

From the President:

FSA and its members will hold BCIT’s managers accountable

Since 2009 we have been part of charting the course for our institution with Don Wright and the Leadership Team leading us through a marathon of planning. Many of you contributed your suggestions and comments to help shape the Institute’s new Strategic and Fiscal Plans. The culmination of this planning process was the recent development of the Implementation Plan, which assigns action items to individuals and sets out the activities and timelines to achieve the objectives in the Strategic Plan. Our attention should now shift to monitoring the execution of the Implementation Plan and, if necessary, holding individual managers accountable for its success.

These next months of the journey are of utmost importance. BCIT requires careful stewardship and leadership to ensure we set ourselves up for success and free ourselves from the stranglehold of the recent past. Our financial situation is still fragile and the work toward realizing our Strategic Plan has just begun. Members have been asking how they can continue to be involved. Here are a few suggestions:

- Familiarize yourself with the Institute’s Vision, Mission and Mandate documents

- Read the BCIT Strategic Plan and incorporate its objectives into your thinking and planning
- Add the Operation Plan as a standing item to your department meeting agenda to promote discussion about how best to successfully contribute to BCIT realizing its vision
- Take responsibility for the Individual Action items
- Hold managers accountable for Implementation Plan items and find ways to support them in carrying out their duties

If you have a question, an answer or an idea, you owe it to yourself and members of our community to bring it forward. While it takes precious time to do so, your experience and expertise is required to ensure BCIT moves forward in a thoughtful, strategic and responsible way — with your input. We were provided the opportunity to draft the plan; we now have a responsibility to hold management accountable for carrying out the plan. The FSA will be seeking new opportunities for members to work together to build BCIT’s future.

Amy Fell
FSA President

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Member consultations winding down, proposals being prepared

By Paul Reniers

What may have been the most comprehensive set of member consultations in FSA history is now winding down. The last forums were held last month and the Collective Agreement Committee (CAC) has begun the mammoth task of sorting through the information already generated by the discussions.

The CAC is now compiling dozens of pages of notes from forums and department meetings to identify potential changes to the collective agreement, member interests and opinions, and bargaining strategies. What will be particularly helpful are the examples offered by members about how problems with the collective agreement affect them and their students, and how changes can have significant impact on the working and learning environment at BCIT.

These notes will be brought together with hundreds of specific suggestions made



through individual conversations and e-mails on how to change the collective agreement. An on-line membership bargaining survey is also expected to go ahead in the next several weeks. Based on

this data, the CAC will formulate proposals and establish priorities. It is hoped to put these forward to the members in the next few weeks.

FSA joins Provincial Bargaining Council

By Paul Reniers

For the first time since sectoral bargaining began approximately 15 years ago, the FSA will be at the table with counterparts from the BC Government Employees Union and the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE).

The FSA has traditionally stayed away from provincial bargaining for a variety of reasons. Doing so has preserved our autonomy, our slightly superior compensation, and several unique aspects of our collective agreement. As the largest bargaining unit in the sector by far, we have had the means to negotiate good agreements on our own.

The provincial scene changed for us significantly in 2007. We discovered at the end of bargaining that our wage settlement had actually been determined as part of the provincial negotiations, without our being present. When the Provincial Bargaining Council settled wages with the Post-Secondary Employers Association, our wages were included in the calculations. The provincial government was unwilling to provide any authority to vary that settlement.

Based on that experience, the FSA Executive Committee was determined to have a voice at the provincial table. We have agreed to terms for the Provincial Bargaining Council that allow us to have our full autonomy. We are not required to sign

the provincial master agreement and we are not required to follow FPSE or the BC-GEU in job action. Because the council will work on a consensus model, we have the same ability to agree or disagree as do the other unions. In fact, with our size and our staff support, we expect to be one of the most influential locals in the council. We can have a voice at the provincial table while we continue to advocate for bargaining at the institutional level.

Even though we have joined the Provincial Bargaining Council, we expect the emphasis in this round of bargaining will be on local issues. We are, however, making sure that the needs of our members are heard where decisions are made.

Layoffs: 12 positions eliminated

By Christine Nagy

The FSA Board of Directors and the FSA staff would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members who offered their valuable time and energy to respond to BCIT's request for input on the 2010/2011 Preliminary Fiscal Plan.

As you know, January 6 was the close of opportunity to submit your feedback on the draft fiscal plan, and the Institute subsequently unveiled the Final Fiscal Plan on January 21.

Despite everyone's best efforts on providing suggestions as to how BCIT could minimize the impact on staffing levels, the FSA Labour Relations Representatives found themselves busy attending in excess of a

dozen departmental staff reduction meetings during late January and early February. The Labour Reps attended to represent our members who were potentially going to be impacted by the Final Fiscal Plan, and to ensure that the staff reduction procedures were legitimate and complied with the collective agreement.

The end result of this exercise is that 12 positions are to be eliminated as a result of the Fiscal Plan, with two additional positions being laid off for other reasons. Further, the Institute has advised that layoffs may still be announced in Renewable Resources.

The 12 positions being eliminated as a result of the Fiscal Plan layoffs have been addressed in the following manner:

- One was resolved through voluntary layoff under Article 18;
- One was resolved through the sharing of workload between departments;
- Six were resolved through agreements based on the terms of the Collective Agreement;
- Three were resolved through other tentative agreements, and
- One is subject to a grievance, which has been filed.

All settlements are confidential and without precedent.

The FSA has asked the Employer to provide an accounting of total layoffs across the Institute in comparison to the Final Fiscal Plan. That report is expected this month.

FSA grievance: Institute violated Union's rights as exclusive bargaining agent

By Heather Neun

The FSA's status as the exclusive bargaining agent for its members is the subject of a recently filed union grievance. The FSA alleges that the Institute engaged in discussions with individual members that breached its obligation to deal solely with the FSA.

These discussions took place in the context of the fiscal plan and staff reduction process while the FSA was attempting to negotiate the terms of severance for all affected members. The Institute's discussions with individuals concerned enhanced terms of severance that were different from those

strictly available under the collective agreement.

The FSA's sole bargaining authority is guaranteed in the collective agreement and under the B.C. *Labour Relations Code*. That guarantee means that private negotiations are not permitted between the employer and an employee concerning terms of employment and all matters already covered in the collective agreement, such as termination of employment, severance pay, etc. This kind of deal making between individuals and the employer that would establish special rights for individual employees violates the union's status as sole bargaining agent.

The FSA believes that the Institute crossed the line and conducted itself as if it could deal first with individual employees about matters that are within the FSA's exclusive authority. The concern in such cases is that when an employer deals directly with employees about implementing terms different than those in the collective agreement, this strikes directly at the union's authority to represent all members of the bargaining unit. The FSA filed the grievance out of concern that the Institute's actions undermined and compromised its role in determining the terms and conditions of employment for its members.

Upcoming FSA Events

FSA General Meeting

Wednesday, April 28, 2:30 - 4:20 p.m. - SE6 233

Raising awareness of our membership's contribution to students' BCIT experience

By Paul Dayson

In January, the FSA began a student awareness campaign. To date the FSA has run four advertisements in *The Link*, BCIT's student newspaper. Each ad has highlighted one FSA member and how they contribute to students' educational experience in ways students might not immediately think of when they think of learning at BCIT.

The four members profiled to date illustrate the dedication of the FSA membership to BCIT's students. It's about better preparing these students for the workplace — giving them a competitive edge in their future careers and lives. The members featured so far are:

- For four years — largely on his own time — BCIT's Mechanical Engineering instructor **Taco Niet** has mentored BCIT students participating in engineering competitions. This work adds value to students' credentials and brings national recognition to BCIT's Mechanical Engineering Program..

"It's about helping them reach their potential."



Taco Niet believes in giving his students the opportunity to excel. For four years — largely on his own time — he has mentored BCIT students participating in engineering competitions.

"It's about team dynamics, a work environment that gives us more knowledge than classes," says Su Chong Io, one of Niet's students.

It also adds value to his students' credentials and brings national recognition of BCIT's Mechanical Engineering program.

But for Niet, it's simply about his students success.

As the union for BCIT's technology faculty and staff, the FSA negotiates for the working conditions that ensure BCIT's students can receive the quality of instruction they expect.

It's about a better student experience. An experience that gives you real knowledge that is practical and applied — what employers are looking for when you graduate.

It's your competitive edge.

BCIT FSA
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courses with Medical Radiography faculty. Online course work adds value for students in providing the flexibility that working practitioners in medical fields require.

- As research head for the Centre for the Architectural Ecology, **Maureen Connelly** knows her research and industry connections contribute to a better classroom experience that prepares students for the future.
- **Judy Bushnell**, a BCIT counselor, helps students to achieve well-being in the face of personal and academic challenges — helping them reach their potential. Doing this builds resilience that prepares students for BCIT's intensive programs and for future obstacles in their lives.

Two more ads are scheduled to run in *The Link* this term. In addition, a poster campaign is planned and the profiles will also be appearing on the FSA's website at bcitfsa.ca.



Rosario Passos believes in delivering the best learning experience. She leads a Learning and Teaching Centre team developing online and blended courses with Medical Radiography faculty.

"These courses promote independence and teamwork, better preparing students for the workplace," says instructor Meena Amlani.

Online course work also adds value for students in providing the flexibility that working practitioners in medical fields require.

But for Passos, it's simply about BCIT students' success.

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Maureen Connelly believes in BCIT's students. She knows her research into green roof technology has the power to change the world but that students will make it happen.

"The environmental advantages are there, but to be sustainable it needs individuals to implement it," says Connelly. "That change happens in the classroom."

Her research and industry connections contribute to a better classroom experience that prepares students for the future.

But for Connelly, it's simply about a better world for BCIT students.

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It's about a better student experience. An experience that gives you real knowledge that is practical and applied — what employers are looking for when you graduate.

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Judy Bushnell believes in helping BCIT students achieve their goals. As one of the institute's professional counsellors, she helps students to achieve well-being in the face of personal and academic challenges.

"It's not just about helping students overcome obstacles, it's about helping them reach their potential," says Bushnell. "It's about building resilience."

That resilience prepares students for BCIT's intensive programs and to meet the challenges in their future.

But for Bushnell, it's simply about BCIT students' success.

As the union for BCIT's faculty and technical staff, the FSA negotiates for the working conditions that ensure BCIT's students can receive the quality of education they expect.

It's about a better student experience. An experience that gives you real knowledge that is practical and applied — what employers are looking for when you graduate.

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FSA President Amy Fell and Vice President Terry Gordon celebrate their acclamation on St Patrick's Day. PAUL DAYSON PHOTO

FSA Elections

**President, VP acclaimed in win
Director-At-Large position remains unfilled**

Nominations for the 2010 FSA Elections closed at noon on Wednesday, March 17.

The only nominations received were Amy Fell for President and Terry Gordon for Vice-President. No nominations were received for the one vacant Director-at-Large position.

As each nominated member meets the eligibility requirements according to the FSA's bylaws and policies, the FSA's Returning Officer Kevin Cudihee declared each nominee acclaimed in the position for which they were nominated.

How the vacant Director-at-Large position is to be filled will now have to be determined by the Executive Committee as mandated by the FSA's Policy on the Conduct of Election (Policy 1.2.1 Conduct of Elections).

2010/2011 FSA Executive:

- President:** Amy Fell
- Vice-President:** Terry Gordon
- Directors-at-Large:** Joe Boyd,
Neil Cox,
Steve Finn,
Colin Jones,
Taco Niet,
Teresa Place,
Silvia Raschke

Amy Fell, President

Amy Fell has been FSA President since 2005. Her experience at BCIT ranges from being a student living in residence to navigating the regularization language through a variety of positions in the Registrar's Office, Student Services, and ultimately to her position in Program Advising. Amy joined the FSA Executive in 2002 with a vision to strengthen the FSA's identity and to bring about meaningful communication at all levels within BCIT. She finds working with the FSA and its stakeholders very rewarding and looks forward to continuing her work with members, the FSA staff, and the BCIT Leadership Team to bring about positive change in working conditions at BCIT.

Terry Gordon, Vice-President

Terry joined BCIT as a full-time Instructor in August 1998. He currently teaches accounting and business valuation courses in the Financial Management Diploma and BTech Programs in the School of Business. Terry is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Business Valuator. He has been a member of the FSA Executive since 2006 and has served as a Director-at-Large, Treasurer and Vice President. He was a member of the 2007 Bargaining Committee and is currently a member of the Collective Agreement Committee.

Month Free of Teaching

By Terry Gordon, FSA Vice President

The FSA office often receives questions from members regarding the month free of teaching ("MFoT") provisions contained in the Collective Agreement. Article 8.6.1 gives teaching Faculty one month "... free of teaching and student evaluation (examination, marking and marks review) duties". Here are some of the more frequently asked questions regarding this topic.

What am I required to do during this month?

The Collective Agreement does not list any specific activities or deliverables for the MFoT. Responsibility for assigning duties to be undertaken during this month resides with the members of your Department (all of the FSA employees plus the related manager, each with a single voice and single vote). These duties relate to the "...effective operation of the Department". Scheduling of these duties must be "...consistent with fair treatment of each Employee within the Department". For Departments that face low enrolments, the Department may assign "...activities designed to create a more satisfactory enrolment situation".

Most Faculty use their MFoT to update their course material and to prepare for the next term. Many Faculty also use this time to complete professional development.

Does this month have to be in June?

No – While many Faculty use all or part of June as their MFoT, there is nothing in the Collective Agreement which requires that the MFoT be taken in June.

Does this month have to be a continuous block of time?

No – Subject to the requirements of your Department, the MFoT can be scheduled in segments. We are aware of some Faculty who spread their month over the entire summer, while other Faculty take half of their MFoT in June and the other half in August.

Does this month count against my annual vacation or other break periods?

No – Article 8.6.5 specifically states that the MFoT "...is not included as part of the Employee's Annual Vacation or of Term, Spring and Christmas break periods".

Do I have to be on campus during this month?

No - Subject to the duties assigned to you by your Department, you are not required to be in attendance at the Institute during your MFoT. If you are not on campus during this month, you are considered to be "on-duty, off campus".



Institute’s new vacancy management policy cannot affect approval of leave requests

Q Can the Vacancy Management Policy affect the approval of my leave request?

A The continuing policy of subjecting potential vacancies to a vacancy management process should have no bearing on an FSA member’s decision to apply for, or to be approved for, any of the various types of leaves available under the terms of the FSA Collective Agreement.

Last fall, BCIT’s Leadership Team, as part of the Fiscal Plan, announced a vacancy management system whereby the filling of all vacancies over two months in duration would be subject to approval by a Leadership Team committee.

The FSA has received questions about the negative effect this policy may have on the approval process for the various leaves found in Article 9 and Article 10 of the Collective Agreement. In particular, there may be some confusion surrounding leaves that are subject to the availability of a suitable replacement. Three of the



Ask your Labour Relations Representative

By Ian Stockdale

leaves available to an FSA member may be denied on the basis of inability to find a suitable replacement – Article 9.7 General Purpose Leave Without Pay, Article 10.5 Professional Development Leave, and Article 10.7 Professional Development Leave Without Pay.

Agreement by the FSA is required to vary any clause of the Collective Agreement,

and the FSA has not agreed to any such variations with respect to Article 9.7, 10.5, or 10.7. Nor has BCIT management sought any changes to the Collective Agreement as a result of the vacancy management policy and has assured the FSA that the vacancy management process will not impact any Collective Agreement rights. If your manager has indicated otherwise, please let the FSA know and advise the manager to check with Human Resources.

Other Leaves

All of the other leaves available to an FSA member, i.e. vacation, sick leave, long term disability leave, bereavement leave, compassionate leave, maternity leave, parenting leave, adoption leave, jury duty and court appearance leave, election leave, pre-retirement leave, and Article 10.6 short-term development leave for Technical Staff and Assistant Instructors, cannot be denied on the basis of failure to find a suitable replacement.

The BCIT Faculty and Staff Association Team

Executive Committee

- Amy Fell, President
- Terry Gordon, Vice-President
- Teresa Place, Treasurer
- Joe Boyd, Director-at-Large
- Neil Cox, Director-at-Large
- Steve Finn, Director-at-Large
- Colin Jones, Director-at-Large
- Taco Niet, Director-at-Large
- Silvia Raschke, Director-at-Large

Staff Members

- Paul Reniers, Executive Director
- Heather Neun, Senior Labour Relations Representative
- Christine Nagy, Labour Relations Representative
- Ian Stockdale, Labour Relations Representative
- Eileen Chaban, Financial Administrator
- Paul Dayson, Communications Officer
- Marian Ciccone, Office Assistant

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