

Professional Employees Association

UVic Chapter

President's Report

(1997-1998)

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by but it is time again to take a look back over the past year, and to set some goals for the future.

This year was again a very busy one for the UVic Chapter of the PEA. Internally, the largest job of the year was of course the negotiation of our second Collective Agreement. This round of bargaining consumed about two full days per week for your committee members from January through August. You ratified the agreement on September 18/98, the Board of Governors ratified it 10 days later.

Some of the highlights of the agreement are:

- Progression to the ceiling! (guaranteed annual 1.5 percent increases from the Job Rate/Normal Maximum to the Ceiling, and annual 3 percent increases below that)
- Health care improvements (effective July 1/2000)
- 2 percent across the board increase (effective July 1/2000)
- 10 percent salary increase on promotion
- CSI members moved onto the grid at Salary Grade 1
- Improved "academic freedom" language
- No contracting out if layoff will result
- Improved severance provisions
- Conversion to regular status for Term appointees after the job has existed for 3 years.
- Improved recognition of union representatives' time commitments
- Many "language" clarifications

We also achieved some "off table" improvements to our Professional Development Expense Accounts (now \$250 per year plus a special central fund which receives \$50 per member per year effective July 1/99)

I should note that there are still a handful of items which we were unable to bargain successfully. Not the least of these is the Extra-To-Load appointment issue, which we will continue to work on through our contacts in the Faculty Association (since those appointments are covered by their agreement). We also have strong feelings about member involvement in the appointment of senior administrators (e.g., Deans, Directors and up). We will continue to press for representation on those search committees. Early retirement is also important for many of our members.

Copies of the new collective agreement will be ready for distribution to all members shortly.

Another major occurrence for this year was the inclusion of a new group of employees into our bargaining unit (the Continuing Specialist Instructional or CSI staff). The agreement incorporating the CSI group into our unit was signed January 29/98 and effective April 1/98, but the normal severance provisions of the Collective Agreement will not apply to CSI staff until July 1/99.

Many private individual concerns were also addressed this year by our PEA Staff Officers Elaine Doyle (who left the PEA in August) and now John Forde. Some of these issues made it to the Association/University Committee. This year was the worst year we have had in the Chapter for problems affecting individual members. Stress levels have been very high for many members so it is probably fortunate that the Employee and Family Assistance Plan also came into effect during last year.

Several members have identified various work scheduling problems, especially in cost-recovery departments. If you are having troubles, please talk with John Forde, our PEA staff officer (385-8791, jforde@pea.org).

Some other items of note that happened this year include the Salary Deferral Plan being finalized (with information to be distributed to members shortly). We also got agreement from the administration that the draft Intellectual Property and Conflict of Commitment policies would not apply to our employee group and that these issues would be negotiated separately with us. Also at our request (after initial resistance) the administration agreed to release the CASS Review document publicly.

The Job Evaluation plan has not moved ahead very far since our last AGM. We have succeeded through bargaining to have market comparators used in setting wage levels. We still intend to pursue a gender neutral plan, but there was concern that any plan divorced from the real market would be unusable.

Anyway, now that Bargaining is concluded, the JE Committee will get back on track soon.

Outside of the Chapter we were also very active this year. There has been considerable Chapter involvement in the Provincial PEA organization. We participated in many of the association's standing committees, including the Executive, the Electoral Review Committee, the Policy Review Committee and others. Many significant changes to our provincial organization have come from UVic member input. Our members are widely respected in the organization and we expect UVic members will be invited to participate in many of the standing committees again this year.

We also fielded two Executive candidates in the recent provincial election, but both were unsuccessful, one lost by only 16 votes. With over 350 UVic members and an abyssmal UVic ballot return of only 35 percent, we collectively have to take responsibility for the fact that the second largest bargaining unit in the entire PEA was unable to elect a single representative to its Executive board. This is unacceptable and your Chapter Executive will do what it can to prevent this from happening next year.

It is also worth noting that the PEA AGM this year was fairly well attended by UVic members despite the fact it was held in Vancouver. The provincial union covers salary replacement and expenses for any Local Representative or Executive member who agrees to attend so several of us participated. We took this opportunity to thank the outgoing Executive for acting on the resolutions we put forth at the last AGM (to strike and Electoral Review Committee, and to increase membership involvement in standing committees).

UVic members should also be aware that this year the GLP bargaining unit of the PEA (its largest) came under attack by the BCGEU and the NDP government. All GLP employees were almost moved by force into the BCGEU. After some hard bargaining by Alan MacLeod, the Executive Director of our association, the result was that the GLP unit remains intact, but is frozen at its current configuration. That is, no new government employees who become licenced professionals will be added to the PEA (e.g., when Biologists or Social Workers become registered professionals they will remain BCGEU members).

Outside of the association, the Chapter helped UVic Term Appointed Specialist Instructional or TA staff to unionize as CUPE 4163. We also suprtd the UVic Faculty Association in opposing the Intellectual Property and related policies. We voted to support any form of legal strike action taken by CUPE 951 after their negotiations turned sour in January. Fortunately they settled shortly

therefater. We supported UVic students (CFS local 44) in their national campaign against student debt and for increased funding to the university sector. The UVic PEA also hosted a meeting of the Coalition of Unionized University Employees of BC. UVic's CUPE 951, 917 and 4163 locals were all present at that CUUE meeting as were a dozen or so other unions from UBC, SFU, UNBC, and RRU. Basically, we have been building bridges with our colleagues for our mutual strength.

Let me note that this year CUUE attempted to set up a meeting with Minister of Advanced Education, Andrew Petter. They began trying in March and although were were promised a meeting we have been subjected to multiple reschedulings and last minute cancellations. Clearly, Minister Petter is not giving CUUE the same level of respect that his predecessor Paul Ramsay did last year. We are still trying without success to pin down a firm date for this meeting. His Ministry is punctual when it comes to giving us copies of the gloomy annual UVic budget though!

So that is where we have been. I would ask you all to express your thanks to your fellow members who have done the work to get us to where we are today.

Members of the Bargaining Committee:

- Ann Nightingale (Chair)
- Elaine Doyle (PEA Staff Representative)
- Grant Rogers
- Berenice Wood
- Ian Thornton
- Jane Kovach
- Glen Darling

Members of the Association/University Committee:

- Ann Nightingale (Chair)
- Elaine Doyle (PEA Staff Representative)
- John Forde (PEA Staff Representative)
- Renato Danesin
- Glen Darling

Members of the Executive Committee:

- Glen Darling (President)
- Elaine Doyle (PEA Staff Representative)

- John Forde (PEA Staff Representative)
- Tom Gore (Vice President)
- Maggie Cooper-Little (Secretary)
- Dick Chappell (Treasurer) (who is leaving the Executive)
- Rosalie Phillips (who has left UVic)
- Jane Kovach (who is at home recuperating from surgery)
- Ian Thornton
- Martin Milner (who is leaving the Executive)
- Berenice Wood (who replaced Rosalie in a by-election)

Members of the Seminar Committee:

- Maggie Cooper-Little (Chair)
- Rosalie Phillips (who has left UVic)
- Jane Kovach
- Angela Katahan

Members of the Elections Committee:

- Kim McGowan (Chair)
- Ludgard De Decker
- Mary O'Rourke
- Norman Thom
- Ian Thornton (who stood down to run for re-election)

The many members of the Local Representatives Committee (Chaired by Rosalie Phillips, then Martin Milner and effective today, Susan Corner).

And all of the other members who represent the UVic Chapter on a wide variety of UVic committees, provincial PEA committees and others

I would also like to thank and congratulate the acclaimed incoming Executive members:

- Tom Gore (Vice President)
- Ian Thornton
- Susan Corner
- Vincent Conner

As I look forward to the coming year, I want to move to address what I see as a crisis in our membership motivation and involvement. We have to find ways to get the membership interested in the association. After all, the association is

only as strong as its level of membership support. We need to reach out to "grandparented" employees who have not joined the association (but who still pay dues). We need to reach out to new employees and welcome them. And we need to reach out to those two thirds of our members who routinely ignore our communications.

We need to rally the troops to get representation for our Chapter. Specifically I want to see us achieving at least one representative on the provincial PEA Executive, on the UVic Board of Governors, and on the Board of Pension Trustees. The ballots for the latter election will be coming out soon and I would encourage all of you to please consider voting for Dick Chappell, who I believe is the only PEA member running in that election. We need PEA representation on the Pension board.

On campus this year we also hope to set up some kind of union of UVic unions to share information and improve communication and cooperation among employee groups. We are currently researching other professional employee groups in Canada and the U.S. with the hope of developing broader ties in those directions too.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Darling.
President.