



**association of university and college employees**

July 29, 1982

Deborah Murray  
DALHOUSIE STAFF ASSOCIATION  
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Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3J5

Dear Deborah:

Please accept my apologies for not replying to your letter sooner. We have been involved ourselves in negotiations of a new collective agreement for four months now and have been very busy. We are at a critical point in our talks now. Discussion is down to a salary equity program proposed by the management and wages proposed by the union. I imagine you know that we are under government guidelines in this province. There is a 2-year program in place with increases of between 0% and 10% in the first year and 0% and 9% in the second year.

We have been in the process of canvassing our members through the shop steward structure this last week on the four major issues of importance to the employer. These four issues are:

- a change in the suspension article to permit the employer to have unlimited right to lengths of suspension and demotion
- a change in the grievance procedure to limit the right to lay a grievance to within 14 days of occurrence of action
- a change in the leave of absence article to limit leaves to 3 months with the reasons for leave taken into consideration
- a change in our maternity leave article so that employees will have to have 1 year's service before eligible

We put these four articles to our members and asked them how they felt about the proposal and whether these were strike issues for them. In almost every case our members said they didn't like the proposals but that with the present economic climate they were not prepared to go on strike for these issues.

I have had the personal experience of being through two strikes with this local. Based on this experience I would advise that you have the best possible assessment of how your members feel about the issues and just how far for how long they are prepared to go. We have been in the position of going on strike and then wishing we were able to go back to work, that is, members didn't realize the resolve of the employer, they wished or thought the employer would fold and it did not happen.

... continued ...



It is wrong, in my opinion, for members not to have the correct sense of their power. They must be prepared to say to the employer, if going on strike, we are right and we will not be returning to work until our demands are met. This is an extremely difficult decision for most people to make, especially people in bargaining units like yours and ours since their wages are at the bottom of the income scale.

There was a strike in Vancouver last year of CUPE and the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union that lasted for 17 weeks. The issue of the strike was parity between the inside clerical workers and the outside labourer workers. This was won but the strike was lengthy.

When we sign the agreement now being negotiated we will immediately begin to prepare our members for next year. Hopefully if we do this now when we get into a crisis situation next year or next time our members will be more prepared to follow our lead.

This letter is filled with philosophy more than anything else and I don't know if it will be of much help to you. If there is anything more specific we could help you with, contact us again.

In solidarity,

Carole Cameron  
Union Organizer  
AUCE Local 1