



PAUL DAYSON PHOTO

From the President:

Making our Institute a better place to work

What in your mind is the key ingredient that makes BCIT a place where you are proud to work? For me it is being part of a time in the lives of our students that gives them a foundation to build on throughout their career. A BCIT education opens many doors but that first door into their career immediately following their studies sets the course for their professional lives. It is the result of the culmination of effort on behalf of faculty, staff and management. What is possible if we find better ways to work together? What would it mean for us as faculty and staff? What would it mean for our managers? What could it mean for our students?



what it can become” (p. 16). Our ability to provide the kind of education our students are seeking depends on our relationships. The relationships we have with our external stakeholders are important. Even more so, it’s the relationships shared amongst the internal stakeholders that are paramount in defining this

organization. How we work together matters. It defines how great we are and how great we can become. Take a moment to reflect on the state of your relationships with your students, colleagues, managers and your union. What single thing can you do today to positively contribute to a relationship that matters to you?

The Faculty and Staff Association relies on its professional staff and volunteers to seek the input of the members to set the course for our shared vision of tomorrow. We need you, as members, to think about what matters in your workplace and start conversations with colleagues to get to the bottom of how the union can best represent you and your interests. We need you to share ideas on how the union can support your department in creating the conditions that promote your ability to

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A vision of our excellence for BCIT's community

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get your job done and to enjoy doing it. We need members to think deeper and more creatively about what matters to you in your working conditions so we can promote it or change it to better meet our collective needs. Through working together and sharing the outcomes of our conversations, we start to think about what is possible and we promote the union's ability to represent and protect your interests.

I have a vision for the BCIT community: That we become an institution renowned for our organizational and operational excellence. One that allows our students to experience the way an organization can and should run. One that focuses on our common goals and collectively moves mountains to attain them. One that promotes questioning, and has the courage it takes to speak up against the inertia generated by years of practicing something a certain way. One that is respected and tolerant with individuals as we weigh our options and that wholeheartedly supports collective decisions. One that makes every employee believe they are valued and can see how they are integral to accomplishing our shared aspirations. Our foundation already exists in the passion each of us has for working here. The next step requires that we seek out opportunities to ask more questions, support each other in getting answers, develop a shared understanding, and work together on solutions. In the process, I am hopeful that we can develop stronger relationships which are essential to realizing our collective greatness and bringing about the organizational excellence we are capable of.

Amy Fell,
FSA President



QMUNITY PHOTO

First BCIT queer competency training session a success

By Paul Dayson,
FSA Communications Officer

Organizers are calling the Institute's first Queer Competency Training a huge success. Over 50 members of the campus community attended the training, surpassing the expected turnout of 40 people for the workshop offered on June 21 by the Student Association in collaboration with BCIT's Harassment and Discrimination Office.

"Providing these professional development opportunities on LGBT awareness is an important step towards cultivating an environment where staff, students,

and visitors can feel welcomed and genuinely safe during their time on campus." said Christina Batstone, the Advocacy Coordinator for the BCIT Student Association.

"The BCITSA is especially excited that over 15 departments were represented, indicating that there is a hunger amongst staff to be actively involved in creating a campus where everyone is respected," she said.

Participants included a cross-section of the campus including individuals from BCIT's Student Services, Human Resources, a broad range of academic departments, as well as the Student Association's and the FSA's staff and members.



Premier Christy Clark -- a proud supporter of our province's professional athletes.

BC GOV'T PHOTO

Managing under a 'salary cap'

*By Paul Reniers,
Executive Director*

Comparing faculty and staff compensation to professional athletes sounds like a disappointing exercise. On the face of it, we seem to have little in common. Their salaries are, literally, in another ballpark. Most of our members would be happy just to be able to afford to see them play.

While I think it's ridiculous that you'd have to dig down to the Abbotsford Heat's third line to find pro hockey salaries that compare to ours (and they get a lot more vacation), I'm not advocating that we shoot for the stars of hockey when it comes to pay rates. Where we do have common ground, aside from all being good union members, is that both our employers are under tight wage restraints. Most pro sports teams now work under a negotiated salary cap while we negotiate with a provincially imposed "net zero" mandate. But these restrictions don't mean that employers don't have options.

Despite the wage restraints, pro teams do their best to show how much they value their athletes. Because they can't compete on salary, they compete to

create the most attractive work environments possible. They create luxurious facilities, accommodate families and illness, and offer long term contracts to show athletes that they are valued.

BCIT has similar opportunities to build its franchise despite the net zero mandate.

For instance, while the Vancouver Canucks organize father-son road trips, we may be the last remaining bargaining unit in the public sector that doesn't top up pay on maternity leave. Even the other bargaining units at BCIT get supplemental employment benefits for new mothers. We don't.

Roberto Luongo has a contract that will pay him millions of dollars a year well past his fortieth birthday. In ISEP, Interior Design, PELD, New Media, and other PTS programs, we have some instructors with full time loads, teaching as much as 49 weeks a year and, even though they may have taught at BCIT for several years, their contracts may be given for two months at a time. Many of them teach regular hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 5:30. Nothing about their work distin-

guishes them from regular faculty except they have no paid sick leave, no job security, no collegial rights, no right to take leave, and even with a full-time load they might have to wait almost two years to get benefits. Changing this status for these employees is not prohibited by the "net zero" mandate.

We all know a wage increase is what's really needed. Even the NHL adjusts the salary cap upwards every year. Without even a cost of living increase, the salary expectations of the professionals we seek to hire and retain will be increasingly out of our league. Shouldn't our instinct then be to work together to build a supportive work environment that honors commitment and values effort, good things start to happen. Fans identify with the strength of the franchise, not just the star players. Accomplished veterans want to come and play here. Regular players offer a "home town discount" to continue to be a part of it. All players adapt expectations and take on roles to support one another. Before you know it, we're conference champions!

Next newsletter, we'll talk about avoiding riots.

The value of the FSA's Tech Reps

Every FSA department at BCIT needs a Tech Rep and an alternate. We know a lot of people find the thought of being a Tech Rep a bit intimidating and feel very unsure as to what their role would be. Others may also think they don't have time and it would be of no benefit to their department. We would like to share the value that the Tech Rep brings to the department and show how rewarding this role can be.

Tech Reps meet on the second Wednesday of each month (excluding June, July and August). The meetings start at 2:30 p.m. and are usually held in SW3-3615. During the meetings, the FSA educates the Tech Reps about how our collective agreement (CA) works and provide any relevant updates as to what is happening around our CA and negotiations. We also discuss many other issues that departments struggle with, and look to Tech Reps to share how they do things in order to facilitate a solutions.

However, what we really need is communication from the Tech Reps. We want to know about the issues your department is struggling with. For example, how does your department handle work load, hiring new employees and duty day assignments?

We need to know as much as possible about your department so that we can make improvements to our CA and protect what is currently valued.



FSA Tech Reps, Executives and staff confer during a group exercise on strategic planning last spring.
PAUL DAYSON PHOTO

Supporting your Tech Rep is also important. We all have three hours per week to attend to FSA duties/responsibilities, and this is where your Tech Rep will find the time to attend the monthly meetings. It is important that departments don't schedule other meetings on the second Wednesday of the month so that Tech Reps will be available to attend FSA meetings. At departmental meetings, it is also a good idea to add "FSA update" to your agenda to allow the Tech Rep to give a quick FSA update and/or get some feedback from the group regarding

any issues that should potentially be brought to the FSA.

Make sure your department has a Tech Rep, and if you don't, consider being one. An active Tech Rep will contribute to building the strongest possible Collective Agreement that will work best for all members and facilitates the work of all our members by protecting our rights.

Teresa Place, FSA Director & Treasurer
Joe Newton, FSA Director
Silvia Raschke, FSA Director

FSA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 2:30 pm
SE6-233 (Telus Theatre)



When Labour Relations comes knocking

When are faculty and staff required to share information with the employer?

By Paul Reniers,
Executive Director

An FSA member was recently approached by BCIT's Labour Relations office for information about a colleague. Because the member was a co-ordinator, he held some information about the colleague to which the Institute didn't otherwise have access. The member asked us if he had a duty to share information with LR? Depending on the context, a member's obligation to provide information to the employer may change.

In the case of the co-ordinator being approached for information about a colleague, the short answer is yes. Article 19.1.5 of the collective agreement states,

"Colleagues have a duty to respond to requests for information by the appropriate Manager where they have relevant knowledge and information concerning the work-related performance of the Employee, except where the colleague is currently involved in a developmental review process with that employee. Employees responding to such requests for information shall be indemnified pursuant to Article 7.6."

This article points out that the member's manager should be the one making the request, not LR. As in the example that arose recently, the manager is likely to have a closer relationship with the members and a better understanding of the context for the information sought. The reference to indemnity in Article 19.1.5 means that the employer takes responsibility for the disclosure and the individual providing the information won't be adversely affected as a result of the disclosure.

Some workplace circumstances may limit an FSA member's duty to disclose information to the employer. Article 19.1.5 refers to a duty held by "colleagues," not employees. Employees do not have to incriminate themselves. If the employer, either LR or your manager, asks for information about your own actions or performance, you are entitled to consult with the FSA before responding. All FSA members are entitled to be represented by the union in matters relating to discipline. Depending on the circumstance, the FSA may advise that you comply with the request, that the union speak on your behalf, or that you not comply.

Performance appraisals also have special rules under the FSA Collective Agreement for providing information to the employer, set out in Article 13. A manager cannot simply ask for the employee to provide whatever measures of performance the manager would like to use. The Performance Development System governs most FSA employees while a few departments have their own approved performance appraisal systems. Any assessment must be consistent with these mutually agreed upon processes.

Course materials are another special circumstance. Course materials developed under a contract with BCIT specifically for that purpose are the property of BCIT. Course materials developed by an employee as part of their normal instructional assignment, however, are the property of the employee pursuant to Article 7.4.1. In that case, the employer is entitled only to copies of the course outline and formal scheduled examinations. None of those materials may be used by the Institute or another instructor without the agreement of the employee who created them. The employee can insist on compensation as a condition of granting that permission.



Log In to Win contest continues

Join us now at BCITFSA.ca for your chance to win

*By Paul Dayson,
Communications Officer*

Last year, to celebrate the launch of our new website, we ran a contest and awarded an iPod and an iPad to two lucky members who signed up for membership on the website. This fall the contest continues with two more iPods up for grabs.

To date, about one third of the FSA's membership have created user accounts gaining access to the

website's online forums.

Log in to win

It's your chance to win and to stay informed about FSA activities. Create your bcitfsa.ca user account today for your chance to win in our two draws for an iPod Touch.

Prizes will be drawn once 600 and then 1200 members have registered on the website. We now have around 570 members registered, so the next draw for an iPod Touch will take place

soon. Create your account early to be entered in both draws.

Encourage your FSA friends and colleagues to enter so both prizes will be drawn soon.

All members who have previously signed up for an FSA website account will be automatically entered into the contest, except those who have won.

See our website at bcitfsa.ca contest rules, eligibility and details.



Winners! Leyal Jamieson (left) of Mechanical Technologies receives her iPod from FSA Executive Director Paul Reniers; and Judy Fraser (right) of Specialty Nursing with her new iPad 2.

PAUL DAYSON PHOTOS

A strategy to improve service to FSA members

*By Paul Dayson,
FSA Communications Officer*

Members can expect to see some changes to the FSA over the next few years. Since January, we have been working on the development of a new strategic plan for the Association – hiring a consultant to guide us and holding focus group sessions with members, Tech Reps, the Executive and staff. Currently we are finalizing the Strategic Plan.

With the new plan the FSA will focus its efforts on three strategic priorities: bargaining and labour relations, member engagement and the management of the Association. Some of the outcomes of these efforts might not be obvious to most members – impacting the way our staff structure their time and organize their work. Others will become readily apparent, such as an increased focus on communications, as well as education and involvement of members.

Through these changes we hope that as an organization we will be able to be better representatives, negotiators and advocates for members and improve their working life here at BCIT.

Working for you in Bargaining and Labour Relations

Changes to bargaining and labour relations will be geared to better protecting and advancing the collective interests of our members. We will be increasingly questioning our methods and systems for collective bargaining and seeking increased feedback from our members about their best interests, working environment and perceptions of the post-secondary employment landscape.

For labour relations representation and advocacy, we will continue to pursue techniques that result in the best outcome for members individually and



PAUL DAYSON PHOTO

collectively. To better support this, we will be increasing our investment in the development and maintenance of effective tools for tracking, storing and accessing relevant information about our bargaining unit’s labour relations, as well as for tracking current events in the labour relations field outside BCIT.

Engaging you as members

Expect to see an increase in materials, emails and website activity, as our efforts towards engaging members with the business of the Association will focus on increased communication and education for members as well as for those in specific roles, such as Tech Reps.

The FSA envisions itself as a member-based organization, where volunteers from the membership play an integral role in the direction and management of the Association, and we strive to have open, effective communication at all levels. We will be striving to let every member know about their membership in the FSA and the benefits to them of their involvement. We will seek regular feedback to ensure the work we are doing is in the interests of the membership, and let members know that their involvement is critical to the success of the FSA and the fulfillment of our commitments to them.

This said, we will continue to maintain a governance board model and retain

clear distinctions between the roles of the executive and the staff.

Managing your Association

We have already begun a review of the Association’s bylaws and policies to better meet our obligations as a society and a union. We hope to present a new set of bylaws to the members at the annual general meeting at the end of October, along with the Strategic Plan to inform our operational, communications and human resources planning for the coming years.

We’ve committed to having the mix and range of professional staff in place in order to protect and advance the interests of our members, and to implement and maintain a business continuity plan to allow us to provide our services without interruption to our members. To support this, the FSA will be engaging in more frequent and constructive communication between the executive and the staff, and will provide a satisfying work environment to retain and select employees who best meet our needs.

At all times, the FSA will continue to strive to manage our relationship with BCIT so as to best enable the effective assertion of our members’ collective and individual rights.



PAUL DAYSON PHOTO

A tribute to Leonard Johnson, President '76-'78

by *Cathy Magee*
Former FSA employee

Leonard Johnson, Staff Society President from 1976-78, passed away on May 26, 2011. An active member throughout the 1970s, Len was a powerful force in the shaping of the FSA as the independent labour union that today represents BCIT's faculty and technical staff.

When Len started at BCIT in the fall of 1967 teaching Administrative Management, there was no Institute of Technology Act or Board of Governors, no official staff representation and staff had no voice or power. The Staff Society (now the Faculty & Staff Association) organized coffee services and a Christmas dance – membership was voluntary with annual dues of six dollars. All staff were civil servants, most with ongoing “temporary continuing casual” contracts – not great for getting a mortgage – and BCIT's wages and budgets were dictated from Victoria. Common concerns and the need for stronger representation to the provincial government brought staff together to find their collective voice – Len was a vital part of this growth.

Len's first official role with the Staff Society was as Chair of the Faculty Committee, 1970-71, helping to give staff a voice through the Proposal for Joint Agreement on Faculty Personnel Policies. This jointly-agreed document set out terms and conditions upon which the union's first collective agreement was later built. It recognized BCIT's uniqueness within BC's higher education institutions, established the Staff Society as the voice of staff, and embedded annual reviews of salaries and working conditions.

In a memo to members, Len outlined what he saw as the purpose of these written policies: “...a method of providing a knowledge of rights, privileges and obligations to present and prospective Faculty members and a means of pursu-

ing equitable treatment of Faculty members to maintain morale. ... it makes sense to distill our past experience and state as policy those aspects which we feel contributed to success.”

In 1972, the newly elected NDP government indicated that it wanted BCIT to have an independent Board of Governors, and that it expected to extend collective bargaining to all public sector employees. That potentially meant the loss of an independent identity for BCIT's 300 faculty and technical staff, because of the likelihood of being represented by the BCGEU who wanted to represent all civil servants. It also meant avenues of communication that had been established between the government and the Staff Society would no longer be effective as the Staff Society had no official standing.

The Executive, guided by research done by Len, determined their best option was to obtain the right to negotiate on behalf of BCIT's staff under the proposed Labour Relations Act and to press for a separate provincial act to cover BCIT. Len posed some critical questions whose answers would have great impact on the future direction of the Staff Society; he said “the most important element in determining an appropriate format of collective bargaining is the method of final settlement of disputes...” and he called for maximum flexibility for the parties to find methods allowing them to reach bargaining solutions. As one Executive member stated, it was a time of vast complexities, and there was a concern that the Staff Society, because of conflicts in the existing and proposed legislation, would not be able to achieve the right for their members to choose their own bargaining agent.

In July 1974 Len was a Director on the Executive when the Institute of Technology (British Columbia) Act was passed.

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Johnson chaired our first bargaining committee

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That same day the Staff Society applied to the Labour Relations Board to become a certified union – the only way to be officially recognized by the government -- with certification being granted in August 1974. Len became the Chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee, beginning negotiations in September 1974. During negotiations there were many tense moments, including a serious consideration to strike, but the first collective agreement was ratified in April 1975. The economic gains with this first collective agreement were huge – roughly a 39% increase overall. It obtained working conditions, benefits, and salaries that became the new standard to which the rest of the post-secondary sector would aspire.

Len continued to serve his colleagues becoming President of the Staff Society from 1976 – 1978 and dealing with many more important issues with his trademark frankness and honesty. Len's kind manner and great patience made him an approachable instructor and a well-respected colleague. His keen mind could reach the heart of any issue with a single comment or question, and he was principled and tenacious in any quest for truth and justice. It is to Len's character strengths that FSA members owe their right to be in an independent union. Len would have been the first to

acknowledge others for that – and there were others – but Len was the steady hand on the tiller who never lost sight of the principled goals.

Len leaves his family and many others who remember him as a fine man, to respect his contributions and to mourn his loss.

A Student Scholarship

Like our current members, Johnson was concerned for his students' welfare. At his memorial service his children remembered how some of his students were struggling with life's financial demands in order to get the education they wanted and saw a BCIT student scholarship as a fitting tribute to their father.

Donations can be made to this scholarship in Len's name through the BCIT Foundation:

- 604.432.8803
- www.bcit.ca/foundation
- foundation@bcit.ca

Tax receipts are available for contributions of \$20 or more.

FSA Bylaw changes proceeding

*By Paul Dayson
FSA Communications Officer*

The FSA Executive is in the process of developing a revised set of bylaws. These will not produce radical changes to the FSA and are revisions without any particular agenda for re-making the FSA. Rather, they are intended to make sure that the FSA has the right bylaws to meet the needs and potential challenges of the next several years and to comply with current legislation.

The FSA Executive has over the last year been working to bring our policies up to date and, through this process, identified a number of significant issues with the Association's current bylaws. For example, there are provisions in the bylaws that are counter to the Society Act and also sections which are confusing and unclear. Rather than continue working with bylaws that have these issues, the Executive decided to take on the task of updating our bylaws.

To date, the Executive have taken the existing bylaws and drafted an updated version that clarifies confusing language and fixes some of the more obvious issues. To ensure we

follow all provisions of the Society Act and the Labour Code and to develop bylaws that will serve the FSA for the foreseeable future, we have been working with a societies lawyer to bring our bylaws up to date with the Society Act. We are looking at having the proposed bylaws reviewed by a labour lawyer as well, to ensure Labour Code compliance. We are looking forward to working with the lawyers to ensure the bylaws empower the FSA to take on the tasks required to represent our Members.

Once the reviews by the lawyers are completed, and the Executive recommends a draft be brought to the members, it will be posted on the FSA website. We will also send out notice of a meeting at which the new bylaws will be presented to the members. Members' suggestions and comments on the draft will be taken for consideration. After this, at the next available General Meeting, we will bring forward a motion to adopt the new bylaws.

If you have any questions or suggestions relating to the FSA bylaws and our plans for updating them, feel free to contact Taco Niet, who is leading this initiative for the Board.

Survey Says!

Member Outlook Survey a new tool for improved representation

By Paul Dayson,
FSA Communications Officer

This October, the FSA launches the first survey of members leaving the institute. This Member Outlook Survey will be sent to all members who have a break in their dues payments to the FSA due to gaps in their contracts, their taking a leave of absence from the institute or their leaving employment with the institute.

The goal of the survey is to provide the FSA with quantifiable information that can be used to strengthen negotiations with BCIT in future rounds of collective bargaining, and to make improvements to the FSA.

“Learning why our members leave BCIT could provide the FSA with very important information about how the Institute could better retain its employees, and how we could represent their interests at the bargaining table,” said FSA Executive Director Paul Reniers, the FSA’s chief bargaining negotiator.

“We try to listen to on-going members in lots of different ways, but when



members make that important choice to leave, we lose track of them.”

The short survey, which will be available both online and as a mailout, was developed in conjunction with a team of directed studies students in the Human Resources Management Diploma Program. Follow up interviews will also be done with members who indicate their willingness to participate.

“This will be an important tool for the FSA,” said FSA President Amy Fell.

“Knowing why people leave and what their experience of working at the institute was like – as well as how the FSA served them – could be instrumental in improving our negotiating position in bargaining, our advocacy work and representation of members.”

All answers collected through this survey and interviews will be confidential and would only be shared in a manner that preserves respondents’ anonymity.

The BCIT Faculty and Staff Association Team

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Amy Fell, President
Terry Gordon, Vice-President
Teresa Place, Treasurer
Alistair Calder, Director-at-Large
Steve Finn, Director-at-Large
Joe Newton, Director-at-Large
Taco Niet, Director-at-Large
Silvia Raschke, Director-at-Large
Kathryn Stewart, Director-at-Large
Ted Rutledge, Director (Associate Members)

Staff Members

Paul Reniers, Executive Director
Heather Neun, Senior Labour Relations Representative
Christine Nagy, Labour Relations Representative
Tess Rebbitt, Labour Relations Representative
Eileen Chaban, Financial Administrator
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