is a PROBLEM, not simply the "reality" that we are faced with. Human beings determine what reality looks like, and that means each and every one of us. Second, we should all get involved with CUPE 4163. The Union is only as strong as its members make it, so we need rank-and-file members to be active participants in the Union's activities. This ranges from simply attending Annual General Meetings, to joining the Political Action Committee (contact me at thomasd@uvic.ca for more info.), to representing the Union on committees across campus. Third, pressure must be applied on the UVic Administration in order to achieve any further gains for sessionals. We do not need to wait for another round of bargaining for this to happen, but can organize and become actively engaged at any point in time. Finally, we must recognize that the push to make labour "flexible" - meaning casual, part-time, short term, seasonal, etc. - is occurring on a broader scale, both domestically and globally, and in nearly every industry. Thus, we need to connect with the larger labour movement (both organized and not) in order to struggle, in solidarity, for a more just and equitable world.

*Dave Thomas is the 2nd Vice President of CUPE 4163's Component 3. He is a Sessional Lecturer in Political Science (see bio on page 5).*



**Get Oriented!**  
The Component 3 Orientation Package is your guide to the 2006-2010 contract. It simplifies the contract into one page, and explains how the union works.

You can download a colour pdf copy from our website or email us for a B&W printed copy.



# Know your Contract

## Understanding the Salary Grid

Many of the “Frequently Asked Questions” we receive from sessionals are about the pay scales (p. 30-31 of the Collective Agreement). This article will attempt to answer the most common questions, as well as provide information on changes to the pay scales that were negotiated in the last round of bargaining.

Two of the most common questions are: “Where do I start on the pay scale?” and “How do I move up a step?” These questions are common because the answers to them are not in the collective agreement – they are covered by University or departmental policies. The obvious answer to where one starts is at Step 1, but there is opportunity to negotiate with your department. For example, most incoming sessionals with a PhD. will start at least on Step 3. You may also receive credit for teaching experience at other universities, which can allow you to start even higher.

Besides the GWIs, we also negotiated a reduction in the number of steps on the pay scale. This lessens the gap between Step 1 and the top step, and also significantly increases the salary at Step 1. On May 1, 2007, and again on May 1, 2008, we drop the current Step 1 from the salary grid. You can see this reflected in the pay scales in the collective agreement, as we move from an 8-step grid in May 2006, to a 7-step grid in May 2007 and finally to a 6-step grid in May 2008.

To implement the new salary grids, all sessionals below the top step will “move up a step” in May 2007 and May 2008. What this means is if you were at Step 2 on the May 2006 grid, you would remain at Step 2 on the May 2007 grid, but Step 2 is now worth what Step 3 was on the previous pay scale (along with the 1% GWI this year). You will then move up to Step 3 on the new grid in September, as part of the regular step increases. The same thing happens again in May 2008: if you are on Step 3, you remain at Step 3, but it will be worth what the current Step 4 is worth, plus the GWI for 2008. If you are already at the top step of the pay scale, you will remain at the top step (i.e. those at Step 8 on the 2006 grid will be at Step 7 on the 2007 grid, and then Step 6 in 2008), but you will receive the general wage increase each year.

The grid provides an example of the salary for a 1.5 unit course for a sessional who started at Step 1 in September 2006, through the final year of the collective agreement.

*Sean Hillman is the Business Manager for CUPE 4163 and holds a Law degree from Dalhousie.*

Date	Step	Salary
Sept 1, 2006	1	\$4,328
May 1, 2007 (drop step 1 + GWI)	1	\$4,556
Sept 1, 2007 (move up step)	2	\$4,740
May 1, 2008 (drop step 1 + GWI)	2	\$5,032
Sept 1, 2008 (move up step)	3	\$5,220
May 1, 2009 (GWI)	3	\$5,404
Sept 1, 2009 (move up step)	4	\$5,600



*Susan Turner wearing her plastic ceremonial ring as she signs the contract.*

In order to move up to the next step on the salary grid, you must teach at least 1.5 units (one standard full-term course) in the previous year. Step moves occur in September of each year, so you must teach 1.5 units between September 2006 and August 2007 to earn your step increase this year.

Another question we often receive, particularly in the summer, is, “How much am I actually being paid for this course?” Because the salary grid is expressed in monthly amounts, rather than simply per course or units taught, it is not always readily apparent how much a particular course is worth. The monthly amounts in the pay scale are based on a standard

one-term (4 month) course. If you are teaching a summer session course (other than a ‘K’ section course), simply multiply the amount in the table by 4 to find out the total salary for the course. For example, as of May 1, 2007, a 1.5 unit course at Step 1 of the salary grid is worth \$4,556. The same course at Step 7 of the grid is \$5,768.

There are also a number of changes to the salary grids as a result of the most recent round of bargaining, which concluded in March 2006.

First, there are General Wage Increases (GWIs) in each year of the agreement. These apply to each step in the salary grid. They occur on May 1 of each year, and range from just over 1% (May 1, 2007) to just over 3.5% (May 1, 2009).

## MEMBERS IN PROFILE



*Dave Thomas*

Sessional Instructor, Political Science  
2nd Vice President

Dave recently completed his PhD. from Queen's University in December 2006, and has been teaching in the Political Science Department since September 2006.

Dave teaches courses related to the politics of "developing" countries, and in particular, African politics. His research interests include: South African politics in the post-apartheid period; politics of sub-Saharan Africa; international political economy; and Canada's relationship(s) to the "Third World". Dave lived in Johannesburg SA for five months while conducting field research for his dissertation in 2004.

As a grad, Dave was deeply involved with two (failed) attempts to organize the TAs at Queen's with CUPE. Drawing on this experience, he was eager to become involved with CUPE 4163 upon arrival at UVic. Dave is currently the 2nd Vice-President of Component 3, and is working toward creating a vibrant Political Action Committee (please contact him at [thomasd@uvic.ca](mailto:thomasd@uvic.ca) for more information).

Dave was born and raised in Calgary, and is the youngest of four children.

## MEMBERS IN PROFILE



*Christine Wadge*

Continuing Instructor, French  
1st Vice President

Christine Wadge was born in Normandy, France. After working for a short time as a secretary and civil servant, Christine emigrated to England, earned a BA in French at Warwick University, and taught Business French at east Warwickshire College. Then she emigrated again, this time to her husband's native Canada, and started her long career (nearly 20 years) as a sessional in the French Department at UVic.

Christine has been an active unionist in all three countries, starting in her teenage years with the French Union locale CGT. She helped with organizing the sessionals into CUPE 4163 back in 2000.

Christine sat on the bargaining teams that negotiated the last two collective agreements. She has been on the executive of CUPE 4163 for many years, and is currently the First Vice-President.

# Cell Phone Booths

## What about cell phones in the classroom?

Type in “cell phone debate” at Google and three tend to come up. The first is over whether cell phone use has negative physical health consequences to users or others. The second, or ‘safety’ debate, is over whether cell phone use compromises users’ ability to pay attention to the effects on themselves or others of their behaviour. Finally, there are those items which debate the social consequences of cell phone use. Let’s call these the etiquette debates.

Questions about cell phone use in schools are mostly etiquette debates. Specifically, schools have wrestled with the decision whether to prohibit students using their cell phones on school property and especially during class time. Why?

Rules of etiquette limit what often appears to be harmless behaviour to the individual. It’s just that on a certain scale, in certain places, etc., this sort of behaviour erodes our feelings of society with one another. So, rules of etiquette develop mainly for one reason: to maintain the social order, whatever it happens to be.

Naturally, certain rules of etiquette will come to feel very old fashioned, even oppressive as the architecture of one’s social order evolves and changes. The young are usually the first to feel the pinch and tend, foolishly, to cast all rules of etiquette out with the uncool ones. But as they mature, they come to realize the necessity of such rules and the importance of fitting them for the preservation of that social order one’s community actually endorses. New technologies sometimes break out and escape etiquette’s grip. But never for long.



One finds considerable support within the cell phone etiquette debate for very stringent rules regarding cell phone use. It is considered very rude to use them in front of anyone. One has only to think of the once ubiquitous ‘phone booth’ to see another instance of this particular rule of etiquette in action.

Unless otherwise formally agreed to (e.g. certain business contexts), all person to person phone calls are by definition and therefore by default, private calls and as such should be made away from the ears of those whom they do not, in one way or another, concern so as to avoid causing accidental or unintended overhearing.



So, what about cell phones in the classroom? The debate sets those who believe cell phone activity (which can include ‘waiting for’ or ‘hoping for a call’) interferes with learning because it occupies the student’s attention so completely against those who insist it is his or her family’s right to have total access to the student and the student’s right to call for help should an emergency develop in the classroom. The problems for elementary, middle and high schools are complicated by the fact these students are minors.

The ‘emergency’ principle here seems to be: When an emergency occurs, we must be able to contact family members as soon as possible to inform them. No one will disagree with this principle. But note that if we had at our disposal implant technology so that we could always be instantly reachable, we would all be perpetually engaged in communication activity and thus less and less or even unavailable for other things needing our attention. Especially learning. So, this principle is not enough on its own to justify allowing cell phone activity in classrooms.

We often delay giving someone bad news on the grounds doing so later rather than earlier will not harm anyone and will give the receiver some happiness they might not have otherwise received. When we say, ‘we didn’t see any point in ruining your holiday,’ for example, even if our decision to delay was a wrong call, the receiver usually understands.

So there are obviously conditions attached to the emergency principle which need to be worked out. Timing is clearly an issue here. But so is our definition of an emergency. The concept of an emergency is necessarily social and therefore must have an objective component that needs to be spelled out in any cell phone policy.

The Toronto Public School Board has instituted a school board wide limit to cell phone activity by students. The policy calls for their powering off and putting out of sight of all such communication devices during instructional time. This is seen as a fair compromise between those concerned with social consequences (disruption) and those concerned with individual rights (access). The question is, how will violations be handled? If they are not handled seriously, then the rule is biased in favour of rogue cell phone users.

I have the same policy in my classroom and violations are handled summarily. But what we really need is a university wide policy in line with the Toronto Public School Board policy when it comes to cell phone power during instructional time. They should be powered off and stowed during instructional time.

*Susan Turner is a Continuing Sessional in Philosophy. She sat on the bargaining team and is the past President of Component 3.*

# TILMA & Universities

What is the impact of the new trade agreement?



April 1, 2007 marked the formal passage into law of the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). While TILMA does not take effect for 2 years at the Post-Secondary level, during that 2-year transition it prevents institutions from making policies that run contrary its terms.

BC campuses today preside over a myriad of private sector activities, such as measures that restrict the way retail businesses are able to operate on campus, or policies that govern the commercialization of research. TILMA places a large question mark over an institution's autonomy to regulate these kinds of activities, because the Agreement explicitly bans regulations that "restrict investment".

Furthermore, TILMA requires that BC and Alberta standards and regulations be "mutually recognized" or harmonized. Unlike the earlier Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), there is no protection against downward harmonization.

It is not clear how harmonization will apply to universities and colleges. Will, for example, standards applied by BC universities to the privatization of public research have to be reconciled with those used in Alberta's universities? Will BC's stricter limits on private colleges and universities be reconciled with Alberta's?

TILMA also makes it difficult for college and university authorities to implement procurement policies that provide preferential treatment to local or ethical businesses.

TILMA provides for panel-based adjudication of disputes, and for the awarding of penalties of up to \$5 million. However, colleges and universities will not be permitted to defend their measures before TILMA panels. They will have to rely upon representation provided by the Provincial Government -- a signatory to the TILMA. In the event of a negative panel ruling, the province is obligated to ensure that colleges and universities change what they are doing to comply with the ruling.

In short, TILMA gives private interests significantly increased powers to challenge the actions of post secondary institutions. If left unopposed, TILMA will act as a sweeping constraint on the governance of public sector authorities. To deal with this threat, colleges and universities should immediately begin pressing the provincial government to have the post-secondary sector in its entirety made exempt from provisions of TILMA. This is the surest way for negative risks and impacts to be avoided altogether.

*This article is a summary from CUPE National Researcher John Malcolmson. For more information please contact [cupe4163@uvic.ca](mailto:cupe4163@uvic.ca).*

## MEMBERS IN PROFILE



*Dave McKercher*

Continuing Instructor, Linguistics  
President

Dave McKercher has a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Calgary. He moved to Victoria in 1985 to be an Education student in the Post-Degree Professional Program. After completing his B.Ed. degree in May, 1987, he was hired as Lab Instructor in Biochemistry and Microbiology and taught a biochemistry lab techniques course for 6 years. During this time, Dave took courses in Linguistics at UVic and discovered a passion for the study of language structure and patterns. He completed an M.A. at UVic in 1996 and went on to complete a Ph.D. degree at Stanford in 2001. Dave's first academic job was at UVic as an Assistant Professor in Linguistics, followed by a stint as a sessional at SFU, then a year as an Assistant Professor at U of Toronto.

Dave returned to UVic in 2003 as a Sessional Lecturer in Linguistics and this is where he has remained. When he recognized the importance of CUPE 4163 in raising the profile of sessionals at UVic and in improving their employment situation, he joined the executive.

## Deadline for Submitting Pro-D Application, July 31

The UVic Sessional Lecturer Professional Development Fund submission deadline is 4:30 PM, Tuesday, July 31, 2007.

This is a new fund to support the professional development of Continuing Sessionals at UVic. Deadlines are twice per year. Guidelines and application forms can be found online:

[http://web.uvic.ca/terc/teaching\\_grants/](http://web.uvic.ca/terc/teaching_grants/)

## CUPE BC Convention in Victoria

CUPE BC's 44th annual convention was held in Victoria. Delegates met May 9-13 to elect a new executive and vote on a range of issues.

For the first time in the union's history, all four general vice president positions on the CUPE BC executive board will be held by women. Barry O'Neill was acclaimed as president for a sixth term, while Mark Hancock was acclaimed for his second term secretary-treasurer. For a full list of executives and conference details, please check the CUPE BC website ([www.cupe.bc.ca](http://www.cupe.bc.ca)).

## CUPE 4163 Social Justice Fund

At the CUPE 4163 Annual General Meeting in March 2007, members voted that the recipient of the CUPE 4163 Social Justice Fund be Haliburton Farm ([www.haliburtonfarm.org](http://www.haliburtonfarm.org)).

Once a year CUPE 4163 members donate \$1 from their pay cheques. This fund is used to donate to groups working around the world that pursue goals that members deem important. Past beneficiaries include: The Stephen Lewis Foundation (twice), the Mustard Seed, and Save The Children Foundation.

Send the union an email with your suggestions for the next recipient. Members will choose the next recipient in October.

## Workshops for Members

This Spring, our Director of Communications, Melissa Moroz, is organizing workshops of interest to members. Past topics included "Resolving Conflict" and "Bargaining Unit Supervisors". Check your email for future workshops.

## University Representatives Needed

The University President appoints representatives from CUPE 4163 to various ad hoc committees (e.g., benefits, Pro-D, accommodation, Health & Safety, etc.). We are always looking for representatives.

We are also looking for volunteers to sit on union committees. It's extremely important that members from a diverse group of departments participate. Committees are where the 'participation' in participatory democracy happens! Lack of skills or experience need not inhibit anyone from joining a committee, as there is free training.

## Learning & Teaching Centre Summer Events

**Learning and Teaching Centre events are open to all those at UVic interested in instruction. Whether you are a Term Sessional or a Continuing Sessional, we encourage you to take advantage of the LTC's resources. You can contact them at 721-8571 or [lrc@uvic.ca](mailto:lrc@uvic.ca)**

### Instructional Technology Working Group (ITWG) Open Access for University Curriculum:

Discussing the MIT Experience  
Tuesday, May 15, 2007, HHB 128 1:30 PM ~ 2:30 PM

### Workshop in Writing Multiple Choice Tests

Wednesday, May 23, 2007, HHB 128 9:30 AM ~ 12:00 PM

### Developing Your Teaching Dossier Workshop and Support Group

Tuesday, May 29, 2007, HHB 128 11:30 AM ~ 1:30 PM

### Support Group

Once you have started assembling your dossier you are invited to participate in a group that will meet regularly during the summer to provide motivation, feedback and support to members. Joining this collegial group will allow you to have your dossier ready for the 2007-08 year in a low-stress environment. To join the group please email [lrc@uvic.ca](mailto:lrc@uvic.ca).

### New Faculty, Instructor and Librarian Orientation

Sunday, August 19 ~ Wednesday, August 22, 2007  
HHB Lobby, 105, 110, 116, 120 and 128

### One-on-One Consultations on Teaching By appointment

Summer is often the best time to develop or revise courses, re-think that assignment you don't enjoy teaching or consider how to improve your teaching evaluations. The Learning and Teaching Centre provides a confidential one-on-one consultation on any aspect of teaching enhancement.

Please mail to: