

AUCE PROVINCIAL

18 September 1980

Women Office Workers
600 Lexington Avenue
New York
New York, 10022

Dear Women:

A supporter of yours sent us a copy of one of your leaflets and since we were interested in your organisation we thought we'd write and tell you about our union.

The Association of University and College Employees (AUCE) is an independent feminist union whose members are employees at the colleges and universities in British Columbia, namely Simon Fraser University, the University of B.C., Capilano College and the College of New Caledonia. We have 2800 members and seventy per cent of the members are women employed in clerical, technical and library jobs on the campuses and at the campus 'satellites' at the teaching hospitals.

Our union is committed to improving the working conditions of a traditionally unrecognised and underpaid sector. We have benefits and sick leave provisions for part-timers, control over hiring and promotion practices, grievance procedures, day care at some of the campuses and maternity benefits clauses in our contracts which compel the universities to pay the difference between the Federal Government's Maternity Benefits provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, and the woman's regular gross wage, upon her return to work after the maternity leave. We are the only union in Canada with the latter protection (maternity) in our contracts and at that we had to fight for it through the Federal Court of Appeal after the Unemployment Insurance Commission charged the women for the benefits paid out after they received the universities' topping-up monies. We have found that by the universities paying the difference in the wages for those women means they are encouraged to return to work and the money means a lot to a woman who has an extra mouth to feed on scanty government benefits! Most of our contract efforts are now directed at achieving 'equal pay for work of equal value' - the other 30% of our members are men who are predominantly employed in maintenance and computer operator jobs, and their salaries are less than those of men performing similar functions with traditionally-minded employers. The men have really been supportive of the women getting fair wages and working conditions, even if it sometimes means that they end up receiving a little less on their pay-cheques. Of course, we've had a lot of educating to do...

I have enclosed copies of our collective agreements for your reference and if they can be of any use to you or any contacts you might have at U.S. Colleges and Universities, please feel free to share them, and please give our address to anyone interested in knowing more about organising clerical workers, from a Canadian perspective.

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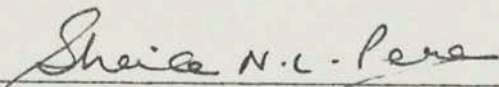
In any case, please write and tell us about your organisation and send us any materials or information you feel might be of interest to our members.

There is another Canadian union which is organising women in offices, banks, day care centres and restaurants - in fact they have organised OXFAM nationally. Their name is the Service, Office and Retail Workers' Union of Canada (SORWUC) and for further information about their efforts in organising the unorganised you can write to them at:

Jacqueline Ainsworth
President
Service, Office and
Retail Workers' Union
of Canada - National
Mezzanine Floor
402 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C.

I have also enclosed copies of some of their contracts as well.

In Solidarity,



Sheila N.L. Perret
Secretary-Treasurer
(604) 684-2457

**ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY AND
COLLEGE EMPLOYEES (A.U.C.E.)
- PROVINCIAL OFFICE -
#901 - 207 WEST HASTINGS ST.
VANCOUVER, B.C.
V6B 1J8**

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