



ASSOCIATION OF
ADMINISTRATIVE +
PROFESSIONAL
STAFF AT UBC

Submission by the

Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of
The University of British Columbia

to the

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government
Services

October 13, 2017

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia is the professional association for the Management and Professional staff group at UBC. Our over 4,200¹ members play vital roles in every function of the University. They provide leadership and professional expertise to UBC's central service departments as well as within academic faculties and on research initiatives. Our members are located at UBC's two main campuses at Point Grey in Vancouver and the Okanagan Campus. They also work at hospitals and on research sites around the province.

Our members will have an integral role in implementing the Province's vision for British Columbia as well as specific actions set out in the mandate letter to the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills & Training. It is because of this important work, that will impact the future of all British Columbians and the economic health of our province, that we put forward our recommendations to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia (AAPS) recommends that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services:

- **Ensures adequate and long-term funding for staffing initiatives at UBC outlined in the ministry mandate letters**, including
 - Expanding post-secondary co-operative education
 - Creating more opportunities for technology and innovation in post-secondary education
 - Expanding forestry focused academic and co-operative education programs
 - Prioritizing mental health
- **Ensures that the provincial government addresses issues of precarious work in funding new initiatives**, including
 - Psychological safety in the workplace
 - Ability to attract top-tier candidates
 - Inability to meet basic life objectives

TARGETED FUNDING IS GOOD POLITICS, BUT NOT ALWAYS GOOD POLICY

We appreciate that targeted funding announcements make for good politics. These kinds of announcements are easy to identify with, appear to be straightforward to implement and look like the government is controlling spending. However, if long-term funding strategies for workers do not accompany targeted funding announcements, these initiatives can fail to be effectively integrated.

¹ [2016/2017 AAPS Annual Report](#). AAPS at UBC. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

We believe that the initiatives outlined in Honourable Mark's mandate letter² are good for students and the province. Hands-on learning and professional experience gained through co-operative education and work-experience programs combined with academic excellence will help enhance the workforce.

Establishing technology and innovation as a key area of the economy through technology-related post-secondary programs and co-op programs is imperative for the future of this province. Increasing the next generation of skilled workers in B.C.'s forestry sector by increasing the number of degree programs is an excellent example of how we can modernize an important existing industry.

Given the importance of these initiatives, we want to ensure that they are successful over the long-term. We want to ensure that both students and stakeholders have a positive experience to ensure the continuation of programs like co-operative education.

Currently, we have 45³ AAPS members that are directly involved in co-operative education at UBC, supporting over 5,000⁴ students nationally and internationally, not to mention the countless AAPS members that act as mentors and supervisors to students working at UBC. Expanding co-operative education requires UBC to have operational funding that will ensure adequate staffing to deal with the increased volume of expanding programs.

In our 2014 Workplace Engagement Survey for AAPS Members, 71 percent⁵ of members already indicated that they work above the standard work week. If the provincial government is asking UBC for additional programs, the Province needs to ensure that the University has the money and the people to make these goals a reality.

PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH

We are pleased that the province has made mental health a priority for the people of British Columbia, including prioritizing youth mental health in the mandate letter to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.⁶

Again our members have a critical role in implementing this government priority at UBC as they are the counsellors and psychologists that look after the wellbeing of students. In Vancouver, we have 11⁷ members that are psychologists and seven that are clinical counsellors, as well as five wellness advisors

² [Hon. Melanie Mark's Mandate Letter](#). *The Province of British Columbia*. Web (accessed: 2017-08-24)

³ [2016/2017 AAPS Annual Report](#). *AAPS at UBC*. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

⁴ [UBC Co-operative Education](#). *The University of British Columbia*. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

⁵ *Ipsos Reid*. AAPS Member Engagement Survey Presentation, 2014-04-18

⁶ [Hon. Judy Darcy's Mandate Letter](#). *The Province of British Columbia* (accessed: 2017-08-24)

⁷ *AAPS at UBC*. AAPS Membership. Database (accessed: 2017-10-10)

for a clinic that services 54,000 students.⁸ At the Okanagan Campus, there are four full-time equivalent clinical counsellors for 9,000 students.

Without increased funding for psychologists and clinical counsellors, we are concerned that UBC will not be able to deliver on the mandate for student mental health. Without adequate staffing levels, our members who are mental health professionals will experience stress and burnout of their own. We are equally concerned that challenging mental health issues will download to student service providers such as residence life managers, student advisors, recreation staff, and academic program staff who are not trained to deal with these issues and where dealing with such complex issues may impact their own health and safety.

Students deserve access to quality mental health care and we need to have the appropriate number of professionals in place to provide that care.

THE IMPACT OF PRECARIOUS WORK

Precarious work (sometimes called non-standard or contingent) is typically defined in a formal work context as subcontracting, temporary contracts, interim work, self-employment, and involuntary part-time work.⁹

A university is not typically the first organization that you would think of as a precarious work environment, but 30 percent of our members are term (temporary contract) employees.¹⁰ A precarious work environment impacts our members' lives and wellbeing in many different ways, but it also impacts our Province's ability to be productive and innovative.

We encourage the Provincial Government to find ways to turn the tide on project-based funding and begin to focus on ensuring funding for long-term continuing employment.

Term employment costs the public sector. By hiring only on a short-term contract basis, UBC is spending a significant amount of public sector money on releasing and then hiring new employees. AAPS alone had 800¹¹ new hires in the last fiscal year.

The impact on the workplace environment is also significant. In term employment situations, contracts are typically up for renewal on an annual basis. This timeline does not allow for planning, leaves staff perpetually looking for other work, and can create an environment where employees will not come

⁸ [UBC at a Glance 2016/17](#). The University of British Columbia. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

⁹ Fleury, Dominique. [Precarious Employment in Canada: An Overview of the Situation](#). HillNotes. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

¹⁰ [2016/2017 AAPS Annual Report](#). AAPS at UBC. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

¹¹ [2016/2017 AAPS Annual Report](#). AAPS at UBC. Web (accessed: 2017-10-06)

forward with issues in the workplace such a bullying/harassment or financial impropriety for fear of losing their jobs.

Unaddressed issues in a precarious work environment can lead to mental health issues and create an environment where employees are not focused on their work or committed to improving or innovating in the work environment despite their desire to make a meaningful contribution. Term employment also negatively impacts recruitment as many top-tier candidates will be seeking employment from a stable employer who is also willing to make a long-term commitment to them.

Finally, those members who are in precarious work situations do not have the opportunity to build the life that they would like here in British Columbia. Many term employees delay having a family or avoid telling their supervisor that they are pregnant for fear their contract will not be renewed. In 2017 we should not have women afraid to tell their boss that they are pregnant and actively hiding a pregnancy.

We also routinely hear of AAPS members on term employment being denied mortgages even if they have had consistent employment with UBC for many years.

Precarious work means that any homeownership improvements that the government might be trying to implement will be lost on this group of highly skilled professionals who will never be able to own a home because of the nature of their employment contract.

The practice of precarious employment, particularly by one of B.C.'s largest and publicly funded employers, needs to be addressed. The government can begin this process by ensuring funding for adequate staffing levels to implement government programs is not short-term or project-based but contributes to long-term continuing employment.

DRIVING CHANGE WITH THE B.C. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

AAPS is pleased that the government is re-establishing the B.C. Human Rights Commission. As the workplace becomes more complex, it is imperative that both employees, employers, and unions have a government institution which will uphold the Human Rights Code and be a force for change, education, and dispute resolution. As with other government initiatives, we assert the need for the Commission to be adequately funded and appropriately staffed so that it may be proactive, fair, and effective for all people of British Columbia.

CONCLUSION

We support the government's mandates. We support the government's initiatives and understand the crucial role that our members have in bringing these promises to the people of B.C. to fruition. We believe that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services can make budgetary recommendations that will ensure funding for adequate and on-going staffing levels and institute funding policies that will help put an end to precarious work.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff of The University of British Columbia (AAPS) is the professional association for the Management and Professional Staff group at UBC.

Management and Professional Staff (M&P Staff) play critical roles in every function of the University. Their leadership and professional expertise are essential to a world-class institution of learning, research, innovation, and community engagement.

AAPS members are highly qualified professionals overseeing information technology; conducting and facilitating research; directing academic and community programs; managing facilities and infrastructure; guiding and supporting students as academic advisors, counsellors, coaches, program administrators, career and co-op advisors, and travel abroad program coordinators. AAPS members lead industry initiatives and seek partnerships with the broader community for economic development, education, and communication.

AAPS is the legal bargaining agent for the M&P Staff group and represents its over 4,200 members in collective bargaining and dispute resolution with the University.

AAPS supports members in resolving workplace issues and strives to improve their work experience at UBC. The Association also creates a connected community of members through networking and professional development opportunities.

AAPS is registered under the B.C. Societies Act.



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