

THESE CUTS HAVE CONSEQUENCES!

INTRODUCTION

By now, you will have heard that on January 27, 2025, BCIT management announced a budget cut averaging 4.8% across the Institute. Managers have been asked to initiate discussions regarding how to implement this reduction within each Department. The proposed 4.8 general cut follows a 4% budget reduction last summer, which means that across the board cuts are now approaching 9%. The following document is intended to provide members with the information necessary to navigate this situation. It is divided into three sections: **Preamble**, which provides history and context; **Messaging** suggests a handful of useful rhetorical positions; and **Action**, which provides guidance to Departments on how to approach budget reductions.

PREAMBLE

In the last round of cuts, the focus was on reducing Departmental spending in ways that would be minimally disruptive to the Department (with the Department defined as all the FSA members and their related manager in a designated area). So, for instance, if someone in the Department was thinking of retiring, this was seen as an orderly way of accomplishing the necessary cut.

However, the results of this chaotic approach have been felt by our remaining members. Because some retirements took place late in the summer, there were many (Fall and Winter term) classes that had to be covered by other Department members. As there can be no strategic planning or discussions regarding who retires, Departments found themselves immediately searching for replacements to get their work done.

In this round of cuts, FSA members and Departments *should maintain a focus on what work can be eliminated* to accomplish the necessary budget reduction under Article 14 of the Collective Agreement, which outlines collegial governance. Steps will be taken later to decide whether that means that there will need to be workforce reductions.

It is important at this early stage to focus on the work and not the people!

If workforce reductions do indeed need to happen because of the elimination of work, those reductions will be dealt with under Article 18 of the Collective Agreement.

CURRENT BUDGET CUT AVERAGING

4.8%

BUDGET REDUCTION
IN SUMMER 2024

4%

CUMULATIVE CUTS
APPROACHING

9%

MESSAGING

On the cuts:

- Management's proposed across-the-board cuts are significant, and they will have negative consequences on BCIT employees, students, and our reputation.
- These cuts are going to impact what BCIT can do and what it can offer.
- FSA Members can no longer do more with less.
- The last round of cuts resulted in a great deal of work being "picked up" by other members.

- Cuts to other bargaining units affect FSA members too. If work is not eliminated, it will necessarily be downloaded onto others.

On how Departments approach the cuts:

- When talking about how to accomplish this cut, we must focus on things we will STOP doing.
- A good question to ask is "What specific functions will we **eliminate** in order to accomplish these cuts"

ACTION

FSA Members should call for a Departmental Meeting. Article 14.1 says:

A Department's objectives shall be set by the Manager through the consultative process, and shall be possible to implement in accordance with the Collective Agreement.

The cut of 4.8% can be seen as a Departmental objective, which requires consultation with the Department regarding the purpose of the objective, and how the cuts can be accomplished or mitigated. Consultation is not a right of veto for members but is a responsibility of members and an opportunity to seriously exchange views and information before taking action. Following consultation and the establishment of the cuts as a Departmental objective, Departments as a whole have the right and duty to devise plans to determine how to cover necessary services and operations and to allocate professional duties. This is not a unilateral management right, but if you do not exercise your rights then management will.

Departments should call these meetings as soon as possible. We have heard that managers have until the end of February to advise their Deans and the Executive on suggestions for accomplishing the cuts in their areas.

Even if formal Department meetings are not scheduled, Managers should be discussing the budget cuts with members of the Department. You may call a Department meeting by using the break time on Wednesday afternoons as per article 2.1.8.2 of the Collective Agreement. We suggest keeping the focus on what functions/activities/courses or other work will be eliminated or discontinued rather than trying to find easy ways to accomplish the cut.

Please reach out to the FSA (fsa@bcit.ca) for any assistance or guidance in this process.

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