

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE EMPLOYEES

A.U.C.E. Local 1 (U.B.C.)

PRESS RELEASE

The following statement was issued by an A.U.C.E. membership meeting of approximately 350 people on Thursday, December 12.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Dec. 13, 1974

On October 1, 1974, the University of B.C. signed a first Contract with the Association of University and College Employees, Local 1. A.U.C.E., an independant union, is the bargaining agent for U.B.C.'s 1300 Library, Clerical and Secretarial staff.

The Contract provides for a base rate of \$633, attained in 3 across-the-board steps, longer vacations, and improved benefits. However, A.U.C.E. now contends that the University is refusing to implement important sections of the Contract.

"Most blatantly, the University is refusing to follow the Grievance Procedure and Arbitration provisions of the Contract. Like most collective agreements, ours provides for the submission of unresolved grievances or disputes to an impartial third party for binding resolution. Arbitration can be invoked by either party.

"When we served arbitration notice on the University at a meeting on December 5, 1974, they refused to accept it, and in fact left all copies of it behind on the table. We then sent a copy registered mail, and received a reply that "the University does not consider that either of the matters which you mention are subject to arbitration". At that point we were forced to apply to the Labour Relations Board in order that they might oblige the University to honour the established arbitration procedure.

"The University's arrogant refusal to abide by the Arbitration provisions of the contract is a clear attempt to browbeat and intimidate our union. It is the kind of Neanderthal tactic more commomly associated with union-busting days of yore than with the here-and-now of B.C.'s largest institution of higher learning.

"We know, and they know, that the reason the University does not want to go to Arbitration is because it will lose. They are therefore trying to bully us into backing down. But in fact, their willful and major violation of the Contract constitutes pure provocation. In many industries such confrontation tactics on the part of the employer would provoke a wildcat strike or a slow-down.

"This is not the first time that the University has refused to follow the Grievance Procedure. During the summer, they refused to honour an interim Grievance Procedure that had been established between the University and the Union prior to the signing of the contract. After considerable delay, they were finally forced to honour it when the Union applied to the Labour Relations Board.

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"This time we simply cannot afford the kind of delay that may be required due to an LRB inquiry. The grievances we want arbitrated involve major violations of the contract on the part of the University, and directly concern hundreds of employees, both inside and outside our bargaining unit. The denial of the right of these employees to speedy redress of their grievances is the denial of simple justice and totally immoral.

"On another matter, the University is violating not only the contract but also the Annual and General Holidays Act. It is taking away all vacation time employees have earned prior to the coming into effect of the contract. This amounts to the wholesale robbery of, on the average, one week's vacation time from every member of the bargaining unit. The total monetary loss to our members would be in the order of one to two hundred thousand dollars. We have lodged a formal complaint with the Labour Standards Branch.

"These willful and flagrant violations of a Union contract by a public institution can only be described as scandalous.

A.U.C.E. is circulating a petition addressed to the Board of Governors demanding that the Board intervene to ensure that the Personnel Department implement the Contract fully and in good faith.

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