

March 13 2017

Dear President Petter,

On Friday, March 10, food service workers at SFU waited at the Diamond Alumni Centre for 45 minutes for representatives of SFU new food services provider, Sodexo, to show up for a meeting. Sodexo stood the workers up. When it became clear that reps from Sodexo would not show to the meeting, the workers, who received termination notices in February, were understandably distressed. Having received no commitment they would maintain their jobs, their union, or their contract from either the university or Sodexo, workers then decided to march to Strand Hall to see whether they might receive any assurances from you. You refused to meet them.

Under your leadership, SFU has branded itself as a socially compassionate and “engaged” institution. Yet in awarding the contract to Sodexo and not requiring successorship as part of the deal—which would have guaranteed workers their jobs, their union, and their contract—decisions taken at senior levels of the administration have imperilled the livelihoods and injured the dignity of some of the most vulnerable workers on our campus. While senior management in the upper echelons of the university administration make hundreds of thousands of dollars a year (partly thanks to contracts like Sodexo’s), these workers are among the lowest paid on campus. They have been forced to fight hard for whatever meagre security they used to have. Many have worked at SFU for decades, and most earn \$16-\$18 an hour (less than a living wage). More than half of these workers are women, a number of them are immigrants, and many are people of colour. If our university is genuinely committed to lifting people out of poverty, we need to start with workers in our community. As you yourself recently said, speaking at the “We are all SFU” event, it is “our common resolve to foster a university environment in which **all** members of our community feel valued and supported.”

You have the power to intervene and do the right thing, to make this statement more than mere rhetoric. Show us that you care. The university needs to see some “engagement” from you on this file.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Blomley, Geography
Enda Brophy, School of Communication
John Calvert, Health Sciences
Stephen Collis, English
Samir Gandesha, Humanities
Mark Leier, History
Carolyn Lesjak, English
Kirsten McAllister, School Communication
Eugene McCann, Geography

Geoff Mann, Geography
Christopher Pavsek, School of Contemporary Arts
Lynne Quarmby, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry
Michael T Schmitt, Psychology
Malcolm Steinberg, Health Sciences
Kendra Strauss, Labour Studies Program
Habiba Zaman, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies