

This past year provided our members many opportunities and a variety of ways to experience our broad and endlessly interesting community. Its diversity and integrity is without question a hallmark of our chapter and the organization as a whole. It was a year for our chapter that was, at times, rich with inspiration, creativity and fresh ideas like those cultivated at the educational conference held in Kelowna in April. Our members also had opportunities to network and unify locally, notably at three chapter functions held at the University Club. To encourage greater member participation in these events, spouses and children were welcomed for the first time.

Our executive incurred change this year as well. Sheryl Karras, who sat repeatedly as a Director and Vice-Chair over the years, began a sabbatical in July. Catherine Franz of Occupational Health and Safety very capably replaces her.

The past year also presented a number of challenges. The elimination by the government of mandatory retirement changed the rules for the way that we transition into retirement. In particular our members were potentially affected by unilaterally made changes that alter LTD and sick leave after their normal retirement date. We, the PEA, filed a grievance in response to these changes and continue to monitor cases as they unfold.

In the spring the government informed Universities that our base funding would be immediately cut by 2%. The effect of this decision has no doubt been felt directly or indirectly by all of our members. The university claims that no layoffs will result from this cut in 08/09, and we review cases on a regular basis to ensure this is maintained.

Recently, some of our members have been concerned about access to their personal Professional Development Expense Account. Please know that your PDEA funds are available for you to use, and by and large they should be readily accessible to you. According to the University, your person development includes, and I quote:

*"those activities which enhance a staff member's work performance, ability or effectiveness and contribute overall to the successful achievement of the University's mandate."*

If you feel you are being unfairly prohibited from accessing your PDEA funds, please advise your local rep, or alternately a member of your

executive. There is a valid process in place to resolve these issues, but only if they are brought forward.

Looking forward, we will enter our next round of bargaining in 2010. Given the state of the economy, and the expectation that more funding cuts to the University may be a real possibility, we have begun the process of preparation for those talks. In July, Rebecca Michaels, Tom Gore, Ernie Gorrie and I traveled to Vancouver to meet with our counterparts at the Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of UBC and the Administrative and Professional Staff Association of SFU. The purpose of the meeting was to renew contact with our colleagues, to exchange experiences and ideas, and to recognize that, in bargaining, our position will be stronger if we are strategically aligned.

In 2009 we will ramp up preparations and planning for the next round of bargaining. Without question, we will need members to engage with us in that critical process and I ask that, when the time comes, each of you seriously consider putting your name forward to participate. All voices are valuable and new faces are always welcome.

In closing I would like to thank the dedicated members of our executive who, without compensation, accept this responsibility and commit great effort to make our organization work better for all. I would also like to thank our Staff Officer, Ernie Gorrie, for all of his work this past year. And while I'm at it, thank you and welcome home to Tony Bute, who is filling in for Ernie while Ernie is on vacation. Thanks also to our team of local reps. We certainly can't function effectively without you. And thank you all for joining us here today.

I respectfully move acceptance of this report.