



**association of university and college employees**

June 18, 1985

Eileen Stewart  
Director  
Personnel Services  
Campus Mail

Dear Ms. Stewart:

Re: Ritchie and Associates

We appreciate Mr. Grant's letter of April 23, 1985. At our last general meeting, our members instructed us to write a further letter objecting, in particular, to the failure on the part of the University, and its managers, to inform them properly about the purpose and methods of the Ritchie and Associates review.

In Mr. Grant's original letter of February 13, 1985, we were told that 'administrative procedures' were being analyzed, and that it 'may be necessary to observe the work being performed by individuals at the work place.' The emphasis appeared to be on administration, and methods of operation. Mr. Grant's second letter went a little further, as regards one area of concern to us, and stated that there would be some 're-organization of the work' resulting from the review, and that this would, in some cases, have 'an impact on the bargaining unit'. Obviously a major concern to our members is the possible loss of jobs - not only because some of them may be displaced, but because many of our members already perceive their workplaces to be under-staffed. The Vancouver Sun article of May 28, 1985, did little to calm their nerves. Vice-President Gellatly was quoted as saying, when asked about staff cuts, that he would not comment because he didn't 'want to get staff unduly upset'. Well, they're already upset, but they don't know whether it's 'unduly', since they haven't been given enough information concerning the purpose of this exercise. It would seem, at a time like this, when the University claims to be in fiscal distress, that staff cuts would be the major purpose of such a review. Generally speaking, the University does not generate profits, so the primary cost saving that could result from an increase in productivity, and efficiency, would be through a subsequent reduction in staff. If this is not the proper conclusion to be drawn, we would be happy to know what is. It's not possible to overstate the extent to which full information can serve to reduce fear.

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The other major worry we have concerns the methods employed by Ritchie and Associates. Rumours are flying fast and furious - Ritchie and Associates are paid on a straight commission basis, and, therefore, have a high stake in seeing that jobs are cut; their last job was in Georgia, and their next in Alabama (right to work states); they stay in expensive hotels and fly home every two weeks. However, I'll try to restrict myself to what I've heard first hand.

Some of our members have found the efficiency experts unobtrusive, and not at all bothersome. Others, however, report that the presence of these men, with their stop watches and seemingly petty questions, has caused them considerable anxiety. Some of the people we've spoken to feel that too much emphasis is being put on monitoring phone calls, coffee and lunch breaks, time away from the desk, and so forth, and that the attention paid to actual work procedures is superficial, and is carried out with no real understanding of the meaning of the work being performed. Most people we've spoken to feel that their own managers, or they themselves, would be better able to identify any inefficiencies in present systems, or methods of operation. What Ritchie and Associates are doing is a time-motion study, and most of us feel it is inappropriate in a situation where the type of work being done involves more variables than can be accounted for by a study of time spent per function, and where employees have formerly been treated respectfully, and expected to have the maturity, and intelligence, to be responsible for their own use of time. This is a University, not a factory.

In addition, the behaviour of these men, in some cases, has been perceived as being rude and deceptive. If our members were this closely watched by their own supervisors, many of them would call in their Union and initiate a grievance on the basis of personal harassment. The fact that the close scrutiny is coming from an agent of management, and not management itself, does not lessen the feeling of being harassed.

I realize that Ritchie and Associates is a long way from MBO (Management by Objectives, which was introduced in the Library several years ago), but one would think that a group that is going to come in and closely observe staff for a period of weeks or months, would at least sit down with the staff and explain what they are doing, and allow some opportunity for questions to be asked. As it is, the staff have to be satisfied with the assurances of their managers - managers who themselves are unhappy and apprehensive about the presence of Ritchie and Associates, and who, in some cases, are also in the dark as far as the purpose and methods of the review are concerned. In the Library Processing Center, for example, Ritchie and Associates met with management, and the librarians in turn assured the staff that it was the workflow that would be studied, that stop watches would not be used, and that people would not be

individually monitored. Now the librarians are angry because Ritchie and Associates appear to be doing exactly what the staff had been assured they would not do - that is, they are closely watching individuals at their work, timing their trips to the washroom, their coffee breaks, asking for records of sick leave and doctors appointments, and so on.

One other concern that has been communicated to us is the cost of this study. Our members have not had a wage increase in more than a year, nor have they been paid the step increments which are contractually their due. When they find themselves being scrutinized by a host of men with stop watches and clipboards, whose intention is to interfere with their methods of working, and possibly recommend the elimination of their jobs, or increase their workload by eliminating someone else's job, and who, in the process, waste their valuable work-time, they wonder where the money is coming from.

Having said all that, there are a number of things we would like to request. First of all, we would like more information about the purpose and methods of the review. Is the purpose to increase efficiency, or to save the University money by cutting staff (the two don't necessarily go together)? Is Ritchie and Associates really a return to Taylorism, as everything we've heard, both from our own members and from our sister locals here and at UVIC, leads us to believe? Or do they actually attempt to understand the work we do in such a way as to produce a report that will help us do it better, more 'efficiently'? Where have they worked before, and what have been the results of their studies?

We would also like to know the cost of this review, and what funds are being drawn on. We would like a commitment from the University to supply the Union with a copy of Ritchie and Associates' final reports once they are completed. We would like assurance that nothing that is said to these men, or observed by them, will be used for the purpose of disciplining any of our members. Finally, we would like a meeting to be arranged between the Union, the University and representatives of Ritchie and Associates.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

Ted Byrne  
Union Coordinator

cc. A. Bruce Gellatly  
Vice President Administration and Finance