

For Immediate Release

BCIT FSA Members Endorse Affiliation with CAUT

Wednesday, April 27, 2016, Burnaby, BC: After a 5-day online vote, the BCIT FSA membership has endorsed affiliation with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). Members voted 70.2% in favour of affiliating with Canada's national professional association for post-secondary educators.

After a substantive information campaign including guest speakers, member meetings, an extensive online FAQ, and even door hangers, the members of the FSA will be asking CAUT to consider a membership application at its annual council in November.

The impetus for affiliation came in part from the recognition that the issues impacting the working conditions of FSA members are frequently beyond the control of BCIT. To improve the terms and conditions of work, the FSA increasingly needs to be represented at the sectoral, provincial, and national levels. FSA members need a platform for maintaining dialogue with colleagues in other unions in higher education and in the public sector more broadly.

Paul Reniers, FSA Executive Director, stated, "Membership in CAUT has the potential to make us better at almost everything we do. CAUT membership provides us access to amassed bodies of knowledge on almost every issue that is important to us. CAUT has services and functions that support faculty association leadership, bargaining, advocacy, lobbying, and policy. No other resource or participation in any other organization can add value across the FSA's key activities the way CAUT can."

The decision to seek affiliation was driven not only by what membership in CAUT can offer the FSA but what the FSA membership can bring to the national level.

During the campaign FSA Director and incoming Vice-President Kenzie Woodbridge noted that "by affiliating with CAUT we get the opportunity to add our own experience and knowledge to [the] national conversation. We will have an open connection to be able to contribute our expertise. We can send our amazing members and leadership to contribute to high-level nation-wide strategy discussions. There are many great people already doing this work, but the conversations they're having will be fuller and better conversations with our voices in the mix."

The FSA is a trade union representing almost 1,700 full-time and part-time technology faculty and staff at BCIT. Through representation, negotiation, and advocacy for members, the FSA advances the employment interests of faculty and staff and improves working conditions at BCIT.

All questions can be directed to Paul Reniers, Executive Director at 604-432-8696 or preniers@bcit.ca.