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FACULTY FOCUS
We’re spending our energies at the Association this fall looking to see what might be coming down the tracks and preparing for its arrival. There’s lots to plan for, with collective bargaining starting in 2010; new provincial mandates to consider; money issues on campus; as well as our ongoing cases, issues, and concerns.

COMMUNICATIONS
We launched (quietly) our new website in August. It’s designed to be maximally useful to you; please send along any comments or suggestions for improving it even further!

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
• In this newsletter is our second report on your important issues from our spring focus groups: this time, it’s all about workload and worklife balance [page 5].

• Speak Your Mind. The bargaining 2010 survey is currently underway; we’ve made it quick and easy, and it’s your chance to tell us what you want. Please fill it out!

• You can weigh in on our bargaining priorities and goals at our Fall General Meeting on Wednesday, October 28 at 12:30pm: we’ll be outlining the six major issues which matter most to you that we’ll take to the table. Come, speak, know that you’ve been heard.

• We’re monitoring the provincial bargaining scene as well, as this will be an important element of our negotiations with UBC [page 4].

• Tell us what matters to you any time! If you or your unit would like to meet and talk to us about your priorities for bargaining, please just let us know (faculty@interchange.ubc.ca).

We’re Listening: Our Bargaining Targets for 2010
with Nancy Langton, Chair, UBCFA Bargaining Preparation Committee

We’re opening the door to bargaining in a new way this year by sharing the six main priorities you have for our 2010 negotiations with UBC.

Based on what we’ve heard from you in focus groups and the bargaining survey, we’ll commit ourselves to your main priorities for 2010. This is your chance to be at the table with UBC; please come and share your experience, your ideas, your expertise, so that UBC works for you.

Wednesday, 28 October 2009 @ 12:30pm
UBCV: IT Services / Telestudios, Room 112, 2329 West Mall  UBCO: LIB 305

continued on p3
We’re continuing to work with the administration on how to address what appears to be an appreciable and systemic gap between male and female professorial salaries at UBC: see page 6.

Pension Fix: We’ve also discovered that UBC has not been contributing into our pension funds the full amount they are obliged to pay, as laid out in the Collective Agreement (it’s supposed to be 10% of our salaries). Instead, they’ve been deducting from their contribution to our pensions a percentage of the federal payroll taxes which they, as the employer, are supposed to pay. This means that UBC has been paying us less in total compensation than we were entitled to under the terms of the Collective Agreement. For most members, the underpayment was in the order of $770 this year. UBC has also been under-deducting the amount we should have been saving in our pension plan (it should have been 5% of salary and they’ve been deducting less) although this, in itself, is not a significant problem (we can always make up the missing savings with, for example, a corresponding contribution to RRSPs).

We’ll need to wait until after the next round of bargaining is complete in 2010 before UBC will have to revert to the language of the Collective Agreement, but we’ve told the university that it must be corrected then, and they have no choice but to comply with the Agreement’s legally binding terms.

After we revert in 2010 to the Agreement language, it will mean that UBC will be contributing as much as an extra $770 into every member’s pension fund each year (based on 2009’s payroll tax rates).

Your Association is getting ready to bargain for the first time in four years.

Please take 10 minutes to fill out this short survey at facultyassociation.ubc.ca to let us know what you really, really want: for salary & benefits, workload, job-security, support, control in your UBC work life.

We’ll share the results with you at our Fall General Meeting & in our bulletins, and we’ll use your views to guide what we bargain for.

To participate:
• Go to the Faculty Association’s web site: facultyassociation.ubc.ca
• Click on the Speak Your Mind link — this takes you to a third-party secure site for anonymous voting.
• To log in, please fill in the fields: * Surname  * Password (your eight-digit birth date: ddmmyyyy)
• Follow the subsequent prompts that lead you through the balloting process. For technical support, email ubcfa@webstracts.com.

The survey is open until Friday, October 16 at 4pm.
EMPLOYEES, EMPLOYERS AND PSEC: AN AWKWARD THREESOME

Paul Bowles, Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC

Although you may not think about it very often, faculty members at BC’s public universities are public sector employees. As a consequence, when a university faculty association sits down with the university administration to negotiate wages, benefits and working conditions, the whole process takes place under the umbrella of the Public Sector Employers’ Council (PSEC).

Established in 1993 by the NDP government, the legislated purposes of PSEC are to ensure coordination of human resource policies and collective bargaining activities amongst public sector employers and to improve communication and coordination between public sector employers and employee groups. Over recent years, however, its practice has gone far beyond simple coordination to include explicit limits on free collective bargaining.

Part of the problem with PSEC is the extent to which it allows for direct governmental management of our bargaining. PSEC is compromised of two components, the Council itself and the Secretariat. The Council includes representatives from each of the seven public sector employers’ associations, seven cabinet ministers or deputy ministers and the Minister of Finance as the chairperson. The Council is responsible for setting high-level policy. The Secretariat is responsible for implementing Council policies and for dealing directly with public sector employers.

From its inception, the Council’s mandate has included a form of wage controls, which is currently known as the “bargaining mandate.” The bargaining mandates given to public sector employers includes a general limit on growth in wages and sometimes include more specific directives. Over time, the range of items covered by PSEC’s bargaining mandate has expanded unevenly, sometimes including virtually everything that has a cost implication, sometimes setting rules for non-monetary issues as well. The wage-controls can likewise be rather unevenly distributed; in 2006, the general wage increases allowed for university faculty were a little larger than those for most other public sector employees. Nurses in 2009 were given more than the general mandate as well.

This uneven treatment makes it clear that bargaining mandates are discussed between PSEC and the public sector employers’ associations, but the final decision on the mandates is made, effectively, by the Minister of Finance. Because of this political dimension, many have asked if BC public sector employees really have access to free collective bargaining. A recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling on government interference in collective bargaining has raised further questions about PSEC’s role in constraining bargaining.

It’s certainly true that anyone from a union or employee association who has been at the bargaining table since the creation of PSEC would be hard pressed to say that it is a textbook example of free collective bargaining. What is also clear is that —in the short term— PSEC is unlikely to go away any time soon. CUFA BC and its member associations seek to effectively represent the interests of our members in the shadow of PSEC, and we continue to closely monitor PSEC’s impact on our ability to bargain freely with our employer universities.
Bargaining Preparation Committee

In our face-to-face meetings this spring, another of the issues you said a lot about was workload. Several themes emerged from our conversations with you:

1. You suffer from a scarcity of resources: Members report not only that you’re teaching more students than ever before but also that you’re trying to cope with a growing burden of administration and decreasing help with that work. Many of us spend significant time photocopying, booking flights, scheduling meetings, taking out our trash, filling out forms, and therefore NOT doing the work for which we were trained and hired, or adding still more hours to our weekly load, simply because we do not have adequate (or any) administrative support. Like-wise, we are hampered by inadequate lab equipment, under-funded libraries, and limited internal funds for our professional work. We have to spend time trying to collect and protect the resources we need to work, instead of actually working. The university’s increasing dependence on short-term faculty only increases this stress: sessional faculty have even fewer resources available to them, and a shrinking cohort of tenure-track faculty take on all of the service and administrative roles which fall to the professoriate.

2. You feel an absence of support for work/life balance: many of you report stress and stress-related illnesses. Heads and directors express real concern for the health and well-being of the faculty in their units. Faculty recovering from illnesses report being asked to teach more courses to “compensate” for their leave. Librarians report not taking much-needed study leaves because of under-staffing. Parents are exhausted by the strain of childcare and commutes. This concern to find a better balance was a common theme in our meetings with members.

3. You experience burgeoning expectations: vulnerable faculty, pre-tenure or on short-term contracts, as well as tenured professors and librarians, unanimously report increasing expectations. Suggestions that “good” is “not good enough;” demands that our work be defined through simplistic metrics for teaching performance, for student supervision, and for publications; accelerating micro-management of our work; and a growing use of “excellence” not as a compliment but as a form of both social control and disciplinary pressure are all problems which our members report on. You frequently feel uncertain of how to resist these pressures, even when you find them arbitrary.

UBC’s own recent Workplace Experience Survey reinforces some of what we’ve heard ourselves: that while as academics we really love our work, it’s difficult to enjoy it when we feel simultaneously cheated of resources and pushed to do even more than we were doing. This should be of mutual concern to us and to the senior administration, which we know wants to attract and retain strong academics like us. We will work with UBC in bargaining to make UBC a place we can all happily call home. And if you are NOT experiencing these workload pressures, please talk to us, as we want to know what ‘best practice’ really looks like!
Karen Bakker, Status of Women Committee

In 2007 and 2009, UBC’s Equity Office released two reports analyzing pay equity in salaries of full-time tenure track professors, focusing on differences due to sex or visible minority status. Neither study found a difference due to visible minority status, but both studies found a “statistically significant” pay gap between male and female faculty. Male professors earn (on average) $12,840 more (2007 data).

There are a variety of potential explanatory factors for the pay gap. For example, social science researchers have investigated “unconscious bias” in academic settings, and found significant, systemic gender biases which affect perceptions of performance. These may affect remuneration through initial salaries, merit or retention pay. Other factors may include differences in experience (numbers of years in employment) and discipline (as women tend to be concentrated in disciplines which are more poorly remunerated, such as the Humanities). Parental leave, according to the UBC studies, did not have a statistically significant impact on the pay gap.

Another issue that the studies raised is the fact that women are statistically less likely to reach the rank of full professor. The time lag varies between faculties, but can be significant. For example, a recent UBC Faculty of Science study found a maximum lag of thirteen years after being hired, at which point only 14% of women versus 46% of men had been promoted to full professor.

But even when controlling for these three factors (experience, discipline, and rank) the UBC studies find that a gender gap in salary exists at the median: women earn $2,780 less than men. That the gender gap persists despite UBC’s stated commitment to equity and diversity is obviously disturbing. The delay in addressing these issues is also disturbing, given that the first study dates from late 2006.

Pay equity is a legal obligation, governed by the Collective Agreement, UBC’s own policies, and the BC Human Rights Code. While UBC has made some initial steps towards attempting to redress the pay equity gap (such as the recent Faculty of Science Working Climate initiative), these measures appear for the moment to be insufficient.

Other universities take and have taken active steps to address pay equity issues, in a combination of monetary funds and ongoing tracking. Some have clauses in their collective agreements which refer specifically to pay equity. Universities have also implemented a range of progressive policies to prevent pay inequities from developing in the first place. Stanford, for example, monitors salary and non-salary forms of compensation and support to ensure equity and provides special salary money for equity-seeking groups.

As stated in a recent UBC Equity Office report, “Employment equity is about more than hiring members of groups who are under-represented within our workforce... it’s also about ensuring that there is a working climate that is welcoming and inclusive for all. That means, among other things, that resources and opportunities are fairly distributed to those who are hired.” We look forward to working closely with the administration on steps towards achieving this vision of equity.

Our next article will focus on UBC’s previous attempt (in the late 1980s) to address the gender salary gap.


3 UBC Faculty of Science: An Assessment of the Working Climate for Science Faculty at UBC, December 2007.
In the spring of 2009, the Faculty Association was alerted to the possibility that University may have been considering outsourcing its email systems.

As a result, we wrote UBC with our concerns. Here is our letter and UBC's response.

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**FACULTY ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

July 13, 2009

Dr. David Farrar
Provost & Vice President, Academic
Old Admin. Bldg.
Campus Mail, Zone 2

Dear Dr. Farrar:

RE: Outsourcing UBC Email System

It has come to the attention of the Faculty Association that the University of British Columbia may be considering outsourcing its email communication system.

The Association would like to inform the University in advance that we are concerned about any move which would compromise the security and privacy of email communications of faculty members and other UBC community members including staff and students. If an American company, Google for example, were selected to provide the system, this potential threat of third-party access to our communications would be compounded by the threat posed by the USA Patriot Act and other security related legislation and activities of American law enforcement authorities. Legal experts agree that privacy protection in the United States is of a lesser standard than in British Columbia.

Given these concerns, the UBC Faculty Association would vigorously oppose a proposal to outsource our email communications systems.

We write to inform you of our concern as well as to provide you with the opportunity to reassure the Faculty Association that UBC is not considering a move in this direction. If UBC is considering such a proposal, we would like to know the proposed process for consultation with the UBC community on this matter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Hodgson, Ph.D.
President

C: Hubert Lai, University Counsel
    Fran Watters, Director, Faculty Relations
    Richard Spencer, Executive Director, Information Technology

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July 21, 2009

Elizabeth Hodgson, Ph.D.
President
Faculty Association of the University of British Columbia
#112, 1924 West Mall
Campus Mail, Zone 2

Dear Dr. Hodgson:

Re: Outsourcing UBC Email System

I am writing on behalf of Dr. David Farrar, in response to your letter dated July 13, 2009.

We do appreciate hearing from you, regarding your concerns about any proposal to outsource UBC’s email communications systems.

Currently, we have no plans to outsource our email systems. If we were to consider doing so in the future, we would make sure to seek input from the UBC community from the start.

Sincerely,

Richard Spencer
Executive Director
Information Technology
Tel: (604) 822-4950

cc: David Farrar, Provost & Vice President, Academic
    Hubert Lai, University Counsel
    Fran Watters, Director, Faculty Relations
FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK: 26-30 October 2009
For the more than 600 sessional faculty who work at UBC, Fair Employment Week (FEW) is an opportunity to join together in solidarity and alert the wider university community to the inequitable working conditions faced by contract academic staff. The UBC Faculty Association Sessional Faculty Committee will soon be meeting to plan this year’s activities, which will include an information booth at the SUB and a sessional get-together. If you’d like to get involved in FEW activities, contact Rick Gooding at fa.sfc@ubc.ca. For more information on FEW and Campus Equity Week, its equivalent in the United States and Mexico, check out CAUT’s pages at www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=572.

FALL GENERAL MEETING: 28 October 2009
UBC Faculty Association invites you to attend our Fall General Meeting on Wednesday, October 28 @ 12:30pm. The meeting will be held in IT Services/ Telestudios, Room 112, 2329 West Mall, UBCV; LIB 305, UBCO.

RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP: 2 November 2009 8:30am - 4:30pm (Old Admin Building, 6328 Memorial Road)
This seminar is offered jointly by the Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic and the UBC Faculty Association and is for faculty members aged 60 or older. This interactive seminar will be facilitated by Aon Consulting who are experts in retirement planning and will cover all aspects of retirement. Spouses and partners are welcome to attend. UBC will cover the full cost of your session and all materials for both you and your spouse/partner. The session will provide: an overview of transition and lifestyle changes in retirement and how you can plan for them, financial and legal aspects of retirement, and effective tax strategies to build your family income stream. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. RSVP to Alma Salvador at alma.salvador@ubc.ca.

WANTED! PHOTOS OF UBC CAMPUS LIFE
The UBC Faculty Association invites members to submit photographs for our use in our publications including newsletters and website. Photos can cover any aspect of campus (both Vancouver and Okanagan) life including buildings, landscapes, people, whatever catches your eye! The UBCFA will decide at its discretion whether or not to publish a photo. Published photos will include a credit to the photographer. If you have photos to submit, please send them to Ranjit Sundur at faculty@interchange.ubc.ca.

UBC QUARTER CENTURY CLUB ANNUAL DINNER
The Quarter Century Club was established to recognize full-time faculty members and librarians with 25 and 35 years of service. 23 new QCC members and 13 Tempus Fugit members will be inducted this year. This year’s annual dinner is on October 20, 2009 at the Sage Bistro at 6pm. As this year’s President I extend a warm welcome to all new members of QCC and Tempus Fugit and a hearty invitation to all past members. Please visit www.ceremonies.ubc.ca/qcc for more information to the dinner. Douw Steyn, QCC President