

President’s Message:

Setting the Direction

We can’t do this alone...I know I have said this before and Past-President Amy Fell has said it and I’m sure every FSA President before us has said it. As we approach bargaining, now is the time for you to have your say and to guide the work of your union.

Your Collective Agreement Committee is asking to hear from you. It has organized 11 sessions as well as the recent electronic survey to hear what members want the scope of the next round of bargaining to be. Face-to-face sessions with members are underway until early December (remaining sessions listed on page 4) and a second survey will be out soon. Our sessions are designed to hear from a cross-section of the institute. Some are in the evening to connect with our PTS members and other sessions are geared to members working in Research, Nursing, ITS, ISEP/DTC, Student Services, AI/Tech Staff, and Instructors/Non-Teaching Faculty. Members are welcome to attend any of the sessions – even if you missed the session that you “fit” into. Come to hear what others are saying and to contribute your thoughts and knowledge. Make sure your voice is heard and heard now.

The CAC intends to have initial proposals developed and presented to members at the January 22, 2014 General Meeting. We could be at the bargaining table as early

as March 2014. Are you satisfied with your rights, your wages, your benefits? Do you care about your colleagues whose wages are slipping further behind? Who don’t have Professional Development funds or access to the same leaves? Who don’t have parental leave top up? What are you willing to do to gain more for yourself but also for others? What ideas do you have to make our Collective Agreement meet your needs and those of your colleagues?

Last year we showed that our members can make a difference when they participate. Through our four days of job action, we won a wage increase that kept pace with SFU and we protected our drug plan. We could not have done that without members letting us know how they felt and what they were willing to do to get a fair settlement.



Thank you for reading this. Now I ask you to reach out to five members to make sure they know they need to have their voices heard. Show them the schedule, ask them to come to a session and guide our work so that your union is moving in a direction that matters to you.

Teresa Place, President (ext. 7558)

What’s INSIDE

Top Misconceptions & Realities from your Labour Relations Team	2
Request To Use Non Employee Services (RTUNES)	4
Upcoming CAC Consultation Sessions	4
Member & Staff Profiles	5
Annual General Meeting Report	6
FSA General Meeting Dates	7
Office Renovation Update	8
Returning Officer & Director Vacancy	8
The BCIT Faculty & Staff Association Team	8



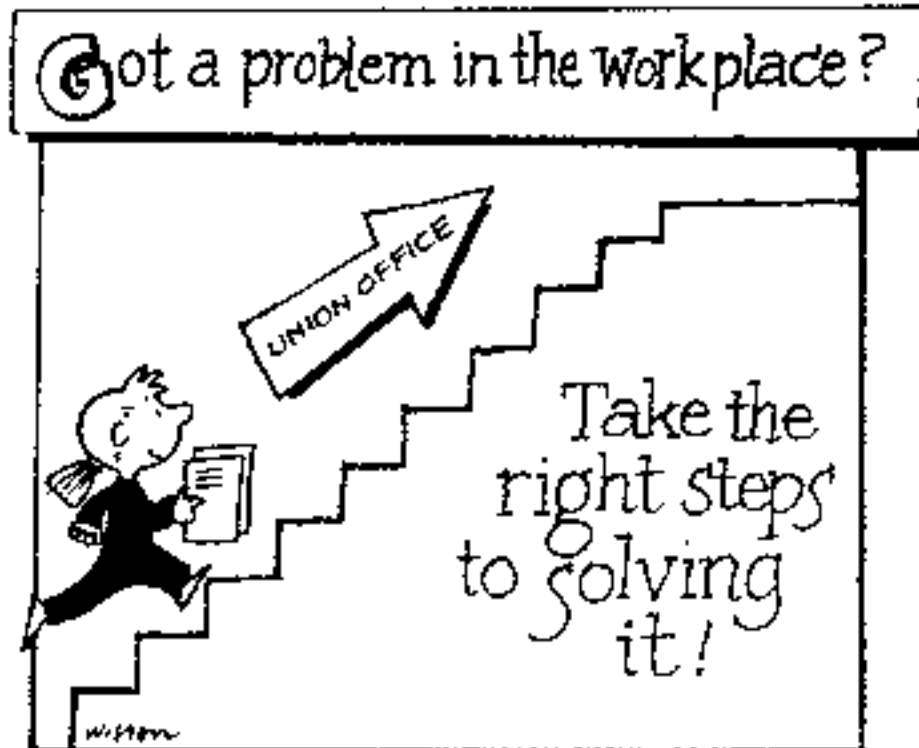
Have you read our Annual Report? Pick it up at the FSA Office or online at bcitfsa.ca

Top Misconceptions & Realities

from your Labour Relations Team

By Heather Neun

Sr. Labour Relations Representative



Oh, the mysteries surrounding the FSA LR rep work... Questions swirl... What do those busy LR reps do? Are they really busy? What do they accomplish? Does what they do really matter to me?

And here begins what we hope will be a regular FSA LR round-up. We start by busting some myths, and in future columns, look for an update on LR themes, successes and challenges.

MISCONCEPTION #1 You should only see an LR rep if you want to grieve - also known as – ‘the LR reps only work on grievances, they don’t deal with casual inquiries or provide one-off advice or ongoing advice and assistance.

In a word, the answer to this misconception is ‘no’. Grievances form a fairly small proportion of our disputes and LR rep work with members. The reps only file grievances if there don’t seem to be other options or means for resolving an issue. Much of the time, reps are dealing with inquiries and providing advice or suggesting helpful ideas and best practices for issues that crop up regularly or in unusual cases.

LR reps address many types of issues. And yes, you can come to the FSA if you are experiencing tensions with your colleagues or manager, or you think you’ve been harassed and bullied or you witnessed harassment and bullying. The same is true if you’ve experienced or witnessed discrimination on the basis of your gender, race/ethnicity or sexual orientation.

MISCONCEPTION #2: You should wait until you have a really big problem before you reach out to the FSA for help.

We hear this frequently from members - after they finally reach out or after their situations come to our attention. Members tell us that they wonder why they waited so long. One member recently counselled her colleagues to visit the FSA after the FSA helped her achieve a significant change in the terms of her employment. She told a newer colleague that it was “okay” to get the FSA’s help to negotiate around such issues, noting that she didn’t understand this when she started working at BCIT.

MISCONCEPTION #3: LR reps go straight to BCIT's Labour Relations department or the manager. Other versions of this: Getting the FSA involved makes things overly conflictive and complicated and the FSA is always antagonistic with management.

FSA's reps try to be creative in approaching problems. They consider a range of actions before deciding on the course of action that is most likely to be effective. Consultations are confidential. And reps don't take things to BCIT without the member's knowledge, provided that there are no security threats or dangers to the member or others.

The FSA frequently works with managers and departments to help resolve conflicts in a constructive way. The reps respond to cases that are simple - as well as more complex situations that have become entrenched and painful for members. We have tales of success of working with managers and BCIT's LR Department to resolve longstanding conflicts and mediate difficult disputes. We do not assume that the FSA's or member's interests conflict with the interests of management or BCIT. We find, more often than not, that there are areas of common interest. The reps work to determine these shared interests; to bring those to the fore; and to negotiate resolutions that address the root causes of problems.

MISCONCEPTION #4: LR reps can't help with the difficult issues that make a real difference to members' work life.

Some workplace situations seem so toxic and entrenched that it's common to think that nothing can be done. And

there are issues that are beyond the FSA's reach. However, our experience shows that resolutions are frequently achievable. We are able to persuade managers to examine these seemingly intractable situations and to work with us and members on how to change course.

MISCONCEPTION #5: Everything that LR reps work on is confidential and a secret.

Not all LR matters are confidential. In the early stages, especially, grievances are often confidential and even private. Some resolutions are confidential because that was a term that BCIT or both parties required as a condition of settlement. Recently, however, we've been trying to ensure that more outcomes can be and are shared with members. Our intention is to do better at communicating the results of our work. In the past, outcomes and successes have too often been buried and were only evident in better conditions for members going forward.

MISCONCEPTION #6: LR reps take sides in disputes between FSA members.

As with all unions, the FSA is bound by law to treat FSA members fairly and impartially. The reps strive hard to remain objective in every case, and especially so when members are in conflict. If there is a potentially serious conflict between you and another member, separate representation is assigned to each member, so that each member feels heard and that their interests are being adequately represented.



**Direct all FSA
inquiries to:
fsa@bcit.ca
or
604.432.8695**

Request To Use Non Employee Services (RTUNES)

*By Paul Reniers
Executive Director*

Our right to reject any contracting out of work in our bargaining unit is a unique and powerful element of the FSA collective agreement. It's the driving force behind BCIT's contracting process known as white contracts or RTUNES (Request To Use Non-Employee Services).

In the twelve months ending October 31, 2013, the FSA received 77 RTUNES worth about \$650,000 and approved all but 3. Those amounts have been declining pretty steadily. The small number of rejections reflects years of working with management to reduce such requests so that all bargaining unit work is being done on the same basis under our collective agreement.

BCIT's agreements with the contractors are not negotiated with the FSA. We are presented with a request usually after a contract is agreed upon. We decide only whether to accept it or not. In rare cases, BCIT might seek to alter the terms of a contract because we're unhappy with it.

When we receive a new RTUNES, we want to know why a contract is needed. If we can identify how the work reasonably can be done within the bargaining unit, the RTUNES are sometimes withdrawn rather than rejected. We seek out information from members to make a decision in the interests of the entire FSA, usually by contacting Tech Reps and Program Heads as members with responsibility either to advise the FSA or over co-ordination of department activities. We'll also go to members we know are familiar with the situation by way of their work or some other contact we've had with them. If members have expressed

concern about the matter, we'll likely talk to them to see whether their concerns are answered. No single member decides whether the FSA will accept or reject an RTUNES. We apply all the relevant information we can gather against criteria based around whether the work could be done by existing employees or on an employee contract.

Some department members may have differing views about the need or importance of some contracting out. Our responsibility is to make our decision based on the interests of the entire FSA. In these matters, our collective interests aren't measured by a vote of a particular department but by whether the decision adequately protects our rights and our bargaining strength while getting the work of the Institute done.

All our agreements are done "without prejudice." Among other things, this means that our agreement to one RTUNES doesn't prevent us from rejecting the same or a similar RTUNES in the future.

Reducing contracting out supports our goal of a collective agreement that meets the needs of our members. When a department or the Institute needs to go outside the bargaining unit to get work done, there's either a problem with our contract or with how the work is being organized. Contracting out also takes the pressure off management to improve our wages and working conditions to the levels commanded by contractors. We know that, if our salary and working conditions were adequate, some recipients of RTUNES would work for BCIT as employees.

Upcoming CAC Consultation Sessions

IN PERSON SESSIONS	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
		<i>All 60 minutes except PTS are 90 min and drop in</i>	
ISEP/DTC Members	Nov 19	3:30pm	DTC 810
PTS DTC	Nov 19	4:30pm	DTC 810
STUDENT SERVICES	Nov 20	2:30pm	SW01-1120
PTS BBY	Nov 20	5:00pm	SE12-309
AI/TECH	Nov 27	2:30pm	SW01-1021
PTS BBY	Dec 3	5:00pm	SE12-309
FACULTY/NTF	Dec 4	2:30pm	Town Square A&B

Member Profile: Jamie Finley



Jamie Finley has been the FSA Tech Rep for the NRG in the Tech Centre for two years. In that time, he's made the most of that role by responding to requests for information from the FSA office, sharing issues of interest with his colleagues, bringing concerns about FSA decisions to our attention, and bringing colleagues to the office when the FSA could help them. He's also brought forward useful suggestions for the FSA Board of Directors

and for Tech Rep meetings that have been incorporated into our work. The FSA is a member-driven organization and Jamie demonstrates this with each of these actions.

What is the most exciting part of your work right now?

The most exciting part of my work has always been the ongoing learning, always learning something new every day. The work that NRG (Natural Health & Food Product Research Group) is involved with influences the direction of industry through the relationships with stakeholders and providing expertise in ensuring products are of quality.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

As I am a person who is deaf, enabling a workplace framework where I can work well in is important, similar to how the FSA works with members and ensures the BCIT workplace for everyone is ideal according to the needs of Faculty and Staff. As well, I believe that the FSA can contribute to a progressive environment for its members, so that BCIT is more recognized

Staff Profile: Sascha Swartz



The FSA staff work diligently to support the members. A few years ago, we saw the need for better co-ordination and organization of our labour relations information. The position of Labour Relations Administrative Analyst was created to wrangle all the data and documents that we generate or review in relation to our members' work. Sascha Swartz joined the FSA in October 2011. Sascha brings to the organization her wealth of experience

in administration and information management to support the FSA's Labour Relations team.

What is the most interesting part of your work right now?

My work varies from day to day which makes it interesting. I am working on a number of projects concurrently and I do a lot of Collective Agreement research including helping to prepare for the next round of bargaining. I also support the Labour Reps, and depending on the type of files they are working on, I find myself spending a few hours or a few days at a time on a specific file which brings me increasingly into direct contact with members which I enjoy.

within BC and Canada as well as internationally, more so than now.

How does the FSA support your work at BCIT?

The FSA supports my work at BCIT by providing an outlet to discuss ideas that can then be acted on in a meaningful way. This is where the Tech Reps play an important role, to communicate current issues the FSA is involved in to the departments at BCIT and ensure members are up-to-date with the necessary information.

Is there anything you'd like to see change as an FSA member?

Change is hard. One structure I see lacking and hope to see improved is the ability of BCIT and its employees to recognize and absorb changes we all see in today's society. It would be good to see BCIT at the cutting edge of technology continuously, with an effective structure enabling those changes. I am certain that the FSA can play an important role in ensuring that the ability to recognize change and implementing those changes comes with a structure that allows for feedback loops.

What keeps you busy when you're not at work?

I am currently the volunteer President of BC Deaf Sports, a non-profit supporting deaf and hard of hearing athletes in BC in their sporting activities. One part of this volunteer work is to ensure that the rights of our deaf athletes are recognized by the sport sector here in BC.

Why do you think the FSA is a vital part of the BCIT community?

The FSA is an integral part of the community. It's our responsibility to ensure our members have the support they need to do their work.

What is something the FSA does that many members may not be aware of?

Confirming that the Collective Agreement is applied as intended requires a lot of manual work. Applying it to an individual member's circumstances and/or checking against the employer's records is essential work to ensure our members receive their full entitlements. It's also very important that members are confirming their records as well and bringing any questions they have to the FSA.

What surprises you when working with members?

It's not really a surprise at all, but I am regularly impressed by the dedication they show to their respective professions.

What are you reading right now?

The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins

Annual General Meeting Report

By Kyla Epstein
Member Engagement Officer



Alf Dumont, BCIT Aboriginal Services Elder

Many people hear the words 'Annual General Meeting' and their eyes start to glaze over, a pre-nap sensation starts to settle in, and they wonder why AGMs were invented in the first place. The road to creating an AGM that deals with the required business of a society, provides members with sufficient information to participate, and provides strong info/entertainment can be a long one. It can be filled with faulty maps, wrong turns, and even stop signs. At the FSA's October AGM we started driving down that road.

Almost 100 FSA members joined in to approve the financial statements of 2012-13, hear highlights of the past year, and an update from the Executive Director. In addition, members were welcomed to the meeting by BCIT Aboriginal Services Elder, Alf Dumont. Alf's welcome not only acknowledged the Coast Salish territories that we work on but also served to remind us of the benefits of collaboration and being brave in our relationship building.

Are you interested in presenting at our General Meeting on Wednesday, January 22nd?

email kepstein@bcit.ca for more information

FSA Office Renovation

Changes to the FSA offices in SE16 are just about complete. We have moved our entrance from the end of the hallway to directly across from Student Health Services. The renovations were paid for in part from our capital fund.

Making this change provides many benefits:

- Greater privacy for visiting members
- Less disruption for staff
- Better security for our confidential files
- More professional, attractive, and convenient reception area
- Easier access to the boardroom for visitors.

Some finishing work remains to be done and some adjustments to our office systems will be required as we adapt to the new space. We appreciate everyone's co-operation as we undertake these improvements.

Returning Officer and Director Vacancy

The Returning Officer will be appointed by the Board of Directors on December 4, 2013. Expressions of Interest should be submitted to Teresa_Place@bcit.ca by November 27, 2013.

Alistair Calder has resigned from the Board. We'd like to thank Alistair for his dedication to the FSA, especially for his work during the 2012 job action. The FSA will be holding a byelection early 2014 to fill this vacancy, stay tuned for more information.

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The BCIT Faculty and Staff Association Team



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