



C U E A B R I E F H I S T O R Y

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Canadian University Employees Union was originally certified in 1974 as Local 1 of the Association of University and College Employees (AUCE), representing U.B.C.'s secretarial, clerical, and library workers, both on the Point Grey Campus and at the affiliated UBC teaching hospitals. Certification followed the organising efforts of a group of U.B.C. employees and a vote in which a large majority of workers voted for the union.

Subsequent locals of AUCE were formed at other post-secondary institutions in B.C., including S.F.U. and Capilano College.

In 1983, a decision was made by the membership to disassociate with AUCE, and to look at other unions with the consideration of becoming an affiliate of another labour organization. After lengthy study, it was decided that we would enter into a two-year agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. At the end of this term, the membership voted to become a chartered CUPE local. We keep the name C.U.E. to distinguish ourselves from the two other CUPE Locals on campus: Local 116 and the Teaching Assistants. Our Local number is 2950.

Further, on September 26, 1985, we were officially recognized by the Labour Relations Board as having adopted the name of Canadian University Employees, relinquishing all identity with AUCE.

Women constitute 92% of the membership of C.U.E. Therefore, a major concern of ours has been the status of women in the workforce in general and at U.B.C. in particular. Most women are not in unions, and consequently earn only half to two-thirds as much as the average and consequently earn only half to two-thirds as much as the average male worker. U.B.C. was no exception, and in fact at the time of our certification, wages were even lower than those paid in offices downtown. The \$250 across-the-board increase we won in our first contract did much to offset this, but still

left A.U.C.E. (female-type) jobs significantly underpaid compared to male-type jobs on campus of similar skill and qualification levels. The roll-back of our wages under the Anti-Inflation Board in the 70's and subsequent small annual increases have been once again widening this gap. Our demand for equal pay for work of equal value is therefore more appropriate now than ever.

STRUCTURE

C.U.E. with its approximately 1350 members is divided into several divisions, each of which consists of a number of office areas and/or buildings. Each division has Stewards assigned who help keep members informed of union activities and to ensure that all members receive their rights under the Agreement.

The President, Treasurer, and other Executive table officers are elected by the entire membership through a mail referendum. Also, members may be nominated to the Grievance Committee (responsible for enforcing the Agreement), the Contract Committee (responsible for negotiations), the Communications Committee (responsible for publishing the Newsletter), and the Strike Committee (responsible for organizing any action the membership may decide to take during negotiations.)

Any member is eligible to run for any of these positions. You might consider doing so after you have been here for a few months. There are always vacant positions to be filled and you will probably find the experience interesting and rewarding.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Much of the energy of the Union is expended in negotiating improvements in the Collective Agreement and in ensuring that this agreement be abided by. You may find many of the rights and benefits we enjoy under it are significantly better than those found in non-union or even other unionized offices. However, it must be remembered that these rights were granted because of an oftentimes difficult fight on the part of your union's bargaining committee. Preventing erosion of these rights, much less expanding them, remains a perennial struggle.

Remember, too, that the Collective Agreement is your document, and will only benefit you to the extent it is enforced. It is therefore in your interest to know what it contains, and if you feel any of its provisions are being ignored at your workplace, you should bring the matter to the attention of the steward or the Union Office. You should not be afraid to do so -- nobody can be penalized for asserting their rights under the Agreement.