

March 13, 1992
Concerned Academics 1992
University of British Columbia

Open Letter to the University of British Columbia Administration and Community:

The Office workers and support staff are on strike. The University is not functioning as it should. Student attendance is down significantly. Many faculty are teaching off campus, many are refusing to teach, and many are contributing large sums to the strike fund. Garbage is piling up, elevators are breaking down, toilets are filthy, the library is open, but functions for only a few hours a day. Conferences are cancelled. End-of-year examinations and degree-granting face serious scheduling problems. In addition, the morale of the community is sinking and previous good feeling is turning to rancour. Students have been threatened by their professors, and professors have been threatened as well. This should not and need not go on.

We, a group of concerned academics, call upon the Administration to negotiate with the striking unions. Moreover, we ask that they negotiate in good faith. We draw attention to three key issues that are raised by the current industrial action.

First, the way the administration bargains concerns us: Employees are treated in an arbitrary manner. Like CUPE, the faculty has not been able to negotiate a settlement for the year 1991/1992. The administration stalls at every turn, earns interest on the government transfers, spends money on other things, then turns around and says it is unable to pay. The administration refused to agree to mediation with the faculty on the grounds that such a decision would imply that it might be willing to change its offer. This intransigence says little for the future of collective bargaining on our campus. We think that the faculty has a great deal in common with our CUPE colleagues when it deals with the Administration.

Second, the Administration has not lived up to the promise to promote fair wages for all employees. The discrepancy in the offers made to different groups on campus indicates a lack of clear direction. The weakest groups, such as the clerical workers and sessional lecturers are victimized rather than provided with fair wages and some measure of security. The gap between the highest paid and lowest paid is widening. Structural inequalities on our campus are worsening. We are acutely aware of this when we observe that an increasing proportion of the University's budget is devoted to administration.

Third, the Administration's response to the ongoing problem of employment equity remains inadequate. Given the Administration's long-term investment in labour market discrimination, from which it

has reaped many benefits, the solution posed in the latest wage offer to CUPE is disgraceful. The Administration relies upon a minimal contribution from the provincial government rather than reforming its budget to grant long overdue equity to its low-waged female employees. Its tenth of March wage offer neither meets cost of living increases, nor lives up to the principles of social justice.

In sum, the facade of normalcy is collapsing. In the last several years, retrenchment has damaged the University. Today, the wounds are inflicted by the Administration's refusal to acknowledge its responsibility to its employees and the community at large. The University is a vital force in the cultural and economic life of British Columbia and Canada. We urge the Administration to move responsibly and humanely by reaching a fair and just settlement before irreparable damage is done.

Yours faithfully,

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|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. William Bruneau | 32. Edward Kruk |
| 2. Gillian Creese | 33. Roopchand Seebaran |
| 3. Dawn Currie | 34. Helena Summers |
| 4. Donald Fisher | 35. Elaine Stolar |
| 5. Jim Gaskell | 36. LeRoi Daniels |
| 6. Neil Guppy | 37. Denise Nadeau |
| 7. Deirdre Kelly | 38. Paula McNicoll |
| | 39. Charles Curtis |
| 9. Leslie Roman | 40. Jerold Coombs |
| 10. Kjell Rubenson | 41. Marion Crowhurst |
| 11. Peter Seixas | 42. Margaret Early |
| 12. Fred Stockholder | 43. Syd Butler |
| 13. Veronica Strong-Boag | 44. Joe Belanger |
| 14. Neil Sutherland | 45. Mary DesChenes |
| 15. Allison Tom | 46. Rosemary Haddon |
| 16. Ian Wright | 47. Carla Petievitch |
| 17. Kathy Hanson | 48. Tineke Hellwig |
| 18. E. Bryant | 49. Catharine Swatek |
| 19. Carol Kniceley | 50. Nitya Duclos |
| 20. Serge Guilbaut | 51. Robert Grant |
| 21. James O. Caswell | 52. Marlee Kline |
| 22. John O'brien | 53. David Cohen |
| 23. I. Marc Pessin | 54. J.C. Smith |
| 24. Maureen Ryan | 55. Joel Bakan |
| 25. Rose San Juan | 56. Norman Epstein |
| 26. Deborah E. D. Weiner | 57. David Donaldson |
| 27. Glen Drover | 58. Charles Blackorby |
| 28. Frank Tester | 59. Margaret Slade |
| 29. Kathryn McCannell | 60. Phil Resnick |
| 30. Mary Russell | 61. Hilda Thomas |
| 31. Stan de Mello | 62. Tony Dawson |
| 63. Peter Harnetty | |
| 64. Karen Wilson | |
| 65. Gerry Pratt | |
| 66. Joshua Mostow | |
| 67. Don Baker | |
| 68. Jo-shui Chin | |
| 69. Karin Preisendanz | |
| 70. Gaalen Erickson | |
| 71. Ken Takashima | |
| 72. Michael Duke | |
| 73. Hiroko Louie | |
| 74. Ken Bryant | |
| 75. Luc Nagtegaal | |
| 76. Julie Cruikshank | |
| 77. Tissa Fernando | |
| 78. John Barker | |
| 79. G.G. Weix | |
| 80. Millie R. Creighton | |

****Several other names to follow.

CC: All faculty members,
Striking Employees of UBC
The Presidents and Vice
Presidents, The Board of
Govenors, The Faculty Senate,
The Honorable Minister of
Education, Tom Perry, The
Honorable Minister of Tourism
and Culture, Darlene Mazarri,
The Honorable Minister of
Labour, Moe Sihota.