

Child care union reaches tentative deal with UBC, strikes cancelled ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Unionized campus child care workers have reached a new tentative agreement with the university after three days of mediation in response to a strike notice.

Neither the union nor UBC will release the terms of the deal, but UBC has said it is similar to deals reached with other unions on campus this year. It is effective from May 2012 to April 2014. The union originally asked for wage increases from the university to bring their average wages up to at least \$20 per hour. Workers currently make between \$11.81 and \$21.19 per hour, depending on education and experience. Most other unions on campus to settle a deal this year received modest percentage raises of 2 per cent for one year and 2 per cent the next.

The workers, represented by a bargaining unit within the B.C. Government and Service Employee Union (BGCEU) local 303, first served strike notice to UBC on Feb. 21 after voting 94 per cent in favour of job action last December. On the same day, the university applied for mediation in an attempt to avoid a strike. The bargaining unit represents around 160 childcare employees.

The workers had planned rotating pickets at five daycare centres on campus on March 1, a move that could have affected over 100 children. But strikes were stalled when UBC immediately called for mediation, and the new agreement now ensures no strikes will happen..

Mediation was first only scheduled for this Monday, but it continued until a deal was reached on Wednesday afternoon.

During mediation, BCGEU local 303 chair Andrea Duncan said to The Ubysey that mandates from the provincial government prevented UBC from offering what she feels is a fair wage for early childhood educators.

"We're really hoping that the government will allow UBC to break outside of that mandate and pay these individuals what they deserve," said Duncan.

Although Schmidt has not released the terms of the deal, he said it fell within provincial mandates.

Schmidt said he was satisfied that a deal could be reached at the bargaining table without job action.

"We're obviously very happy that we've been able to reach a tentative agreement and recognize that all sides worked very hard through the mediation process," said Schmidt.

-reprinted from the Ubysey

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