

Maternity Leave and Your Union

Representatives from CUPE 2278 and the GSS met recently with a university panel to discuss parental leave. The panel was organized to discuss changes to UBC's parental leave policy, which currently offers little to help the many UBC students who are starting families. The policy currently states that a student may take an unpaid leave of absence during pregnancy and child rearing. During this leave, the parent(s) in question are denied access to services and benefits provided to students of UBC. The UPass, AMS/GSS healthcare, library privileges, etc., are all denied on the basis that a person ceases to be a student with rights and privileges being pregnant or child rearing. In effect, the existing policy forces students to choose whether he or she will continue working and studying through pregnancy and raising a child or forfeit access to these vital services.

However, a group of concerned GSS members have put forward an amendment to this university policy. This policy will allow a student to continue studying during periods of parental obligation, and provides the student with the resources to do so. Instead of forcing students to forfeit their status as such, this amendment would allow students to continue their studies and accommodate their parental responsibilities. The panel, including its university representatives, showed great interest in changing the policy, potentially alongside other amendments intended to grant even greater flexibility to new parents studying at UBC.

Want to offer some input or learn more about the Union's Hardship and Maternity Fund? Get in touch with us!

Day of Mourning for Fellow Workers

Unions work who with us on this campus: CUPE 116, whose members work to maintain and keep safe all the grounds and facilities on campus, and CUPE 2950, the heart of all the information infrastructure in our departments and offices. We bargain and work together with their members and support each other in negotiations and in job action.

On April 28 every year, we honour the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured or who become ill as a result of unsafe working conditions. This year marked the 27th National Day of Mourning. In a powerful ceremony near the Chan centre, CUPE 2278 joined 116 and 2950 members to consider those affected by work related deaths, and ponder how to make the places we work safer and more accountable to our lives.

It is important to recognize the important work that other workers perform on campus that supports the running of this University. The risk many of them face is very real – our campus had 300 work related injuries last year alone. UBC works because we all do.

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