

UVic FA Newsletter

Connecting the members of the
University of Victoria Faculty
Association

Issue 3, Nov/15/2013



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Certification: Focus on the Volunteers

In this issue, we feature personal narratives on certification from some of our dedicated certification volunteers. As the Certification Chair, I regularly have the privilege of speaking with colleagues who enthusiastically support certification, and with those who continue to carefully research and weigh the question. *Regardless of their position on certification, it is clear our colleagues share a deep commitment to excellence in teaching and research.*

In my opinion, the most powerful reasons for certifying are to give our Association the legal powers to protect our academic freedom, and our right to empowered participation in decision-making in the teaching and research mission of our university, the foundation of our excellence at the University of Victoria.

Dr. Jason Price
Vice-President, UVic Faculty Association
Chair, Certification Committee



UVic Faculty Association

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year but when you volunteer, you vote everyday about the kind of community you want to live in.”

-Marjorie Moore



Certification: Why did I volunteer?

Why did I volunteer? I was part of bargaining units at my previous two institutions. I was surprised when I arrived at UVic that we had no union. Certification gives us defined rights under the labour code, and formalizes arbitration and grievance procedures under established processes. This only makes sense. The current administrative climate is adversarial, and our bargaining and salary committees have to be prepared to take our part, confident that they have a consensus of support from their colleagues. A certification vote will do this.

**Misao Dean, Professor
Department of English
University of Victoria**

Certification is necessary for FA members to achieve effective communication with the administration. The change in administrative culture from a collegial to a managerial one over the past decade is widely recognized on campus, and one effect of this change is an unwillingness on the part of administrators to act in the interests of FA members. I have experienced this in the course of collaborating on and at times leading an effort to establish more adequate childcare for FA members (as well as staff and students). Over several years we cajoled, prompted, badgered and eventually led the administration to the water, but could not force it to drink. The additional powers of negotiation that certification brings will make it easier to set and meet priorities with an administration that does not include FA member interests in its mandate.

**Michael Lines, Librarian
Faculty of Law
University of Victoria**

Over the past 10 years, while I was on our Faculty Association salary and benefits bargaining committees, I witnessed UVic Administration abandon common interest bargaining in favour of hard bargaining. This has meant that meaningful bargaining has taken place only on those matters of concern to the University: the salary gap not being one of them. Similarly, as an elected member of our Board of Governors I was constrained by conflict of interest guidelines from raising issues of importance to faculty and librarians like the salary gap, workload, day care, free tuition for family members and our underrepresentation on our disability plan board. The administration's reaction has been to push back hard on any and all of these faculty association concerns. This 'hard bargaining and push back' strategy emerged while Mr. Cassels was Vice President Academic. In my opinion our ability to take collective action on any issue of concern to us will continue to be thwarted unless we certify.

**Chris Petter
Head of Special Collections & Digital Initiatives
Member, UVic Board of Governors 2008-2011
Chair of the FA Salary and Benefits Committee 1999,
2003-2004, 2007, 2009
Member of FA Negotiating Team 2004, 2007, 2009
CUFA BC President 2006-2008**

Until I arrived at UVic 12 years ago, I had always had a life supported by a union. My father was a union member. It was with the help of a bursary from his union that I was able to pay my tuition to go to university. Fast forward to the beginnings of my own time as a university professor. I took it for granted that all professors were in unions since I started at the University of Winnipeg which had regular meetings in the biggest room on campus, always well attended and filled with collegial

Continued...

spirit. After a few years I moved to University of Manitoba in order to pursue research and soon discovered I had been taken advantage of in my salary negotiation. The union quickly offered me assistance. As part of salary negotiation with administration they had access to a sum of money to redress the campus wide problem of underpaid professors (primarily women). I was successful in my application to this anomalies committee.

Coming to the University of Victoria and realizing there was no union was an unpleasant surprise. More and more as class sizes rise, pay remains embarrassingly low and Framework Agreement talks stall, I am convinced that we need status under the Labour Code. I am glad to be part of the current certification drive.

**Deborah Begoray, Professor
Faculty of English
University of Victoria**

When I visited UVic for my interview eleven years ago, one of my now colleagues told me that the "best thing about working at UVic" was that there wasn't an US vs. THEM relationship with the administration. It was a big factor in my decision to come here, but I've watched that relationship deteriorate since I arrived, particularly over the last five years.

Most of the blame lies with the ("someone has to be last") administration. But part of it lies with our past Faculty Association executives passivity. We've seen a real change in the FA during the latest round of negotiations, and during the certification drive, and I'm convinced that unionization is now the best way to restore a lost sense of collegiality and mutual respect.

That's one reason I'm pro-union. Another is that I like having accurate information to inform my participation and decision making as a member of the university. While the VP Academic and VP Finance are going around with their public relations campaign about 4% provincial funding cuts and budget deficits, the University's own financial statements show that provincial funding fell only 0.15% last fiscal year – and that we've had multi-million-dollar surpluses each of the last 15 years except one (last year's was \$9 million).

Depressed wages and ongoing staffing and service cuts are a matter of choice, not necessity. If they can build CARSA, they can provide us with a working daycare.

Lastly, I worry about the future of UVic. Starting salary for an assistant professor is barely a tenth of the average house price – we're fooling ourselves if we think this is sustainable, and we're already starting to see top prospects turn us down (or not apply in the first place).

I don't like what UVic has become, and I'm terrified of where it's headed. It's time for us, faculty and librarians, to join together to turn things around.

**Gregory Rowe, Associate Professor
Department of Greek and Roman Studies
University of Victoria**

After sixteen years at UVic, eight as a sessional and then eight as an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Humanities, I would like to help shape the kind of educational institution in which every single person asks themselves the same question: "To what extent does this decision, policy or project contribute to our core mission of teaching and research?" Faculty members, even though we are the university and not mere employees, have asked this question regarding recent planning decisions but have seldom received appropriate or convincing answers. Unionization can give faculty a voice in shaping the future of the university. It can bring about fairness and equity among institutions, colleagues and units. It can foster true consultation on governance models and policies which would in turn be protected by negotiated collective agreements. This university is not broke, but broken. It is time to fix it. That is why I support certification.

**Matt Pollard
Assistant Teaching Professor
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria**

This certification drive is important to me for two key reasons, all of which relate to improving our situation as employees here at UVIC. As academics, we are professionals first, yet it would be folly to neglect our concurrent role as employees. This has been the case for too long, and our wages, benefits, and general working conditions have suffered as a result. We've all seen the CAUT information showing how low our wages and benefits are relative to comparable and other BC universities, and where we have lost ground. I want us to unionize to improve our wages and benefits.

Our working conditions have suffered as well. When I started in 1996, in my department we taught only



Certification: Why did I volunteer cont'd...

undergraduates. Now we have 4 master's programs and a doctoral program, including students in two high-maintenance programs: the doctoral program (35 or so students) and the nurse practitioner (NP) program (another 35 or so). Because the NP program, like the undergraduate program, prepares graduates for required licensure, intense supervision of students is required--far more intense than most other programs. And there's talk about increasing our teaching load. In addition to our increased teaching load, our departmental scholarly activities have mushroomed. I want us to unionize to help us protect the quality and integrity of our academic work.

As a group of unionized employees, we will be strongly positioned to deal with the increasingly adversarial attitude of the administration. The most recent Framework Agreement negotiations demonstrated a taste of what we are facing, and how things have changed. When the Framework Agreement was first negotiated, the teams went out together for a congratulatory dinner. That would never happen today, and probably can't happen again, until a rebalancing is achieved. It's time for us to take responsibility for ourselves and our working conditions. Let's get it done!

**Rita Schreiber, Professor
School of Nursing
University of Victoria**

I'm volunteering to assist with the certification drive primarily because I believe it is shameful and unacceptable that as a faculty our salaries are at the bottom of a list of 22 comparator universities, while the executives who run the university are remunerated at the same bloated level as their ilk across the country. As a new faculty member I'm particularly incensed by this inequity. We are told that we are a first-class research institution, one of which we may be proud, and yet the administration treats us as second-class citizens in Canada's academic community

**Conrad Alexandrowicz, Assistant Professor
Department of Theatre
University of Victoria**

Quotable

“In our view, unionization would push the relationship between members and management toward being as mature, professional, and genuinely collegial as we would all like to think it already is.”

-UVic FA 2014 Negotiation Team

Salary and Quality Rankings

The following table shows the mean salaries for our faculty members and compares these to two highly regarded indexes by which higher institutions are ranked and compared. These are the annual Maclean's ranking and the Times Higher Education Supplement rankings (within Canada) for 2013-2014. The salary data for faculty members is drawn from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) figures for 2013-2014.

We draw your attention to the left hand side of the tables to the Maclean's ranking that puts the University of Victoria FIRST in the overall rankings of Canadian comprehensive universities. Secondly, the Times Higher Education Supplement reveals that we are ranked SIXTH in a comparison of Canada's top learning institutes. In sharp contrast to this top ranked university status we are located in the bottom end of the spectrum for comparative salary levels. These positions are substantially below the Canada average and median salaries. *Have a look at these data and consider their implications for your professional standing and lifestyle. We hope that by viewing these data you will agree with your negotiators and see that it is time for change!*

Comparison of MEAN salaries for all ranks across Canada without senior administrative duties

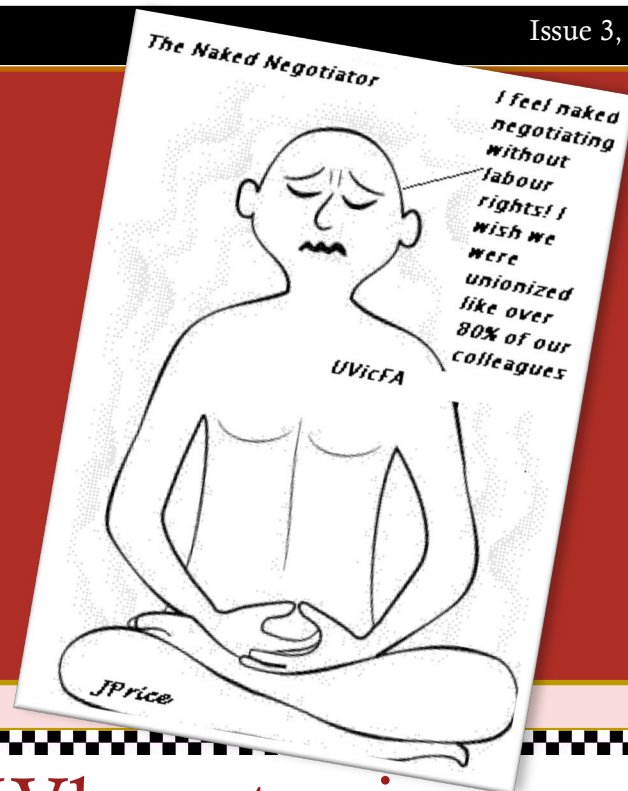
Year 2013 - 2014
(in thousands of dollars)

Maclean's Ranking (comprehensive category overall)	Times Higher Education Supplement rankings (Within Canada)	Rank by Salary	Full Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
1 Victoria	1 Toronto	1	158.1 York	127.4 York	103.7 Ryerson
2 Simon Fraser	2 UBC	2	153.8 Calgary	125.2 McMaster	102.3 York
3 Waterloo	3 McGill	2	153.6 Trent	123.2 Ryerson	101.8 Guelph
4 New Brunswick	4 McMaster	4	153.3 UBC	122.2 Waterloo	100.7 Brock
5 Memorial	5 Ottawa	5	152.8 McMaster	121.5 Guelph	98.8 UBC
5 Guelph	6 Victoria	6	150.2 Waterloo	121.2 Brock	98.5 Western
7 Carleton	7 Queen's	7	149.9 Windsor	120.4 Laurentian	97.9 Laurentian
8 Regina	8 Calgary	8	149.8 Western	118.8 Western	96.7 Waterloo
9 York	9 Carleton	9	149.6 Brock	118.3 Windsor	96.4 Windsor
10 Ryerson	10 Laval	10	149.4 Laurentian	116.7 Trent	95.7 Trent
10 Wilfred	11 Western	11	146.8 Ottawa	115.8 UBC	95.0 Calgary
10 Windsor	12 Calgary	12	146.4 Guelph	115.8 Ottawa	95.0 McMaster
13 Concordia	13 Carleton	13	145.9 Ryerson	115.3 Carleton	94.9 SFU
14 UQAM	14 Dalhousie	14	143.5 Lethbridge	114.8 Calgary	93.4 Saskatchewan
15 Brock	15 SFU	15	142.7 Wilfred Laurier	112.2 Lakehead	92.8 Carleton
	16 Guelph	16	141.5 Athabasca	112.1 Wilfred Laurier	92.3 Ottawa
	17 York	17	141.3 Saskatchewan	111.9 Saskatchewan	88.9 Dalhousie
	18 Manitoba	18	138.0 Lakehead	110.5 SFU	88.1 Wilfred Laurier
		19	137.2 SFU	110.1 Lethbridge	86.6 Saint Mary's
		20	136.0 Dalhousie	108.8 Athabasca	86.5 Memorial
		21	134.4 Memorial	108.5 Memorial	86.4 Nipissing
		22	133.1 Manitoba	108.3 Dalhousie	85.7 Lakehead
		23	129.0 Victoria	102.4 Nipissing	83.6 Lethbridge
		24		101.5 Victoria	83.5 Victoria

Quotable

"...we think it's important that we make our position on unionization crystal clear: every one of us strongly supports the current certification drive."

- UVic Fa 2014 Negotiation Team



Certification: Where to sign cards

For your convenience, certification volunteers in multiple departments and faculties will be holding office hours until mid December to assist their colleagues. Below is a list of places and times where you can drop in and sign, ask questions, or drop off your signed certification card. We have volunteers in every faculty across campus, so if you would like to arrange to meet with a colleague in your faculty or department please contact us at uvicfa@uvic.ca.

Mondays & Fridays 12-1:00

Room 195 Law Library
Michael Lines
Faculty and Student Services Librarian
Diana M. Priestly Law Library, University of Victoria
mllines@uvic.ca
(4236)

Fridays 10-12:00

HSD B216
Rita Schreiber, DNS, RN,
Professor, School of Nursing
rschreib@uvic.ca
(6462)

Wednesdays 11-1:00

MacLaurin A563
Deborah Begoray
Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
Faculty of Education
Research Fellow, Centre for Youth and Society
University of Victoria,
dbegoray@uvic.ca
(7847)

Wednesday & Thursdays 2-3:00

SSM A446 Turpin Building
Laura Cowen
Associate Professor, Mathematics and Statistics
lcowen@uvic.ca
(6152)

Fridays 2-3:00

SSM B354 Turpin Building
Rueben Rose-Redwood
Associate Professor, Department of Geography
redwood@uvic.ca
(7331)

Tuesdays 1-3:00

MacLaurin A348
E. Anne Marshall, PhD, RPsych,
Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies
amarshal@uvic.ca
(7815)

Thursdays 3-5:00

MacLaurin A523
Dr. Monica Prendergast
Assistant Professor, Drama Education
monicaprendergast@yahoo.ca
(4045)

Tuesdays 2-3:30

CLE C319
Misao Dean
Professor, Department of English
mdean@uvic.ca
(7253)

Tuesdays 11-1:00

Room 108a, Phoenix Building
Conrad Alexandrowicz
Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre
conrada@uvic.ca