



June 20, 2023

Ms. Ash Amlani, Chair,
Board of Governors,
Capilano University
2055 Purcell Way,
North Vancouver, BC
V7J 3H5

Dear Ms. Amlani and Members of the Board of Governors,

I write to you on behalf of the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee of the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, to express our solidarity and support for Capilano University's staff efforts to reach a fair and equitable contract with the University.

It is our understanding that staff members represented by MoveUp began progressive job action measures seven weeks ago. In the last two weeks, the staff union has declared a full-scale strike, and the Capilano University Faculty Association has been honouring the picket line.

We strongly urge you to reflect and act on the following issues:

First, we request a return to the table with MoveUp and inclusion of their requested contractual language about equity and the protection of rights around the assignment of remote work. The disruption to the University's teaching and learning environment is far out of proportion to a request for wording around the equitable assignment and protection of remote work for your academic support staff. The wording reflects language of a practice that is already commonly accepted in other staff contracts throughout the province.

Second, we ask that you acknowledge that the impasse at Capilano University centers around equity, and it is from this perspective that the Human Rights Committee takes an especial interest. Support staff have asked for language to be included in their collective agreement that guarantees a fair appeal process surrounding the right to work from home and to preserve 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 children from school.

Single parents in particular, are supported equitably when they enjoy this flexibility. It has been made known to us that most of the staff being affected by this strike are racialized women. They are the staff who look after children in the university's day care centre.

They also include the IT specialists who chose to remain employed at Capilano University because they had been asked to work from home during the pandemic. Without this flexibility, the University cannot expect to retain these highly sought-after specialists as many will seek positions elsewhere. Many of the staff who hold supporting positions are immigrants: hired into their positions because they have the cultural and language skills that make them so valuable in communicating with and supporting international students. Additionally, there are staff members with dependent elders who would also benefit from this accommodation.

Third, we ask that the University's management refrain from engaging in retaliatory and controlling measures that infringe on human rights. Labour rights are human rights, and the ability to exercise these rights in the workplace is a prerequisite for workers to fully participate in their workplace and communities that include the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres. Hindrance and interference with collective organization limits these human rights. We have been made aware that management has used the work-from-home program in a discretionary manner and as a form of reward and punishment. We are also aware that Capilano's administration has engaged in dubious measures to dissuade staff and faculty from joining the picket lines. This must stop. It is entirely at odds with the University's stated value of aspiring to "infuse transparency and honesty in all that we do, fostering trust and supporting a happier, healthier community."

Fourth, we ask that you reconsider your proposed plan to administratively assign credit, grades, and/or course refunds to students taking classes in Summer term I 2023 and similar measures for subsequent semesters. Administrators and Deans are not qualified to properly assign grades to students in every course and area. This is of particular importance in programs related to Early Childhood Education. For example, according to instructors from this academic unit, these students who should be receiving a no-credit (NC) are not deemed safe or qualified at this moment to be working with young children. Administrators are not aware of which students are within this category and this fact is not visible on course e-learn sites.

In expressing our steadfast support for the MoveUp staff members at Capilano University, we ask that you listen to their stories, concerns, fears, and most importantly, their resolve to move forward in a mutually beneficial manner. The members of the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee request that the university administration apply an equity and human rights lens to the current situation and live up to Capilano University's stated commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Phillips', written in a cursive style.

Alexandra Phillips, Chair
Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC