

## Chairs Report 2022 AGM

This past year has been as eventful for the chapter as any I can recall. It seems a lifetime ago, but it was just last January when we all pivoted once again to ‘online mode’ due to another in a seemingly endless series of COVID blooms. At that time, we also welcomed the return of our Labour Relations Office, Sam Montgomery, back from maternity leave. I was renewed and minted into the Chapter Chair seat, and we waited with some anticipation to see what leadership would look like with a new Director in HR. Mountains of change everywhere, and so began the new year.

Thematically this was a year underpinned by bargaining. We formed the committee early, surveyed the membership and developed a plan. Unsurprisingly the dominant issue was and continues to be COLA and the increasingly high cost of living in Victoria. Availability of housing, the cost of food, gas and parking, and increasing rates of inflation exacerbated a major recruitment and retention issue that we’ve been raising with management for years. A related issue: improving and standardizing remote work arrangements was the second main issue for our membership. This is the first year that we’re hosting an AGM while we’re in bargaining, so updates on these and other issues will be forthcoming from our LRO.

Parking. Over the summer management introduced ‘green’ proposals to induce vehicular commuters toward alternate, greener modes of transportation. The proposals included but were not limited to:

- a 67% increase to the cost of a yearly parking
- elimination of the yearly parking pass
- introduction of an e-Bike loan program (we liked this one – it was fully subscribed)

From the outset, our position has been that we fully support any green initiatives that promote the development of meaningful, sustainable, and green practices on and off campus, for our membership and the community at large. However, we are not of the opinion that the parking initiatives fall into this category. In response to the parking changes, and in conjunction with the other campus unions, we published an online petition which to date has received almost 2000 signatures. This action along with other initiatives has proven useful in our discussions with management and demonstrates the solidarity we continue to enjoy with the other unions on campus.

As we are all aware, UVic is currently wrestling with a budgetary shortfall resulting in a hiring ‘Hold and Review’ that’s left few units unaffected. Members report being stressed, overworked, and burned out. Our position on this has been very clear: the health and well-being of our members is the highest priority. It is not for us to fix the budget shortfall, but to continue to work and contribute to this place of higher education in a way that is productive, healthy and manageable. Sam and I continue to press for better and more consistent messaging around the issue from management. We seek data to confirm the process is fair, transparent and equitable, and we look to our members to be part of the solution as well.

I would like to conclude with some random positivity. This past year has seen our membership grow to 1241 current members. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Sam and other key LRO's, we saw some specific, highly frustrating, long-term issues come to ends, or near-ends, this year. We continue to work on improving equity, diversity, and inclusion within this organization, and though we're nowhere near concluding that important work, we are earnestly on the journey. The executive enhanced our member outreach by hosting multiple town halls and Coffee Talk events. Both have been well attended and well received. Sam and I meet regularly with the other union leaders on this campus, and also with a cohort from the other post-secondary institutions on the island. The value of the networking and communications opportunities, and exchange of ideas in those venues cannot be understated.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sam Montgomery for being our fierce and compassionate Labour Relations Officer. I look forward to getting back to our weekly's after bargaining is finished!

I would like to extend special thanks to all members of our chapter executive for your dedication, insight, passion, and diversity of opinion.

Specifically: Katy Chan, Melissa Doyle, Kristen Ficke, John Foxgord, Sandra Guerreirro, Ori Granot, Ash Senini, and Clinton Thomas.  
It is a pleasure to serve alongside you.

Thank you Scott McCannell for your vision and leadership at the Association.

Thank you as well to all our local reps and those members who serve on our various committees. Without you our schooner would have no masts and we would be adrift.