

NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PUSHING LOW PAID WOMEN

WORKERS TO STRIKE FOR PAY EQUITY

"We've got another BCIT situation at UBC," said Joe Denofreo, CUPE National Representative, on February 19, 1992 at the CUPE 2950 Union office on the UBC campus.

"UBC is offering its higher salaried Professors and Management staff 6.5% & 7% in 1991/92 and its low paid clerical workers 3.85% for the same period," said Mr. Denofreo.

"The workers at UBC are mad as hell," continued Denofreo and are preparing a strike vote.

"Fairness is the issue", said Ann Hutchison, Vice President of CUPE 2950 and Chairperson of the Contract Committee. CUPE 2950 represents 1,500 support staff (clerical, secretarial, administrative, library, computer and clinical workers).

Approximately 95% of our members are women, they make an average of \$24,000/yr. We need a decent raise to keep up with GST, ICBC rates, etc.

"Our buying power has decreased 25% in the past 10 years, continued Hutchison, and many of our members are now part of the working poor in this society." It's unconscionable that a public institution like UBC would give high salaried people 7% and our members 3.85%.

"This is just another example of how the University consistently discriminates against women" said Catherine Martell, Facilitator of the CUPE 2950 Women's Committee. This is hardly in keeping with the University's stated commitment to providing equal opportunity access and remuneration to women on campus.

"The UBC President and the 9 Vice-Presidents, the top administrators are all men. 10 of the 13 Deans are men and 12 of the 14 members of the UBC Board of Governors are men," continued Ms. Martell. Ms. Martell then went on to give other figures at the University to indicate male privilege. "There are 457 people making over \$80,000/yr. at UBC, of these 421 are men, 36 are women."

Of 2,939 employees making \$35,000/yr. or more, only 648 are women.

"Of the approximate 4,000 making under \$35,000 at UBC, 75% are women," continued Ms. Martell.

These male managers consistently and constantly undervalue women's work at the University.

"The University has the money to pay its clerical staff decent wages," said Ms. Hutchison, "it's just a matter of priorities." The current University policy of the 7% increase to Managers and Professors and 3.85% to clerical and other staff is just widening the gap between men and women on campus.

There are more than 450 people who are paid over \$80,000/yr. at UBC, do they need a 7% increase?

"It's time for UBC to treat its' staff fairly," said Joe Denofreo, "the University has always said it won't lead with the highest wages during the good times. Well, they shouldn't demand to lead with the lowest wages during the not-so-good times."

"UBC workers must be paid the going wage, so that more of its' employees don't become working poor," continued Mr. Denofreo. The Union is preparing a strike vote around the issue of fairness in the next week.

We will also be asking for a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education and the Minister for Women's Equality. This is a question of pay equity, said Mr. Denofreo, "and the New Democratic government is committed to ensuring pay equity at UBC and other areas, we will be asking the government to get involved in this situation."