

UVIC PEA CHAPTER – 2011 AGM – CHAIR’S REPORT

By Catherine Franz

Most notable this past year was the topic of our Pension Plan. At the start of the year the University indicated that the current plan was unsustainable and did not provide adequate coverage for future plan withdrawals based on an actuarial assessment. The University held two information sessions. In April of this year, following the Universities survey of the membership, individuals received notification that contribution rates would be increasing effective the start of May. The rate increase was a violation of our Collective Agreement and a grievance was filed with the University. The PEA brought in Ed Lee, an actuary from Morneau Shepell on June 14th, 2011 to provide information and education to our members regarding our pension plans. Our members were then asked to vote for the course of action they wished to see. The outcome of this vote was a majority support for the pension plan increase.

Another challenge the PEA membership faced this year was the turnover of our Labour Relations Officers. We started the year with Scott McCannell, who then went on to replace Jodi Jensen as Executive Director for the Association. We were fortunate to see the return of Tony Bute, albeit temporarily. Rhiannon Bray then stepped into the role, as a search was undertaken for a permanent LRO. Melissa Moroz has now been with us since the end of May and we are immensely pleased to have her onboard. She has been working tirelessly with and on behalf of our members.

The PEA Convention was also held this year at the Hotel Grand Pacific in Victoria, on April 8th and 9th. Thirteen UVIC delegates were in attendance for the two-day event to hear and learn from: Paul Strasich a PSEC employee, Ken Peacock the Director of Economic Research for the BC Business Council, and Neil Patton a bargaining consultant, along with Vaughn Palmer as the keynote speaker. The central theme at convention was bargaining, with one of the key take a ways for delegates being, “as soon as bargaining is over the next round begins.”

With this lesson in mind, the Executive set to work laying out priorities and establishing goals in preparation for our next round of bargaining. The Executive reached out to members with the assistance of Local Reps by holding brownbag lunch meetings. These lunch meetings were held in many parts of campus. The purpose of the lunchtime sessions was for the Executive to

connect with members, to learn about members concerns, and to provide an educational opportunity for members. These meetings will continue as we head into the New Year, with an increasing emphasis on bargaining.

The Executive also continues to meet with other unions on campus, including the Faculty Association and CUPE. In keeping with maintaining strong ties with other unions and associations, the Executive met this month with the Staff Associations from SFU and UBC in what was an incredibly productive meeting. Agenda items included: updates on collective agreements and pension plans, as well as the challenges of engaging membership, and the impacts of work intensification. Maintaining strong connections with other Associations is a priority for the Executive.

In June our Annual Retreat was held at the Association boardroom, where discussions focused entirely on bargaining. There was an in-depth comparison of our collective agreement to those of UBC, SFU, VIU and Camosun, specifically in areas such as professional development, work scheduling, vacation allowance, sick leave, and personal benefits.

The UVIC PEA is also fortunate to have a number of members-at-large actively working on behalf of the Association. PEA members are represented on the Mental Health Task Force, the Central Professional Development Fund, and the Seminars Committee. We also have a large number of Local Reps who are our eyes and ears around campus. To all of you, we send our heartfelt appreciation for taking the time to get to know and become involved with your union, and to perform work that benefits all of us. Your active participation continues to make our union stronger.

Our UVIC Chapter website also underwent some revamping this past year with the inclusion of a calendaring system for members to easily view upcoming PEA events, as well as a complete updating of our committee membership page.

To close, I would like to thank the Executive not only for the many hours they dedicate to performing work on behalf of the membership, but also for being some of the most passionate, compassionate and sincere individuals I have had the pleasure and joy to work with. I would also like to extend a thank-you to all the Professionals attending this meeting today, for taking the time out of your busy schedules, and to those who would have liked to attend but could not get away from the office. It seems that more than ever, we need to come together as a collective voice if we are to effect change.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Franz