



University
of Victoria

Faculty Association

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November 9, 2009

Mr. Ray Protti, Chair
Board of Governors
University of Victoria

Dear Mr. Protti:

RE: UVIC Childcare Issue

The issue of Childcare at the University of Victoria has raised several concerns. All employee and student groups have chosen to gather together to jointly sign a petition for the Board of Governors attention.

A visit to Canada's Top 100 Employers highlights the following information about UVic:

Supports employees who are new mothers with maternity leave top-up benefits (to 95% of salary for 18 weeks)

Manages a subsidized, onsite daycare facility for employees with young children

Pays parental leave top-up benefits (to 95% of salary for 18 weeks) to employees who are new fathers or adoptive parents

Helps employees prepare for retirement with contributions to a pension plan, and phased-in retirement work options.

[NOTE: Childcare was a crucial part of this decision to make UVic one of the 100 best employers].

Were the editors of *Canada's Top 100 Employers* aware that UVIC:

1. Is seeking to outsource expansion of child care to an off-site private company with significantly lower standards.
2. Refused to pay for maternity leave top-up for support staff until the union members paid for this out of their wage settlement in bargaining.
3. Was painfully slow to recognize the rights of same-sex and adoptive parents and reluctant to do anything for "new fathers" until the law required them.
4. Has systematically minimized its obligations to contribute to the staff pension plan by taking "contribution holidays" using pension surplus which could otherwise have been used to protect the pension from recent downturns in the investment market or in good times could have been used to improve pension benefits.
5. Knew that many employees do not actually find space for their children in the daycare. Most parents wait two years to get their children into daycare, and many never get their children in, even if they place their children on the waiting list the day they are born.

A set of principled questions to be considered for the Board of Governors Meeting of November 24, 2009:

1. Whether it is appropriate for the university to provide childcare;
2. Whether it is appropriate for the university to subsidize childcare; if so, whether the level of subsidy should stay the same, decrease or increase;
3. What the opportunity costs are; and depending on the Board's answers to the above questions: (c) what options are possible; and (d) what form of multi-stakeholder consultation might be appropriate.

Answers:

1. Providing quality childcare spaces allows many students, staff and faculty who otherwise would not be able to do so to study and work at UVic. Providing adequate numbers of quality spaces will enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism and have a major positive impact on recruitment and

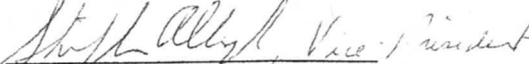
retention of students, faculty and staff and will reflect the University's commitment to equity principles (as it clearly states in the Strategic Plan).

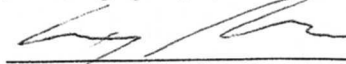
2. The subsidy is not as high as is suggested, for example, over a third - \$189,000 – what is referred to as the 'over \$500,000 subsidy', is in fact money that the government put in the University's base budget several years ago to pay for pay equity adjustments for childcare workers. Therefore, it is government money intended for this purpose, not money the University chooses to put into childcare subsidy.
3. The University is urged to review positive alternative possibilities. To do this, they are urged to develop a Committee, including all University stakeholders, that could look closely at a range of options for increasing UVic's capacity for quality childcare. Having quality childcare for their children dramatically reduces parental anxiety and increases quality of life for all UVic parents, demonstrating UVic's true commitment to being a family friendly institution.

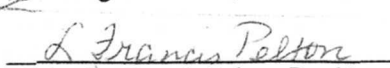
As many of those writing letters on this subject have said, providing quality childcare should be as much a part of the University's mandate as providing adequate library or athletic facilities.


Jointly Signed by:

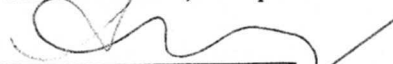
CUPE 917 – representative: 
Ms. Rhonda Rose, President

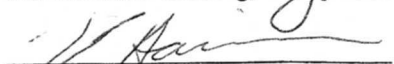
CUPE 951 – representative: 
on Mr. Doug Sprenger, President

CUPE 4163 – representative: 
Mr. Craig Ashbourne, President

FACU – representative: 
Dr. Leslee Francis Pelton, President

PEA – representative: 
Mr. Cliff Haman, Chairperson

UVGSS – representative: 
Ms. Adrienne Canning, Chairperson

UVSS – representative: 
Ms. Veronica Harrison, Chairperson

Cc: Board Members:

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Ms. L. Hwitsum
Ms. S. Mehinagic

Dr. E. Sager
Professor B. Whittington
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