



**Annual Report
2012-2013**

**BCIT
FSA**

**British Columbia Institute of Technology
Faculty & Staff Association**

Mission Statement

To protect and advance the collective interests of all our members

Strategic Priorities

- Bargaining and Labour Relations
- Association Management
- Member Engagement

Contact Us

British Columbia Institute of Technology Faculty & Staff Association

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FSA Office Staff

Paul Reniers, Executive Director

Maria Angerilli, Executive Assistant

Heather Neun, Senior Labour Relations Representative

Christine Nagy, Labour Relations Representative

Tess Rebbitt, Labour Relations Representative

Sascha Swartz, Labour Relations Administrative Analyst

Marian Ciccone, Office Assistant

Kyla Epstein, Member Engagement Officer



“There have been times when an urgent matter has come up and the FSA is always there with an immediate response but they have also worked over long periods of time with our Department to improve conditions on a deeper level. They are there for you when you need them urgently but they also carry issues over the time it takes to seek a satisfactory resolution. We best serve our students when there is a cohesive and supportive relationship between members and the FSA.”

Our Work Makes BCIT Work

I know I'm not alone when I ask myself how long we can continue to function after years of Net Zero. The Province's Net Zero bargaining mandate erodes the benefits we currently have and discounts the value that we bring to BC. The meager pay increase we fought for last year doesn't fully address the many issues we face:

- FSA wages are falling further behind our counterparts in industry
- Our wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living
- Many departments have problems attracting and retaining staff
- Workloads are unmanageable
- Our parental leave provisions are outdated and inadequate
- Our PTS members have few rights and poor access to benefits but they are relied upon heavily
- Research activities are barely addressed in our Collective Agreement

When chronic issues aren't addressed morale goes down and so does employee engagement. I often hear that our members are worn out and they don't have anything more to give. They no longer feel valued or respected for the work they do. Members are often told that they need to change how they work, mark, and lecture and then their workload issues will go away. There is an expectation that by incorporating new techniques and technologies that our workload will diminish yet our time is minimal, our space is limited, our classrooms are old and our PTS Instructors don't even have access to professional development funds. I believe that there is a disconnect between the reality of the day to day work our members do and the expectations of BCIT Management.

The BCIT Strategic Plan focuses on students, who are a vital part of the Institute, and I see the incredible commitment of faculty and staff to our students. Focusing on students only goes so far without also supporting the work our members do. Our students credit much of their success to our faculty and staff; they know that we are a significant component of what makes BCIT great. Our work makes BCIT work.

How do we move forward with so many challenges? How do we show the worth in supporting and investing in the faculty and staff at BCIT? We believe that our members have so much to offer. The Collective Agreement Committee has been formed and we will be turning to the FSA members to hear your suggestions for the upcoming round of bargaining. Our new Member Engagement Officer, Kyla Epstein, is working hard to find opportunities to hear from as many members as possible. We can't do it alone. The FSA is your organization and the members make the FSA work. We have much that needs to be done, and we need to support each other to get it done.



Teresa Place
FSA President

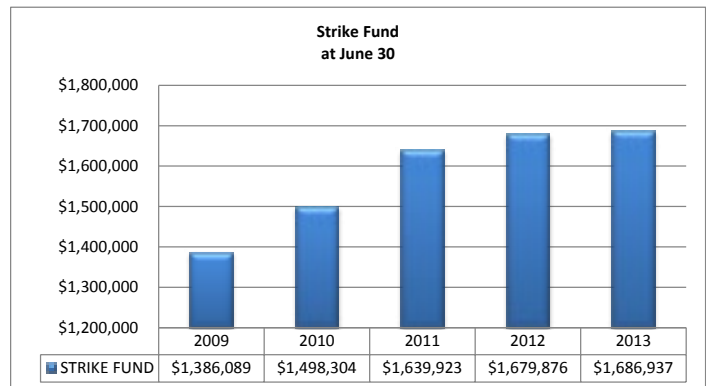
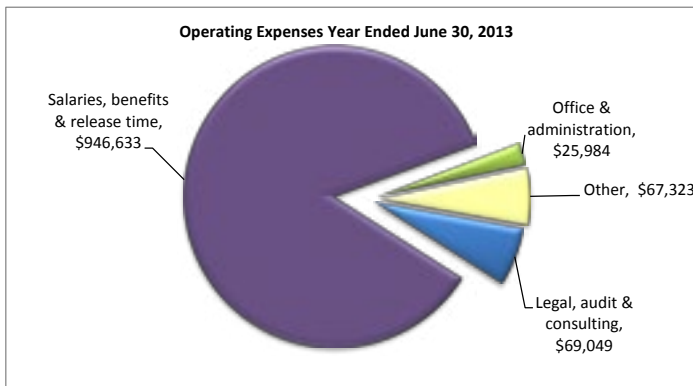
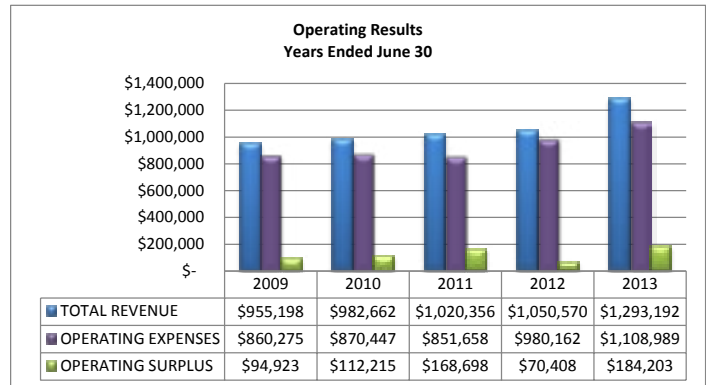
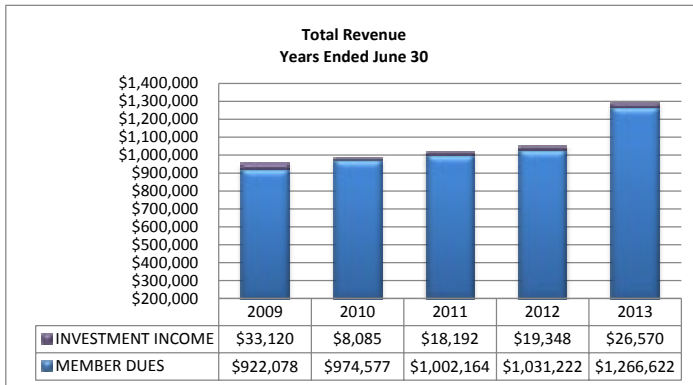
FSA Finances 2012-2013

The FSA finished the 2012-13 fiscal year in a very strong financial position with net assets (assets in excess of liabilities) of \$2.16 million at June 30, 2013. During the year, the FSA experienced a 22% increase in membership dues revenue, corresponding with an increase in the number of FTEs and the increased dues rate. Investment income saw a 37% increase over the previous year due to continued better management of our short-term investments.

The FSA reported its eighth consecutive annual operating surplus even with strike action and was able to grow its strike fund by almost \$7,000, to approximately \$1.69 million. The capital reserve fund was partially replenished with \$11,500.

Financial highlights for 2012-13:

- Operating expenses were higher in 2012-13 due to increased cost of salaries and benefits in the FSA office. This reflects the full complement of office staff and increase in wages due to our contractual obligations.
- Strike fund balance at June 30, 2013: \$1,686,937
- Strike expenses were slightly over \$161,000. Approximately 73% of this was returned to members as strike pay.



Budgeted strike fund allocation	\$142,000	
Operating surplus	\$184,203	
Strike expenses		\$161,737
Actual allocation to strike fund	\$168,498	
Allocation to other funds	\$11,500	



Highlights of Your Association's Activities

In a year dominated by bargaining, other FSA work provided many highlights that demonstrated our increased organizational strength and the benefits of increasing member involvement.

Part-Time Studies Outreach

Our job action brought to a head the gulf between our connection with regular members and our connection with members on PTS contracts. We saw clearly that we need to do more to reach auxiliary members so that we can better work to improve wages and working conditions for all members. We experimented with offering evening sessions of general meetings with remote log-in. We held evening meetings at the Downtown Campus to discuss bargaining. We invited all PTS members to attend BCIT's VP forum on PTS quality and we made a presentation on auxiliary employment to BCIT's PTS networking group.

Research

FSA Vice President Silvia Raschke organized tours of FSA member research activities with several BCIT Vice Presidents and with candidates in the provincial election. The FSA also held special meetings with members in the Tech Centre around collective agreement and bargaining issues.

University Status

In September, the FSA wrote to the BCIT BoG identifying concerns that need to be addressed if university status is to be pursued for BCIT. These concerns included ensuring that BCIT's outstanding reputation is not compromised, maintaining the collegial governance model, and pursuing a more autonomous and flexible management regime. Bob Davis of the Kwantlen Faculty Association spoke to Tech Reps about the challenges his members faced when their institution became a university in 2008.



Shared Services

The FSA met with members and management about a provincial initiative to move to shared services for post-secondary institutions in a variety of areas. We expressed strong concerns about the possibility of degrading administrative services and the burden this puts on all staff. We also delivered a legal opinion asserting that IT Services and other services delivered by FSA members could not be delivered at BCIT by non-FSA members without our consent.

Protecting our Drug Coverage

Following our fight-back in bargaining against compromising our drug plan by aligning it with the provincial PharmaCare drug list, we participated in public sector-wide discussions of this change. Through these discussions, we were able to build recognition among unions of the costs to members associated with this change and how members can be protected while realizing cost savings.

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Pension Study

With our partners at the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE), FSA members were invited to participate in a survey on College Pension Plan benefits. The survey will be used by plan trustees to make strategic decisions about future changes to the plan. The FSA has also participated regularly in meetings of employee partners in the Municipal Pension Plan.

Media Relations

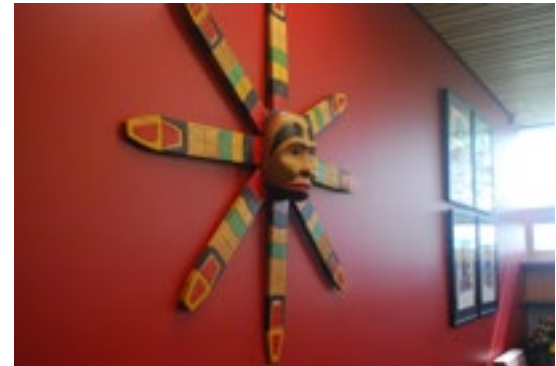
In September, FSA Executive Director Paul Reniers was a panelist on CKNW's The Bill Good Show talking about threats to the quality of post-secondary education. Media coverage of FSA bargaining and job action was extensive and envied by several other public sector unions undertaking job action. Also with our FPSE partners, we ran radio ads during job action calling on the government to offer us a fair wage increase.

Provincial Election

The FSA utilized resources to engage local candidates during the election. We hosted the last all-candidates meeting in Burnaby-North, the riding BCIT is located in. At the debate, successful candidate Richard T. Lee of the BC Liberals committed to the building of the proposed Health and Life Sciences building on the Burnaby campus. FSA volunteers also supported the successful run of our fellow member Dr. Jane Shin, now the NDP MLA for Burnaby-Lougheed.

FSA Elections

Brian Ennis and James Booth completed their terms as directors. Six other directors were returned to the FSA board by acclamation: Alistair Calder (IT Services), Steve Finn (Sustainable Resource Management), Joe Newton (Product and Process Applied Research Team), Taco Niet (Mechanical Engineering), Ted Rutledge (Communication PTS), and Kat Stewart (Broadcast). Two new directors were also acclaimed: Derik Joseph (Aboriginal Services) and Shannon Kelly (Communication).



FSA Office

A couple of changes were made among office staff. Having made strides in improving the quality of our communications over the last few years, we saw through job action a need to reach members and to hear from members in a more direct way. To do that, we re-aligned our communications staff position to emphasize engagement. Kyla Epstein began work as our Member Engagement Officer in July 2013. We also brought on another Labour Relations Representative, Wayne Roberts, for a six-month term. This allowed us to assign our Senior LR Representative Heather Neun to work on an annotated collective agreement, a highly valued and complex reference tool for our advocacy work.

“I have always seen the FSA as important for establishing my rights as an employee within our Collective Agreement. I also feel it is important to be part of a community as an employee at BCIT. FSA contributes to the community in our workplace and has allowed me to meet others within the institution I may not otherwise have met. This year I have taken on the role of Director-at-Large and have expressed how cultural diversity can be looked at within a union representing a diverse student population. I am a First Nations man born in Victoria and raised in Vancouver as well as often spending time in the Tl’azt’en Nation traditional territory, a First Nations reserve community in Northern British Columbia. I look forward to meeting more FSA members and adding to a diverse community here at BCIT. Musi Cho (Thank you)!”

MESSAGE FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Disruption and Resilience

FSA members did something remarkable in the past year. As an independent union representing about 10% of our sector, we took the lead in moving a stubborn government to double its proposed wage increase. We made sacrifices to do it and we managed those sacrifices successfully to protect the well-being of our students, our institution, our members, and our association and we won that wage increase.

The FSA entered into 2012-13 with a commitment to strengthen the union by building stronger connections with members and to organize our affairs to strengthen our ability to represent members. We did not expect to be conducting our first strike action since 1999. We also did not expect the government to give our sector a mandate for 1% annual increases while the rest of the public sector was getting 2% and potential instructors and technical staff in private industry were getting 3% or more.

In refusing to sign a collective agreement with no improvements in 2010, we were planning to be at the forefront of determining wages increases under the 2012-14 mandate. We did not want a repeat of the 2007 negotiations when the sector table determined our wage increases without advising us. When the BCGEU Support Staff units began taking isolated strike actions in November 2012, we moved to see that our job action strategies were co-ordinated. Because of the organizational and communications work we'd been undertaking within the FSA, we were able to mount and win a strike vote very quickly.

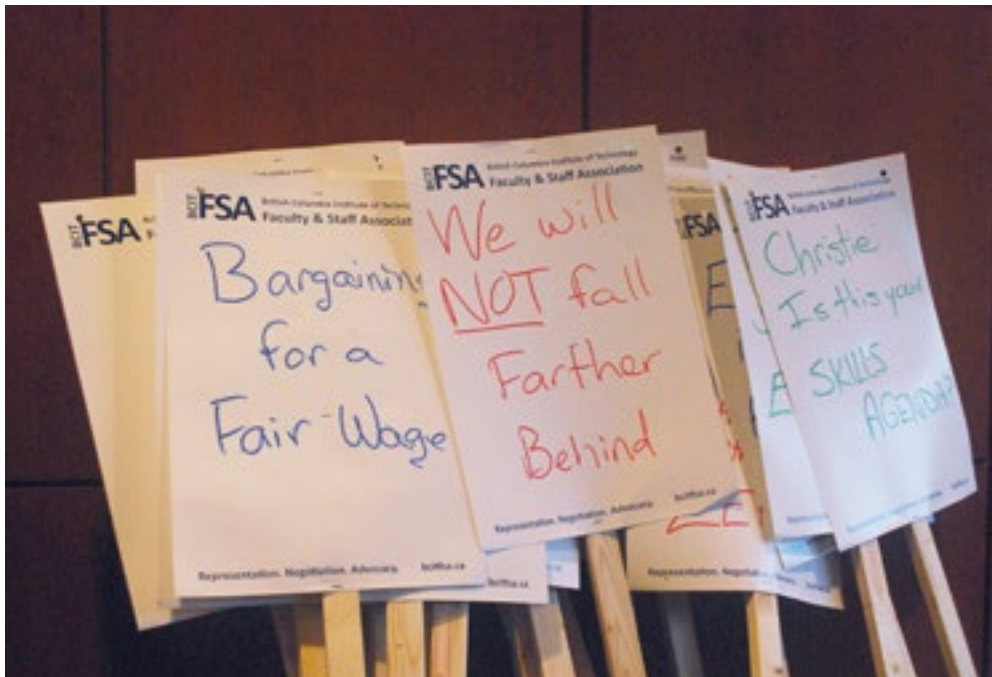


The job action campaign mounted by the FSA was not without significant issues, but it was notable within this sector for its efficiency. Creative approaches in telling the compelling stories of our members allowed us to maximize the impact of our efforts while minimizing class time lost. Together, our aggressive communication campaign and tactical withdrawal of services got the government to authorize additional wage increases in exchange for minor administrative efficiencies. Nobody has claimed that the current round of wage increases is going to address the significant challenges departments face in recruiting and retaining faculty and staff. We did, however, avoid the prospect of falling behind other public sector workers and we were able to complete the semester.

Our job action was also decisive in turning back a government proposal to align our drug benefit coverage with the provincial PharmaCare plan. This idea was floated to us by the Post-Secondary Employers Agency as offering a savings of 0.2% of the cost of the collective agreement a year. We recognize that spiralling drug costs are a serious issue. We also recognized that the proposed change in plan coverage could have significant consequences

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for many members and disastrous consequences for a few. When the BCGEU and CUPE signed on to this change for post-secondary support staff, we worked hard to make it known that it would not fly with us without significant modifications. Our resistance meant that drug plan changes were not part of the settlements for us or other instructors. The experience of other bargaining units who signed on to the change has proven we were right: several significant problems have arisen as a result of aligning with the PharmaCare drug coverage.



Those were not the kind of highlights we were looking for at the start of the year. We are happy to report, however, that the FSA's effective response to these very difficult challenges reinforced how much we had already accomplished through our work on the strategic priorities of member engagement and operational improvement. When the bargaining team and the board of directors saw the need to take a strong stand, members were with us. When we needed to make compelling arguments to politicians, government officials, and the media, we had members' stories to share. When the logistics of these efforts might otherwise have been overwhelming, members came forward to help and we had structures in place to support them. When potential job actions risked unintended consequences, members talked to us and we listened and adjusted our plans. Part-Time Studies (PTS) members were incorporated into union activities to a degree never before seen.

Such challenges have divided our union and many other unions in the past. This time, the FSA came through stronger and more united. The subsequent directors' election saw the gradual renewal of the board with six directors returning unopposed. Despite a strike that nearly resulted in an entire term being lost in some programs, we finished the year in a better financial position. Financially and operationally, we're as strong as ever.

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“The FSA connects our efforts today, back in time to the efforts of others before us. The FSA is our collective voice, without it we are mute.”

Eugene Durisseau, FSA Member, School of Energy

The FSA was strengthened by better integrating our members in PTS into the work of the union. We responded to the call to better reach auxiliary instructors with improved electronic communications and by scheduling alternate general meetings in the evening with secure remote access for members. Our increased commitment to information management has resulted in efforts to consolidate the lessons learned from this job action so that, if we are provoked again, we'll be even better able to respond quickly, creatively, and efficiently.

The last round of bargaining built unity among FSA members in another key regard. By addressing the multitude of side deals and negotiated exceptions to the collective agreement, members saw how the divisions and idiosyncrasies we have built into our working conditions have hampered our ability to bargain substantive improvements for everybody. About 15 side deals were incorporated into the contract or eliminated through the bargaining process, making the collective agreement apply more consistently across the bargaining unit. A more consistent collective agreement means more leverage in negotiating changes the employer wants to see.



Having reached a point where BCIT appears to have neither the latitude nor the desire to make regular improvements to our contract and working conditions, it is no longer in our collective interests to regularly accept any concession to the contract that the employer seeks. When regular adequate wage increases and other considerations were forthcoming, variations between departments were easy to accommodate. Now, if we can only get something by giving something up, we need to put a price tag on our concessions too.

Dwight Eisenhower said, "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." At the FSA we lived the truth of that in 2012-13. On the one hand, job action was a major, intensive, unanticipated, and all-engrossing disruption to our plans for the year. On the other hand, the planning we did for the year provided us with a successful member-centred approach and a strong organizational base to meet that challenge and allow us to come out of it even stronger.



Paul Reniers
Executive Director

Stronger Advocacy and Representation for FSA Members

Better Approaches to Representation

This year, the FSA took major steps towards retiring our labour relations practices that no longer work for members. The FSA rethought its approach to side deals and compromises that don't help members in the long run. We adopted an approach to negotiating agreements so that individual resolutions are distinguished from agreements that apply to the broader membership and should be publishable. As a result, we moved from signing 37 Memoranda of Agreement (MemAgs) in 2010 down to 5 MemAgs signed in 2012-2013. Through bargaining, we eliminated several more of these side agreements by incorporating them into the published Collective Agreement, making that agreement more reflective of the members' rights.



We continued to take systems-based approaches to recurring issues and serious disputes with BCIT. Since it makes no sense to tackle the same problems again and again, the FSA focused on addressing the root causes of issues and conflicts. For example, in some departments we supported efforts to improve communication between members and between members and their management. We have placed more emphasis on drawing on resources beyond the Collective Agreement, like research-backed approaches to creating healthier workplaces. We've encouraged workplace practices that empower members and recognize that a respectful workplace, where employees are listened to and supported, is a workplace that really delivers on the employer's essential mission.

Better Tools for Advocacy

We began the long-anticipated process of building an annotated Collective Agreement that allows FSA reps to quickly draw on relevant information to adequately advance the rights of FSA members. An annotated Collective Agreement means that staff can quickly reference the applicable arbitration decisions, MemAgs, policies and practices that will count when a member is being investigated for alleged misconduct, or a group of members is being denied entitlements, or the Employer is "auxiliarizing" work that should be regular work.

Late in the year, we developed new intake practices meant to provide a single point of contact for members seeking advice and assistance while better managing our labour relations representatives' work time. Members now are asked to direct all inquiries to our fsa@bcit.ca email address or to 604-432-8695. Sascha Swartz, our Labour Relations Administrative Analyst reviews all inquiries, provides information as appropriate, gathers additional information on issues, and passes on matters needing the assistance of a labour rep to the appropriate staff person. In most instances, members should get a response within a working day.

Join us for general membership meetings!

Meetings start at 2:30pm at Town Square A&B on
Wednesday, October 30, 2013
Wednesday, January 22, 2014
Wednesday, April 23, 2014



Key Issues and Accomplishments

- Article 19 and employee misconduct investigations showed a steady increase following an upward trend that began in 2010. The vast majority of such investigations resulted in no discipline or minimal discipline.
- We advocated for members with health issues that affected their work, ensuring that their privacy rights and human right to accommodation were robustly protected.
- Pay during job action periods is always an issue when there is a strike. Almost all these issues are already resolved. When the BCGEU Support Staff did rotating strikes in 2004, the last of our remaining pay issues were not resolved until 2008.
- Multiple interventions were successfully made in situations of disputes/conflicts between members and between members and managers, sometimes department-wide in scope.
- Workload, pay, PD expenses, and leave administration issues were addressed and work continues on creating better educational resources for members about these recurring issues.
- Several requests for reductions in appointments were received from members wanting to work part-time. In all such cases, we seek to ensure that the work is replaced through regular employment.
- Several contracting out issues were investigated. In some cases, the contracts were modified as a result. Grievances were filed in which we claim that contracted out work should have been treated as FSA work but was not.
- 95 contracting-out requests were reviewed for the FSA bargaining unit. The value of the contracts approved by the FSA exceeded \$800,000.
- 63 student employee requests were reviewed.
- 5 Memoranda of Agreement (“Memags”) were negotiated with BCIT.

Heather Neun, *Senior Labour Relations Representative*
Christine Nagy, *Labour Relations Representative*
Tess Rebbitt, *Labour Relations Representative*

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



The FSA Board of Directors

Current (2013-2014)

Teresa Place, President
Silvia Raschke, Vice-President
Steve Finn, Treasurer
Alistair Calder, Director-at-Large
Derik Joseph, Director-at-Large
Shannon Kelly, Director-at-Large
Joe Newton, Director-at-Large
Taco Niet, Director-at-Large
James (Ted) Rutledge, Director Associate Members
Kathryn Stewart, Director-at-Large
Amy Fell, Past President

Past (2012-2013)

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

Representation. Negotiation. Advocacy.

