

The Association Report 2009

The UVic PEA Chapter is one of ten that make up the *Professional Employees Association* which celebrated its 35th anniversary this year. Our 815 members join professionals from other bargaining units to form a union with 2859 members. The PEA is registered as a union under BC's labour laws and has a staff of seven.

The primary role of the association is securing equitable treatment for all members, no matter what chapter they are from. This involves negotiating collective agreements with employers and representing individual members on work related issues. Our expert staff of Labour Relations Officers are committed to safeguarding our members' rights in the workplace.

The Association adopted a mission statement at this year's Strategic Planning meeting.

The PEA is a union of professionals dedicated to fair and equitable collective agreements and working conditions for its members.

We do this through collective bargaining and advocacy, member engagement and education, and promotion of the value of professionals.

We believe in integrity, in respectful relationship, and in enlightened, innovative principles of labour relations.

The activities of the Association are managed by the PEA Executive and staff. UVic's John Foxgord (Computing) is the Association's Secretary Treasurer and Tom Gore (Biology) is Second Vice-President. Lynn McCaughey (Co-Operative Education Program) sits as UVic representative and Kathy Kendal of the Legal Services Society was recently elected President of the PEA.

Three major activities the Association has been involved with this year are a marketing campaign promoting [Professionals for BC](#). The campaign, involving both print and electronic media, is intended to raise the profile of working professionals in the province and to increase "brand awareness" of the PEA as a union of and for professionals. Another major project is our [Access To Justice](#) campaign, which is a response to massive cuts to our Legal Services Society chapter resulting in a decrease in accessible legal services for all British Columbians, especially the poorest. The campaign includes the video *Justice for All?* produced by PEA staff with the support of dozens of volunteers. The short documentary has become a social media hit and will be shown at the [Canadian Labour International Film Festival](#). During a period of rapidly rising rental costs, the Association Executive and staff have for some time been looking for suitable real estate that will provide us with an opportunity to diversify our investment portfolio while at the same time providing us with appropriate office space. We are close to concluding this project.

PEA investments reserves total over \$8,000,000 today so diversification of the portfolio is important. That said, policy requires that we hold a balance in investments capable of supporting members of the PEA's largest bargaining unit through a two-month dispute while taking a grievance to the Supreme Court of Canada. Our Strike Pay policy gives striking members salary replacement up to \$125 a day so we estimate that reserves need to be in the \$6,000,000 range.

A recent survey of PEA members showed that 82% of members are satisfied with the PEA and the work it does and the same number are satisfied with their current collective agreement. However a third of member feel that the PEA should be more aggressive with management as the PEA enters a year in which almost all bargaining units will be negotiating new collective agreements. The next year should be very exciting.

Tom Gore
2nd Vice President
Professional Employees Association