

STAFF: WHAT GOES ON AT U.B.C. ???

My work situation differs somewhat from the lot of most secretaries at U.B.C. I work for seven professors, in a building separate from the main departmental offices, and as a result, am in the enviable position of being able to interact with them in a way in which most secretaries cannot. During the summer of 1971 I received, not only permission, but a great deal of encouragement from them to take the department's introductory course. At the time I felt, and still do, that it is very important that secretaries not only be allowed, but also encouraged, to take courses in order to raise their educational standard and therefore make them more valuable to their employer and make the work more meaningful to the employee. Particularly relevant, of course, are departmental courses. I'm sure that many secretaries are overwhelmed by the new language, structure and peculiarities of experimental design which could be greatly alleviated by taking a course in that subject area. Many spelling and structural mistakes which are frustrating and time consuming would be eliminated.

With this, I approached our Administrative Assistant and requested his permission also. This was subsequently denied on the basis that it was not relevant to my work and that the department could not afford to give me the time off. (The time off would have amounted to 20 minutes 3 days a week as I intended to take an 8:30 class.) It was here that I made my biggest mistake--I didn't get any of this in writing! However, because I believed I was right and because I had the backing of the people I work with, I registered for the class in the fall.

The year progressed very smoothly until April when the department discovered my "Insubordination" and fired me. That same morning two of the professors I work with arranged for and had a meeting with the department's Acting Head and the Administrative Assistant and I was subsequently reinstated to my position.

INSUBORDINATION

Later that same day an emergency meeting of the Senior Advisory Committee was held, which consisted of the six senior professors in the department, the Acting Head and the Administrative Assistant, to discuss my indiscretions. It was decided, as I was later advised by memo, that I would be fined \$50.00 as restitution for the time I took off work to go to classes. I was never told where the money was to be deposited. The fine was paid by the professors I work with and we never heard another word. By the way, I received a first class grade in the course.

Later, for interest's sake, I contacted the Personnel Department by phone to find out if a university policy existed concerning course-taking for staff. It does exist but the policy is not available; a copy can only be requested by a department head! It was read to me over the phone, however, and what it boils down to is that the whole thing is to be left up to the discretion of the department head. The obvious question here is:

WHY IS THIS POLICY NOT AVAILABLE TO STAFF WHEN IT →

CONCERNS STAFF?

The Association of University and College Employees, the independent union formed by clerical and library staff at U.B.C., is committed to working for open and just policies regarding staff, including study benefits. At the UNIVERSITY OF Toronto staff can take classes for half the regular fees. Many universities encourage staff to take time off to take a course during the day programme, providing the work is done.

THERE ARE NO SUCH BENEFITS FOR STAFF AT UBC, AND ALL POLICIES REGARDING SUCH MATTERS ARE SECRET. JOIN AUCE NOW SO THAT WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE WORK SITUATION FOR STAFF AT UBC. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN INFORMATION, DETACH AND SEND THIS FORM TO BOX 11, STUDENT UNION BUILDING, AND WE SHALL CONTACT YOU.

NAME
DEPARTMENT
ADDRESS
.....
PHONE