

LOCAL 1 (UBC)

PRESS RELEASE

One of the basic functions of a trade union is the protection of its members. One form of such protection as guaranteed in the AUCE contract under Article 22.03, Hiring Policy, states, "the University shall fill vacancies from within the bargaining unit, providing employees are available with the required minimum qualifications, before hiring new employees." This statement is designed to give all employees the opportunity for advancement. Unfortunately, the University does not always feel so inclined. A project is currently underway in the Main Library, hereafter referred to as the "conversion project." Up to this moment, at least eight people have been hired for this project with a further possible six to ten to come. Of the eight, only one was a member of the bargaining unit prior to being hired. Those remaining were hired by the University, at the LA II level (pay grade II), from outside the bargaining unit. These jobs were never posted, nor does the University intend to post any (what they refer to as) "temporary positions," although in this case the "temporary" period will be at least two years. No AUCE members at pay grades I, I Intermediate or II have had a chance at promotion or change. The Union has grieved the University's actions but their response has been to quibble over definitions. In their stated opinion, the Article grieved "defines the Status of Employees, it does not define the status of positions" and "it does not require the posting of temporary positions." In fact, according to Erik de Bruijn, the Personnel Librarian and member of the University Labour Committee, should the University wish, any job could be deemed temporary even for as much as 20 years. This is a most flagrant and serious abuse of the intent of the AUCE contract. By this ridiculous definition it would not be necessary for any AUCE job to be posted. The Union finds it difficult to understand the University's motives in hiring people from outside the bargaining unit. Surely it would be to their advantage to take experienced employees from within. This matter, along with almost every single grievance brought to the University Labour Committee, will be going to arbitration. It is another glaring example of the University's unwillingness to go along with the collective agreement in the first place or to settle disagreements over interpretation here on this campus. What is the purpose of the University meeting with the Union when they are unprepared to undertake reasonable solutions to any matters brought to them?