

UNBC President Daniel Weeks
UNBC Board of Governors Chair John Turner
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C.
V2N 4Z9

12 March 2015

President Weeks and Board Chair Turner,

As you know, the UNBC Faculty Association did not take lightly the decision to go on strike. As current and former research chairs, we also did not take lightly the need to write this letter.

While we each have research chair appointments and are recognized both nationally and internationally, we collectively subscribe to the view that individual success, in the past and in the future, is truly built upon collaborations and work with our excellent faculty colleagues, students, and staff at UNBC. Merit-based salary systems, with their outdated and inappropriate metrics, do not recognize the fact that a university is much more than just the sum of its people; it is about how these people work together and how the synergy of their talents, their sacrifices, and their achievements across teaching, research, and service combine to enrich the entire university, its students, and the various communities it serves. A true university recognizes and values all of its constituent parts, and the UNBC ethos of interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and working in common purpose is what has allowed our small, new university to achieve so much so quickly.

We are writing because we believe that we must work together to fix the systemic problem with our pay structure. We must do this now in order to keep UNBC strong into the future by helping to retain our best people and recruit the next generation of excellent faculty as the large group of “original” faculty starts to retire in the next few years. We are deeply concerned that the quality of the collegial environment that we have at the university today will be eroded, and that all we have built may soon be degraded, if we do not soon implement a change that appropriately recognizes the commitment of our faculty members to UNBC.

As noted in the mediation report from Vince Ready, the University is not as tightly bound by provincial guidelines as was previously thought, and the University has the financial resources to address the broken salary system. To address the recognized compensation challenge, it is a question of changing priorities. We believe that the UNBC community has an obligation, and is uniquely positioned, to address many of the challenges and

opportunities that face northern British Columbia into the next 25 years and beyond. Ensuring a strong and sustainable UNBC will help support, and secure the future for, the people and communities across northern British Columbia who worked hard to found this University.

The undersigned are all current or former research chairs. We are proud of the fact that over the past 20 years UNBC's faculty and staff have moved this institution from grass-roots start-up to being the best small university in Western Canada. We remain committed to fairness, respect, and continued excellence. We are on strike because we are concerned for the future of our university and are writing because we believe now is the time to address the broken salary structure. We urge the University's bargaining team to engage in earnest negotiations over new proposals that address this broken structure so that we can, together, set the course for the next 25 years of success at UNBC.

Sincerely,

Joselito Arocena
former Canada Research Chair - Soil and Environmental Sciences

Russ Dawson
Canadian Research Chair in Avian Ecology

Stephen Déry
Canada Research Chair in Northern Hydrometeorology

Che M. Elkin
FRBC/Slocan Chair in Mixedwood Ecology and Management

Sarah L. Gray
Canada Research Chair in Integrative Physiology of Diabetes

Greg Halseth
Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small-Town Studies

Henry G Harder
Dr. Donald B Rix Chair, Aboriginal Environmental Health.

Dezene Huber
Canada Research Chair in Forest Entomology and Chemical Ecology

Kevin Hutchings
Canada Research Chair in Literature, Culture and Environmental Studies

Natalia Loukacheva
Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Governance and Law

Brian Menounos
Canada Research Chair in Glacier Change

Michael Murphy
Canada Research Chair in Comparative Indigenous-State Relations

Philip N. Owens
Forest Renewal BC (FRBC) Endowed Chair in Landscape Ecology

Kathy Parker
Ian McTaggart Cowan Muskwa-Kechika Research Professor

Margot W. Parkes
Canada Research Chair in Health, Ecosystems and Society

Ellen Petticrew
Forest Renewal BC (FRBC) Endowed Chair in Landscape Ecology

Youmin Tang
former Canada Research Chair - Climate Prediction and Predictability

cc: UNBC Faculty Association