

President's Report

November 15, 1996

To: Members of PEA and all Administrative and Academic Professional Staff:

This has been a successful and productive first year for the UVic Chapter of PEA, in every way.

1. We have achieved an outstanding first contract that addresses most of our members' long standing needs.

Nearly three years ago, when we began to examine forms of organization for the A/AP staff, one clear theme emerged. Our group wanted a legal relationship with the University that would prevent the arbitrary and unilateral employment relationship that was increasingly evident in the treatment of individuals and the A/AP group as a whole. In contrast to the Faculty Association and to members of the two CUPE locals, we were the only large group on campus without a legally defined relationship with the University that specified the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

Our contract has changed that. It is a living document that empowers both our members and the University.

The contract should make University administration more efficient and effective on a daily basis since it clarifies many vexatious situations which were difficult for both parties.

For our members, it provides a starting point for the definition of how they are to be treated by the University and, of course, it also makes clear what our obligations are to our employer.

The successful work of our Bargaining Committee has been acknowledged many times and I do so again here.

2. An effective system of Local Area Representatives has grown out of the system of Building Coordinators used during the organizing campaign. These colleagues bring the union and its business directly to every member and, importantly, they are a vehicle for having membership needs and issues drive

executive decision making. Quite simply, the system of Local Area Reps gives every individual PEA member a voice and ownership of issues and business.

3. Related to the establishment of Local Area Reps is the establishment of electronic methods of communicating with virtually every member on every issue at any time. We have used these initial methods vigorously this year and no doubt they will be extended and refined in the coming years.

4. A special attempt has been made to maintain collegial and productive relations with the Executive Officers of the University (President, Vice-Presidents, etc) as well as the Board of Governors and these attempts have been productive. Among other things, our contract has been settled in a civil fashion and PEA has received formal commendation on achieving a tone of relations with the University that sets a positive basis for future employment relations.

5. We have also pursued a deliberate policy and practice of maintaining communication and good relations with our co-workers in the two CUPE locals and our colleagues in the Faculty Association. Quite frankly, I believe such efforts were in part responsible for the widespread support on campus for PEA, particularly at the difficult final stages of negotiations. Such support carries a reciprocal component, informal though that might be.

6. Members of your executive have attended all Provincial PEA executive meetings and I am pleased to note that one member of the UVic Chapter has been elected to the Provincial executive this year. We will now thus play a full role in the affairs of PEA as a Provincial body.

7. We have established an office location on campus which should assist the routine business of the UVic Chapter.

8. During the year, your executive has interceded on behalf of several members who requested assistance in dealing with the University. Quite frankly, the kinds of issues we were asked to address were often disturbing since they illustrated how vulnerable individuals were in attempting to resolve problems when one party had all the authority and no compelling responsibility to go with that authority.

The contract has changed this systemic condition and it should help reduce cases of individual distress and inequity.

9. We have learned to work successfully with the professional staff officers of PEA. As a union, we have benefited in an invaluable way from the expert help

of these individuals. Only with the achievement of the first contract have we begun to pay our first dues, an agreement which has been to the enormous benefit of every A/AP colleague at UVic.

The net effect of PEA has been to createÑfor the first timeÑa sense of identity for the A/AP staff and to make explicit the shared professional values and culture that unite us. The evidence of this accomplishment was everywhere this year. For example, every time we asked for volunteers or help, people came forward willingly.

Attendance at all sessions convened by the Bargaining Committee was high in quantity and quality and the ratification vote of 99.5% illustrates the effective animation of our group culture.

No longer are the A/AP staff fragmented, invisible or vulnerableÑalthough more needs to be done.

Finally, I am please to report that since November, 1995, your executive has worked hard and in a productive, professional way. There have been no personal agendas and our sole commitment has been to the tasks associated with the preservation of your professional welfare.

We represented a rich variety of perspectives which served to unite and strengthen our work rather than to divide it.

During my lengthy career at UVic, I have never worked with such a task driven, competent and good humoured group as those associated with the formation of PEA and I thank all members of your 1995-96 executive for their personal dedication and hard work on behalf of the A/AP group.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve as your first President.

Larry Devlin