

Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

Pay Equity
For
Vancouver Library Workers
July 25, 2007

CUPE



Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

Overview of presentation

- Gender-based wage discrimination and pay equity
- Comparisons of Library Assistant 1 wages
- Comparisons of professional Librarian wages
- Suggested tools to achieve pay equity
- Ramifications of no pay equity



Second only to across the board wage increases, pay equity provisions were identified as the biggest concern for our members in our original bargaining survey.

Furthermore, the 97% strike vote delivered by our members on June 24 clearly reinforced the resolve our members on this issue.

As library workers at VPL, we've long suspected that our wages are significantly lower than those of library workers performing similar work in other sectors and jurisdictions.

However, until the release of CUPE's report "Overdue: Pay Equity for Library workers" – a report which compares and analyzes the salaries of library workers in BC, we were unaware of the extent of the pay equity problem.

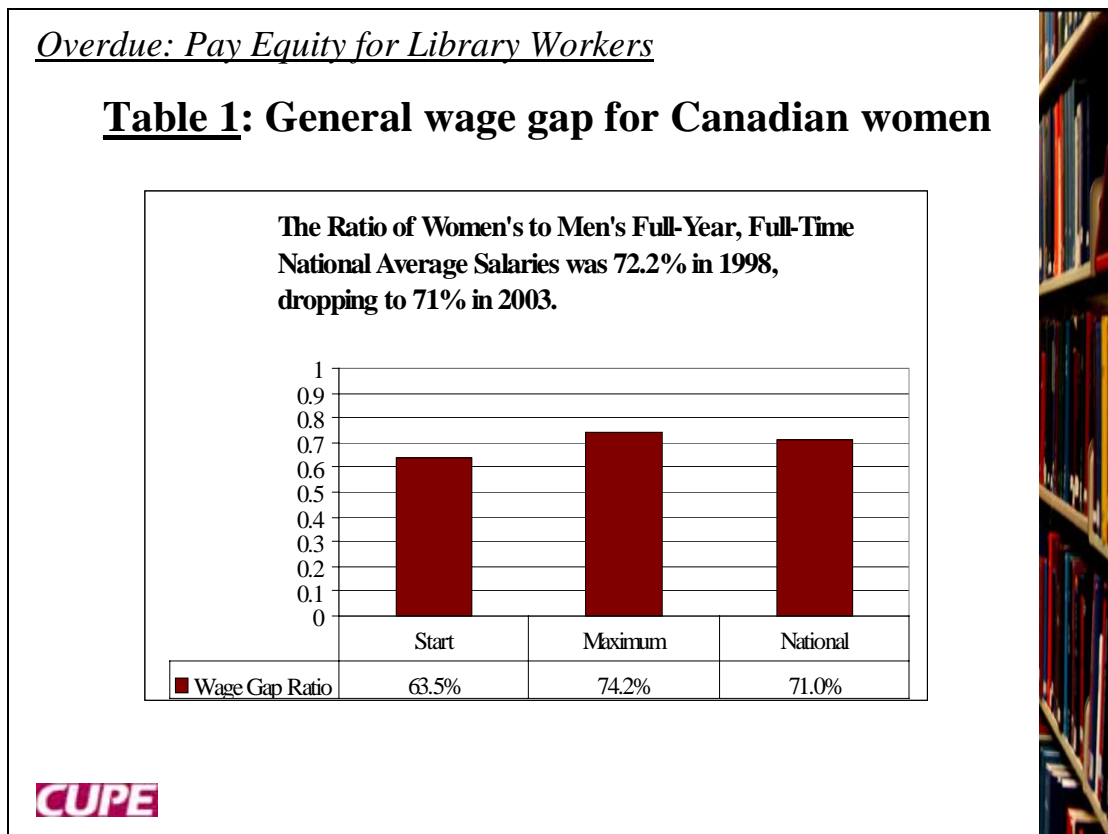
The results of this report clearly illustrate that library workers at VPL are underpaid.

This presentation begins with a quick summary of what gender-based discrimination and pay equity means.

The presentation will then focus on numbers – numbers which will clearly illustrate that workers at VPL are paid significantly less than what is fair, ethical and respectful.

The presentation will end with a review of the ramifications to VPL of not adopting some pay equity provisions and an explanation of some tools that we can use to address pay equity.

Slide 3



This slide demonstrates that despite many gains for women in the workforce, gender-based wage discrimination is still alive and well in Canada.

The average fulltime annual salary of Canadian women in 2003 was still only 71% of their male counterparts.

Furthermore, it is no secret that male jobs in the municipal sector are typically higher paying than jobs in the female-dominated library workplaces.

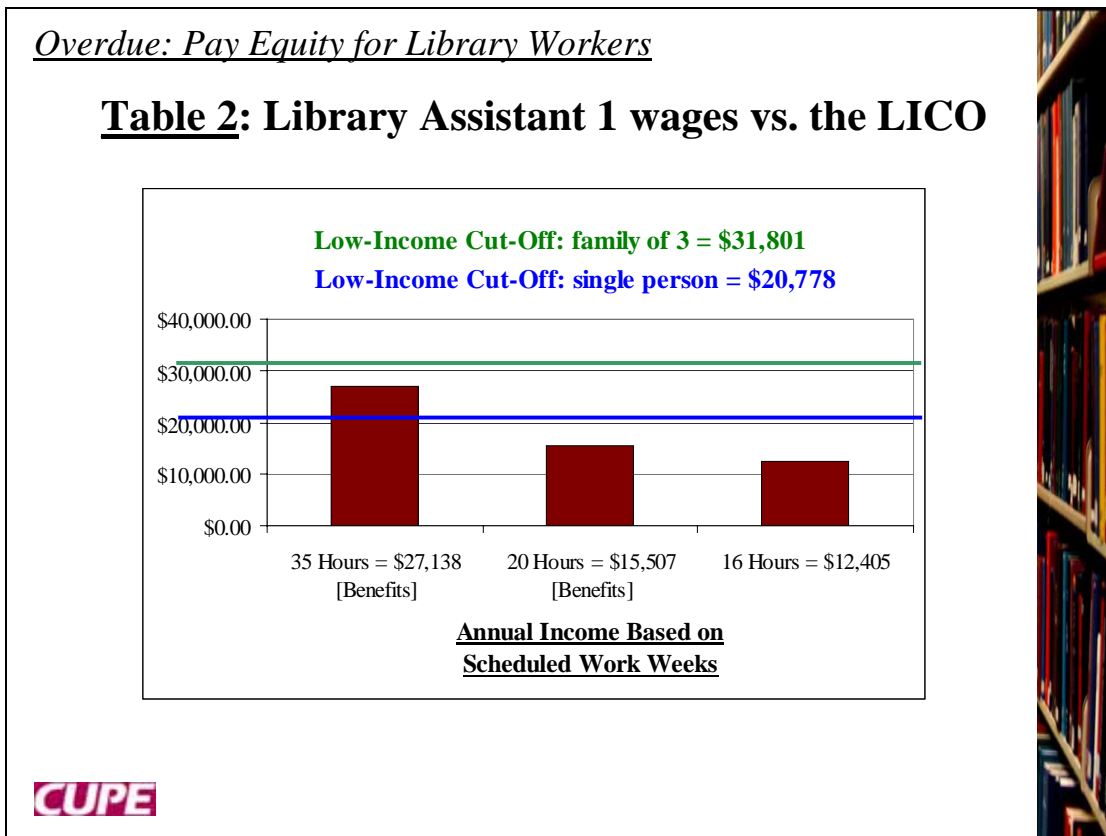
In libraries, this gender-based discrimination probably originated at a time when librarians were typically staffed by middle-class women volunteering or working as second-income earners.

The reality of the library workplace today is remarkably different.

Now all library workers require high levels of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills.

Additionally, professional librarians now require a minimum of six years of post-secondary education to begin with and this high level of education is frequently supplemented with additional ongoing training in early childhood education, information technology, management practices, and the social skills necessary to deal with disenfranchised social groups.

Slide 4



This table compares entry level wages of our library assistants to the Low-Income Cut-off Line (LICO) - Statistics Canada's version of the poverty line.

The LICO is the income threshold below which an earner has to devote an onerous amount of their income to meet the basic needs of shelter, food and clothing – in other words – the income threshold below which an earner would be considered to be living in poverty.

In this table, the green line represents the LICO for a family of 3 and the blue line represents the LICO for a single person.

The first bar compares the entry level annual salary of a fulltime Library Assistant 1 (LA1) to the LICO of a single person living in BC and the LICO for a family of 3.

An LA1 who has no dependents earns just enough to get over the LICO: however, should this person be trying to provide for a family of 3, you can see that she falls below the poverty line.

As if the previous figures for fulltime workers aren't bad enough, the situation for our part-time staff is considerably worse.

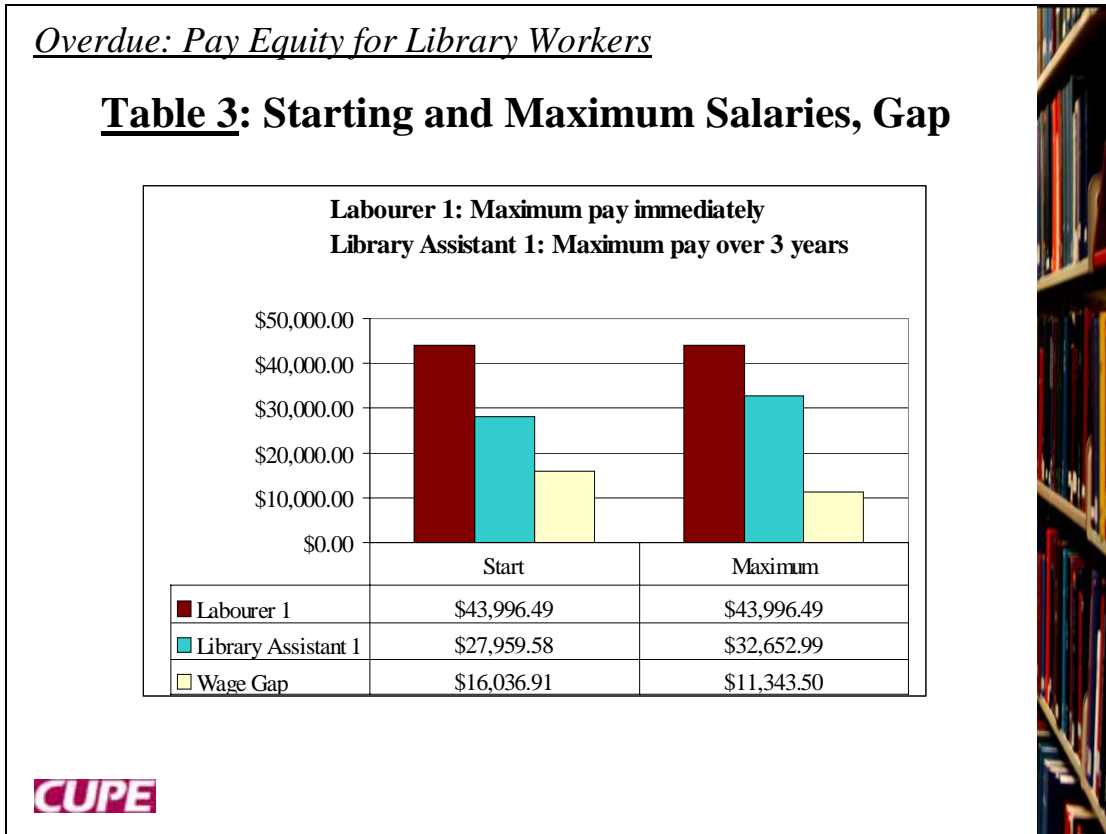
The second and third bars illustrate how far below the poverty line our part-time and auxiliary LA1s are.

The second bar shows the income of a part-time LA1 working 20 hours a week and earning some benefits.

The third bar shows the income of a part-time LA1, who gets no benefits, and works 16 hours per week.

It is important to note that a large percentage of our entry-level workers spend a long period of time as auxiliary or part-time workers without the opportunity to gain fulltime status or fulltime salaries. Not always because they choose to be part-time, but because opportunities for fulltime work are not made available to them.

Only 50 of our part-time and auxiliary staff qualify for health, dental, sick leave or vacation benefits.



This slide compares the salary of a Library Assistant 1(LA1) to the salary of a Labourer 1 at the City of Vancouver.

When we compare the LA1 and Labourer 1 we see significantly lower wages for our entry level library assistants.

In the first year, an LA1 earns close to \$28K whereas a labourer at the City of Vancouver earns close o \$44K.

You may think that this discrepancy is based on higher skill levels required by labourers or hazards in the workplace.

This is not the case, the library can be considered an industrial workplace requiring the repeated heaving lifting of heavy book loads. Consequently there are significant occupational hazards for a library assistant: including RSI and other musculoskeletal injuries.

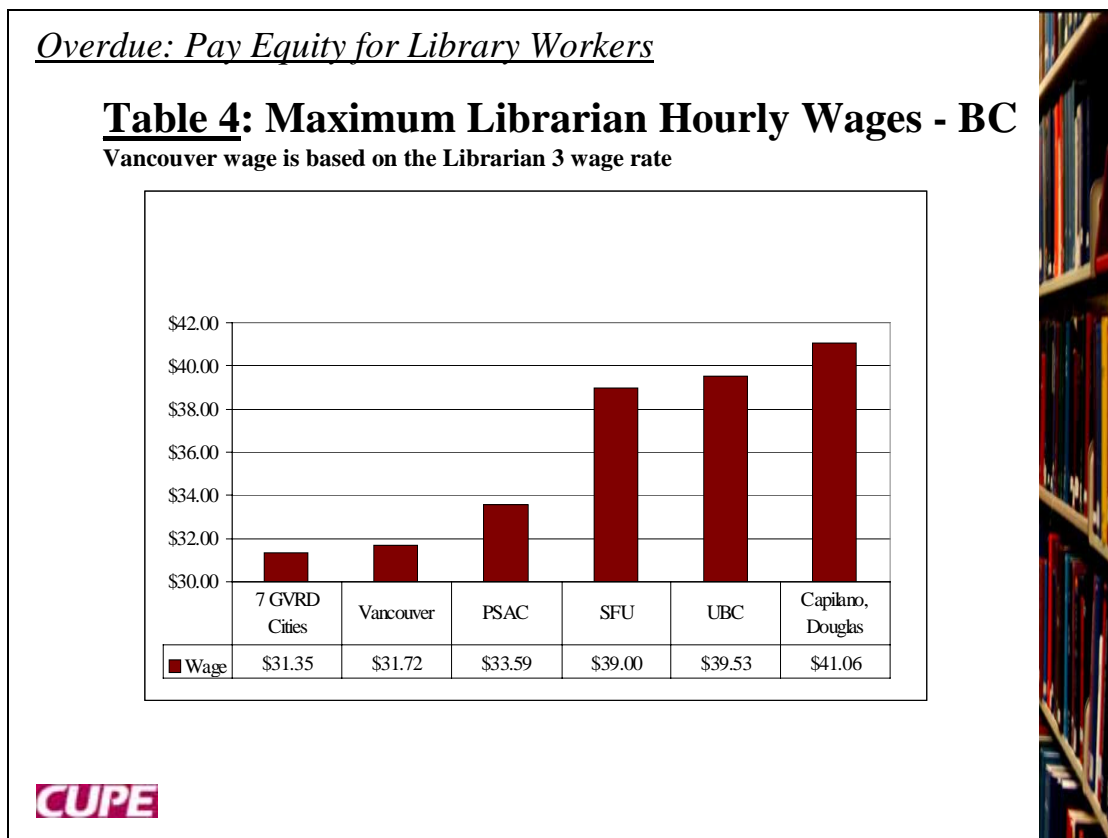
Library workers also face the risk of harassment and exposure to violence from the public.

Additionally, our library assistants require a grade 12 education and basic computer skills, something a labourer is not required to have.

Furthermore due to the existence of pay increments or steps, something not traditionally applied in male-dominated workforces, the LA1 experiences a significant wage gap over the years that it takes to reach their maximum salary.

The gap over 3 years is around \$41K – these “missing” earnings could be enough to fund college tuition for a dependent child or to save for a down payment for a small apartment.

Slide 6



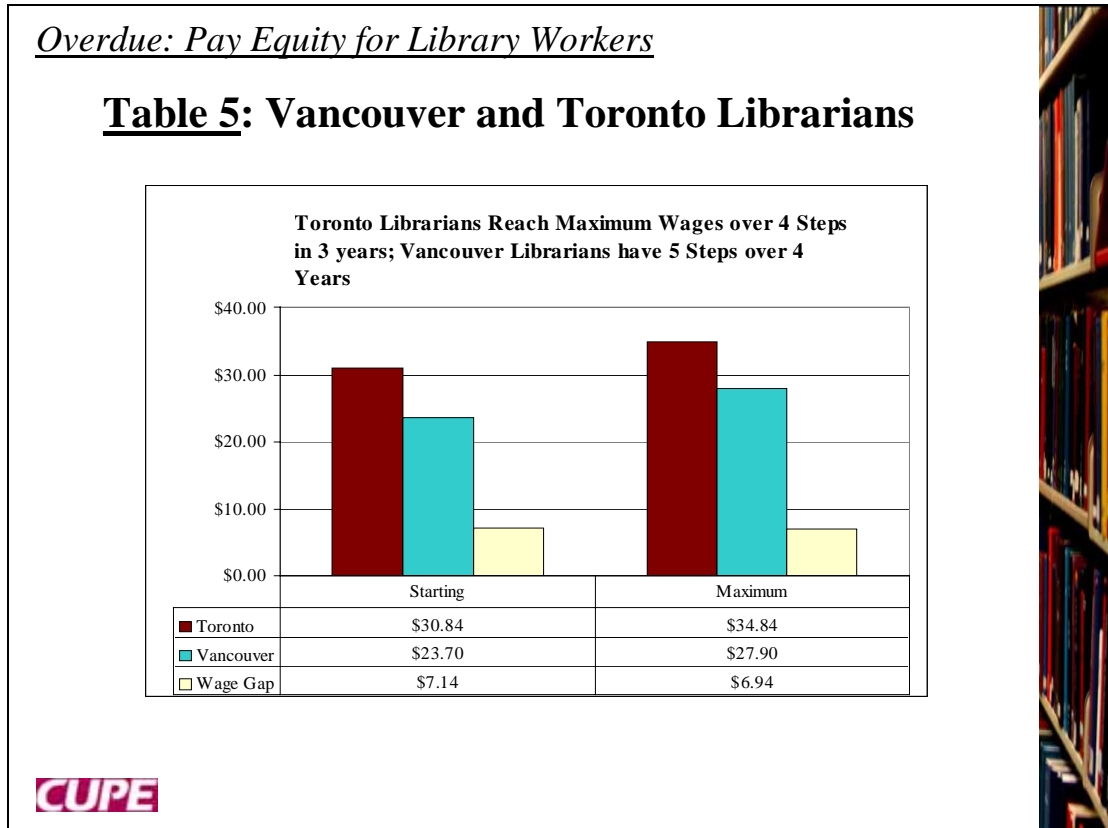
This slide compares the wages of public librarians working within the GVRD to librarians working in the college and university sectors and in the Federal government.

The wage figures used for Vancouver Public Library librarians in this table are based on the Librarian 3 wage rate but more than 40% of our librarians are Librarian 1s that earn a max wage of 27.90.

We quickly see that our librarians make significantly less than librarians in the post-secondary education sectors and less than the librarians working under federal jurisdictions.

In both of these sectors, pay equity settlements have been reached and those settlements have brought the librarian wages up.

Slide 7



This slide shows the difference between the starting and maximum wages of entry level Librarian 1s at the Toronto Public Library and at the Vancouver Public Library.

Ontario pay equity legislation produced significant gains for librarians in Toronto – they earn about \$7.00 per hour more than librarians working for Vancouver Public Library.

Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

Pay Equity Now

- Gender-neutral, points-based job evaluation:
 - Skill
 - Effort
 - Responsibility
 - Working conditions
- Plus:
 - Eliminating increments
 - Increase scheduled hours



So what can we do about this?

We have submitted 3 proposals to address pay equity –

The first is to embark on a gender-neutral point-weighted job evaluation exercise.

This is basically a more objective method of assessing the value of a job.

It is a process whereby job classifications are systematically assessed on the basis of elements like skill, effort, level of responsibility, educational requirements and working conditions.

Once this assessment is complete, the wage rates of these jobs are compared to the wage rates of similar jobs in a workforce that is not female-dominated.

These comparisons generally demonstrate how much a position is underpaid compared to similar positions in a gender-neutral workforce and sets the stage for wage increases.

The 2nd proposal addresses the removal of pay increments.

The 3rd proposal is a special adjustment to librarian wages.

All of these tools have been effective in achieving pay equity for library workers in other sectors and jurisdictions

Slide 9

Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

Summary and Conclusion

- Gender-based wage discrimination and pay inequities still exist in Canada, particularly in the public library sector
- Library Assistant 1 wages leave employees dangerously close to the poverty line
- Professional Librarian wages in GVRD public libraries are not competitive
- Ramifications of no pay equity
- Effective tools to achieve pay equity exist

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Summary

The figures presented here today demonstrate without a doubt that pay inequity is a product of gender discrimination and that there is clearly a pay equity issue at the Vancouver Public Library.

The low wages that library assistants earn and the salaries of our public librarians are simply not competitive with other sectors and regions where pay equity settlements exist.

If management and the Board don't appreciate the "what's fair, ethical and respectful" argument for pay equity, please consider how these inequities are

going to affect the retention and recruitment of library workers in the near future.

They might want to consider why we at VPL are repeatedly experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining library assistants.

They might want to think about the number of librarians that have recently left Vancouver Public Library for higher paying jobs in the education sector.

And now with several other GVRD public libraries and municipalities embarking on job evaluation exercises, the competition from the public library sector will also have a negative impact on VPL's ability to recruit and retain a workforce of committed and talented library workers.