

June 23, 2023
via e-mail

Dear Capilano University Senate,

We, the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance in BC, write to you to express our solidarity for the support staff at CapU who are members of MoveUP, in their valiant efforts to reach a fair deal with management.

We are aware of the progressive job action that MoveUP members began seven weeks ago. In our view, the gradual expansion of their job action is a reasonable tactic in order to apply pressure at the bargaining table. In the last two weeks, the union declared a full scale strike, and the faculty association has been honouring the picket line.

On Sunday night an update was released indicating that a resolution was again not reached, with clawbacks to previously discussed and agreed upon points. We understand that this news was a blow to the morale of the support staff and faculty who have been supporting their colleagues. We heard of the concerns they collectively have regarding the students in the summer term.

ACLA urges the university board and senate to pressure the administration to return to the bargaining table in good faith and to reach a settlement that honours equitable treatment of workers, fair process in negotiation, and preservation of the academic responsibilities that the university has to learners and educators.

We understand that the impasse centres around equity. Support staff have asked for language to be included in their collective agreement that guarantees the right to work from home and to preserve the flexibility in their schedule. This flexibility allows parents to do their work as well as attend to family responsibilities, such as dropping off and picking up their children from school. Single parents, in particular, are supported equitably when they enjoy this flexibility.

It is made known to us that most of the staff being affected by this strike are racialized women. They are staff who look after children in the university's day care centre. They are IT specialists who chose to remain employed at this university because they had been encouraged to work from home during the pandemic; without this flexibility, the university cannot retain them as they seek positions elsewhere. We were informed of the departure of two top IT specialists in the past month. Those who walk the picket line perform duties that are critical to the proper functioning of CapU, be it in the registrar's office, academic advising, or the international student centre. Many of the

staff who hold these positions are themselves immigrants, hired into their positions because they have the cultural and language backgrounds that make them so valuable to communicating with and supporting international students.

These workers bring their many strengths and talents to the institution. How does the institution intend to show its appreciation for their contributions, in concrete and material terms? How will CapU incorporate Indigenous ways in the bargaining process, and enact respect, reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility?

In expressing our steadfast support for the MoveUP members at CapU, we ask that the institution listen to their stories, concerns, fears, and most importantly, their resolve to move forward in a mutually beneficial manner. ACLA implores the university administration to apply an equity lens to this group of workers, and live up to its stated commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Sincerely,

[sent via email]

Asian Canadian Labour Alliance in BC