



BCITFSA

VOICE

Your Association's News

President's Message:

Supporting Publicly Funded Education

As we enter September 2014 and prepare for a busy semester of educating and preparing our students for their chosen fields, the K-12 teachers are facing more job action. The mediator, Vince Ready, has said that the two sides are too far apart to reach an agreement. As in post-secondary education, the K-12 system is facing cuts and these cuts have a severe impact

on the operations of our schools and on the quality of education our students receive. Why should we care about the K-12 students? They will be our students. A student whose education starts out with a system that is underfunded has a direct impact on us in the classroom. Even worse, it limits their potential and their opportunities. We need to support publicly funded education to ensure that every young person has the same opportunity to reach their full potential and that a family's economic background will not impact the quality of a child's education. Publicly funded education provides

equal opportunity to all and, in turn, our society becomes healthier, stronger and more prepared to contribute to the success of our communities.

We can show our support by joining the teachers on the picket line. At a member's suggestion, we printed up placards to show that the FSA supports educators.



Come by and get one. When you are walking the line, perhaps with your child, share with them why you support the teachers and why you personally value publicly funded education. Speak to your MLA's - let them know where you want your tax dollars going and the how the cuts have impacted you personally.

Today's K-12 student could be our student of tomorrow. They are certainly the future of BC, Canada and the world. Everyone deserves a chance to reach their goals

and to contribute to society. Support the teachers now and help protect publicly funded education. It matters to all of us.

From the FSA Blog...

Along with our newly designed website we have a blog section to keep you updated on FSA news and issues facing our sector. Since launching, our blog posts have covered updates on bargaining, BC's blueprint for education, FSA's first Distinguished Alumni Award, and our support for BC's K-12 teachers. Check out these posts and more at: bcitfsa.ca/blog

Bargaining in a Tight Space

By Paul Reniers
Executive Director

The FSA and BCIT held three negotiating sessions in June and have four scheduled in September. Already we can see bargaining proceeding with a pace and a level of engagement on both sides that is far different from the long drawn out 2010-13 round.

The provincial government's highly restrictive bargaining mandate for public sector employers like BCIT significantly narrows the scope for discussions at the negotiating table. In 2012 we saw that the provincial mandate can be moved by determined union members making compelling arguments. In this round, we already have seen settlements in our sector and others that show that very few unions are prepared to try to change the wage mandate of increases totalling 5.5% over 5 years. Teachers are the exception.

Five years of wages falling further behind inflation and further behind the sectors from which we try to draw experienced faculty and technical staff will be a big problem for the government's skills agenda. Even setting wages aside, we have serious employment issues that cannot wait for another five years to be addressed. BCIT's increasing reliance on auxiliary part-time studies (PTS) instruction, the lack of support for those same Instructors, our inadequate hours of work, the insufficiency of our Academic Freedom protections, the disconnect between how we organize research work and what funding agencies and counterparts at other institutions expect; these are all BCIT issues that need to be addressed regardless of the government's economic mandate. Getting a handle on these issues in bargaining within the narrow confines of what the government will allow is a tremendous challenge.



Compounding that problem is a lingering wariness about the employer's willingness and ability to address the needs of faculty and staff. Over the last few years, members have reported more instances of management adopting more narrow views of our rights and benefits. We hear of increases in workload, additional administrative constraints, and less consultative decision making. Financial pressures have driven managers to seek higher revenues with fewer expenses. The last round of budgeting saw 20 regular positions eliminated and an expectation that new revenue will be developed through PTS programs. BCIT is trading good jobs for auxiliary positions to make ends meet. When members face these pressures between rounds of bargaining, gains through negotiation become all that much more important.

There are some grounds for optimism. The messages we've received from BCIT President Kathy Kinloch point to movement in the right direction, although substantial action still remains to be seen. We are seeing more willingness to talk about important issues like hours of work. When we began withholding agreement on expanded hours of work more than a year ago, we were surprised by the employer's lack of willingness to make a deal that would see expanded hours in exchange for other benefits. Now management is starting to talk about what an extended workday might be worth. If we can find that value and build in protections for members, we will be well on our way to a new contract.

In the next few weeks, we'll see whether the employer is able to engage with us in some creative problem solving. Given the pared down and specific set of proposals that the FSA brought to bargaining, movement could come quickly once it starts.

The FSA Bargaining Team will be updating the blog on our website after each bargaining session. Please check it regularly.

A Grassroots Idea That Caught Hold: BCIT Learning Commons

By *Kathy Musial*
Learning Commons Coordinator & FSA Member

Ten years ago the Learning Commons (LC) opened, in a temporary location (a classroom), with a temporary 0.20 faculty assignment and 17 tutors. Today the LC Coordinator’s job is full-time; we have the support of a full-time LC Administrative Assistant, a high-profile location in the library, some key satellite sites and 70 tutors – all of whom are FSA student employees. Despite substantial development, we’ve remained true to our core objective: to increase student success and retention by enhancing student engagement in learning.



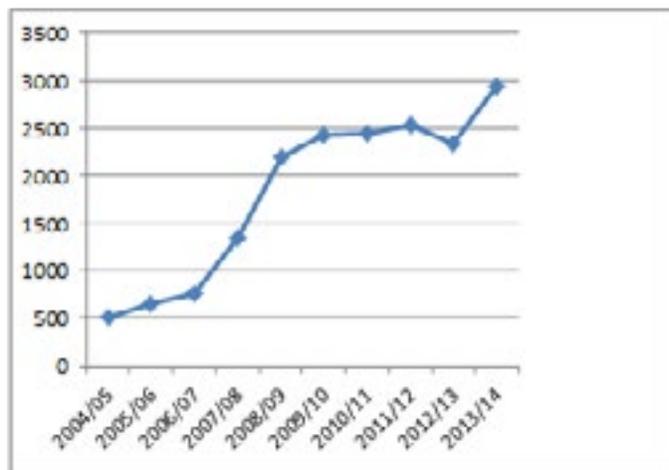
Through Peer Tutoring and the Writing Centre, both free services, the Learning Commons provides opportunities for students to engage in collaborative learning with highly successful students. Peer Tutors offer content and study skill tutoring in their program areas. Writing Peer Tutors work with students on writing assignments, helping students become better writers. All tutors are hired with instructor recommendations and complete two hours of online training followed by ten hours of in-class training to prepare them for the job.

Our model is to be responsive to and collaborate with BCIT academic and student service departments to offer services that are relevant across campuses. Examples of our collaborations include:

- Partnering with the BCIT Student Association on the tutor recruitment process. We hire the same tutors and we offer a drop-in service while they provide 1-to-1 tutoring at \$16/hour.
- Joining forces with the Communication Department to propose the opening of a Writing Centre in 2010. Communications instructor John Storm developed and coordinated the Writing Centre for its first two years and now it is fully under the Learning Commons umbrella.
- Working with faculty and staff at Aboriginal Services, BCIT International, the Student Association, Marine Campus and International Student Entry Program (ISEP) to arrange satellite locations for increased access to drop-in tutoring and writing centre services.
- Supporting the Disability Resource Centre to match our tutors with students with disabilities, as needed.

Peer Tutoring Historical Comparison

Year	Visits
2004/05	513
2005/06	645
2006/07	748
2007/08	1340
2008/09	2195
2009/10	2433
2010/11	2449
2011/12	2529
2012/13	2344
2013/14	2932



In 2003 BCIT Learning Commons was just an idea for a needed service - a way of providing learning support outside the classroom for all students. Together with key backing from the Library Director and the Dean of the School of Computing and Academic Studies (SCAS) we were off. We are now heading into our 11th year. What’s in store for the future? That will depend on funding and new collaborative partners. Drop by the Learning Commons on a Wednesday (2:30 – 4:30pm) to see our tutors in action. Let us know how we can serve your students.

Vacation Carry Over

By Christine Nagy
Labour Relations Representative



Welcome back from summer vacation! As you proceed into the fall semester, this would be a good time to review the balance of vacation leave remaining in your bank. If you're not aware, there are limits to how much vacation leave one can carry over into the next calendar year.

Each employee has the right to automatically carry over up to 10 working days of vacation entitlement accumulated in any one (1) year for use in a subsequent year (see Article 9.2.7.1). However, under Article 9.2.7.4, an employee can apply to their Department for approval to carry over additional vacation leave. The total vacation entitlement in any one (1) year cannot exceed 58 days. Examples of carry over calculations are set out below. Article 9.2.7.2 exempts vacation earned prior to June 26, 1979 from this rule.

Vacation Carry Over Example *Assistant Instructor*

- A full time Assistant Instructor with 16 years of service is entitled to annual vacation of 40 days
- If they use 22 days during a year, they could carry over 10 days pursuant to Article 9.2.7.1, and apply to their department to carry over the balance of eight (8) days pursuant to Article 9.2.7.4
- Their total in that subsequent year would not exceed 58 days (40 + 10 carry over + 8 by application to the department = 58 days)

Vacation Carry Over Example *Instructor*

- A full time instructor with 20+ years of service is entitled to annual vacation of 47 days
- If they were to carry over the automatic 10 days, the maximum number of excess days they could apply to carry over would be one (1) day
- The total in the subsequent year would be 58 days (47 + 10 carry over + 1 by application to the department = 58 days)

Paying Out Vacation

If an employee finds themselves in a situation in which they are unable to take all or part of their scheduled vacation, and it is not possible to reschedule or carry over the vacation (see examples on page 4), the employee must apply to their manager for authorization to forego the scheduled vacation (see Article 9.2.7.6). In these instances, the employee will be paid out for any days outstanding as of December 31st of that calendar year. The payment would be made by the second pay period in February of the subsequent year.

Scheduling Carried Over Vacation

Pursuant to Article 9.2.3 – Vacation Period Selection, an annual vacation schedule will be established by the department. However, for scheduling purposes, requests to use carried over vacation is given a lower priority than requests to schedule regular annual vacation (Article 9.2.7.5).

Newly Hired Regular Employees **NEW!**

Are you a newly hired regular employee since August 1st, 2014? If so, and you work in a teaching department, you are affected by a new provision agreed to during the last round of bargaining. Article 9.2.7.7 states that if you commence employment after August 1st of any calendar year, and you are unable to schedule and use your accrued vacation by December 31st of that year, you have a couple of options:

- Receive full pay out on or about December 31st for all accrued but unused vacation days; or
- Carry over any portion of vacation days accrued up to a maximum of ten (10) days pursuant to Article 9.2.7 and be paid out in full for all remaining accrued but unused vacation days on or about December 31st.

If you are a newly hired regular employee who is in a non-teaching department (Library Services, LTC, DRC, etc.), you are not bound by the new Article 9.2.7.7 provision.

In Summary

Around February of each calendar year, each employee should receive their Annual Confirmation Report. This is an accounting of your vacation (and sick) leave that you were entitled to receive, what you carried over from the prior year, how much you used, and the remaining balance, if any. It is recommended that you confirm the accuracy prior to signing off.

If you have any questions about a general interpretation of anything in this article, and/or the collective agreement provisions, or if you have a specific example you'd like to raise with the FSA, please contact us at fsa@bcit.ca or 604.432.8695.

Reminder!

Tech Rep Selection



Tech Reps are a vital part of the FSA community in facilitating communication between the FSA and our members, offering a departmental perspective on the Association's work, and providing input on major issues for collective bargaining. Tech Reps make the FSA strong and a strong FSA helps make BCIT a better educational institution and workplace.

Selecting Your Department's Tech Rep

- It is you – the FSA members – who get to select your Department's Tech Rep each year.
- Each Department should have at least one Tech Rep and we encourage you to have at least one Alternate Tech Rep.
- The FSA requests that Departments select (i.e. via email, department meeting, etc.) their Department's Tech Rep and Alternate Tech Rep(s) for a one year term from October 1st – September 30th. Each year your Department can decide to renew the incumbent for another term or choose someone new.

The FSA encourages new members and past Tech Reps to volunteer for these roles. Rotation of these roles through your Department will result in a more engaged membership. *Find out more about the role, the meetings, and who to contact with questions at:* <http://www.bcitfsa.ca/call-out-select-your-201415-tech-reps/>

Affiliation Update

By Paul Reniers
Executive Director



Last year, the FSA Board of Directors decided to examine whether the FSA should develop a formal association with some other organization working in our sector. Several factors make this question more relevant today than it has been in the last thirty-five years:

- Discussions at the sector level increasingly drive bargaining outcomes, often without our participation;
- Our future as a union is tied to the futures of other public sector unions and we've seen some unions badly hampered when other unions act alone;
- We saw in 2012 that we can have influence over the outcome of bargaining in our sector, but we shouldn't have to go on strike to use that influence;
- We also saw in 2012 that other organizations have done very helpful work on issues we have in common and that we can benefit from accessing these resources, like the CAUT's work on Academic Freedom and auxiliary instruction;
- Pension plans are evolving and we lack representation in the plan that covers most FSA members.
- Added cost, with additional dues being sent off campus;
- Loss of autonomy, with decisions being made for us by an external organization;
- Lack of flexibility to meet the unique needs of BCIT and our members;
- Being bound to decisions made to benefit other parts of a larger association rather than us;
- Larger associations will cater to the lowest common denominator and not to our unique characteristics;
- Loss of service provided by local staff.

From an association management perspective, the FSA Board of Directors has struggled with succession planning within the union for several years. Associating with a larger organization would provide the FSA with added stability and support if there were to be disruption in key roles.

Assumptions about the risks of affiliation have kept this discussion off the FSA agenda since we opted out of the College-Institute Educators Association in 1980. The arguments against affiliation include:

What we saw with bargaining in 2007 and with the strike in 2012 was that independence was not protecting us from being tied to other employee groups. Instead, other unions were making decisions that affected us greatly without our participation.

Given those experiences, the FSA Board of Directors decided to study the issue of affiliation to determine what it would mean and what it would look like. At the April AGM, members did an exercise where they identified potential benefits of affiliation and concerns. If the Board determines that affiliation should be considered, the question will be put to members based on well-defined options.

To learn more about affiliation, the Board met separately with the leaders of the BC Federation of Labour, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators. Each organization offers different options for affiliation with different benefits.

BCFed

An umbrella group for all unions in BC and offers co-ordination and collaboration opportunities but few services

CAUT

An umbrella group for all Canadian faculty associations and offers significant services but has limited direct involvement in bargaining in BC

FPSE

Provides full representation services to every other college and institute faculty association in BC and it delivers those services in a way that's quite different from how we do it at the FSA

The FSA has four times as many staff as any FPSE faculty association and we have the lowest dues rate. Faculty and staff at FPSE locals get services from members on release time and centralized staff representatives. FPSE local representatives participate on province-wide committees on matters ranging from bargaining to pensions, benefits administration, human rights, and international solidarity.

Both the FSA and FPSE have agreed to look at how those different models might be made to work together. For the FSA, joining FPSE would provide a tremendous extension of our influence. Given our size and capacity

as a union compared to other FPSE locals, we would immediately go from being unrepresented in many sectoral discussions to being the dominant union in those activities. We will not, however, seek that influence through affiliation if it means compromising the high level of local labour relations service to which FSA members currently have access.

The FSA Board has already decided that any decision about affiliation will be made by the membership after ample opportunity for consideration. Once the Board thinks we have determined a realistic set of options, the alternatives will be shared with members.



BCIT offers you and your dependants this benefit as part of your health benefits package. There is no cost to you or your dependants for using this service. How does it work in a nutshell?

An RN Member Advocate* will work with you throughout the process and arrange/pay for the collection of your medical records. Best Doctors locates a doctor who specializes in your condition from a database of over 53,000 peer-nominated physicians. That doctor will review your case, determine a diagnosis and recommend a treatment plan**. You will also receive a written report that you can share with your regular doctor.

This is an excellent service for anyone who is struggling medically and wants some answers or a second opinion.

**Not all illnesses are covered by Best Doctors. The RN Member Advocate will determine if your case is one they can take on.*

***Recommended treatment may or may not be covered by MSP or your BCIT benefits.*

<http://www.bcit.ca/hr/services/benefits/extended.shtml>

<http://www.bestdoctorscanada.com/about-best-doctors>

Did You Know?

Did you know that the FSA has a 'Good & Welfare' program?

Know a member who is celebrating a special event or dealing with a challenging time in their life? Let the FSA know and we will send a small token recognizing that member's circumstance or achievement.

Contact us at 604.432.8695 or fsa@bcit.ca



Students in Distress and Challenging Student Behaviours

By Heather Neun

Senior Labour Relations Representative



From time to time, the FSA fields member enquiries about challenging student behaviors and how these issues are addressed under BCIT policy and procedure. The management of these situations has been brought into sharper focus by the emerging framework of a respectful and healthy work and learning environment. This article draws on the insights of FSA members in Counselling and Student Development, about students in distress and the fact that challenging behaviours may, *in some cases*, have roots in mental health issues. Beyond providing a window into how BCIT students are doing, we highlight the intersection between concerning student behaviours and FSA members, gaps in understanding and the current processes, as well as existing resources and promising new initiatives at BCIT and beyond.

Concerns about challenging behaviour and students in distress are increasing in incidence and complexity. One BCIT counsellor described the situation in this way:

Our students often face significant stress at school and challenging circumstances in their personal lives that can be overwhelming at times. Most BCIT programs are very rigorous, requiring long hours in the classroom or shop, followed by more hours of study, group projects or other responsibilities. Many students also juggle family and work commitments. Having less time available for self-care and leisure can make students more vulnerable to mental illness and burnout, and subsequently strain relationships with instructors, classmates, and loved ones.

We know from Canadian Mental Health Association research that 20% of all of us -- students, instructors, staff and managers -- will personally experience a mental illness in our lifetime. This is reflected in increased demand for counselling and crisis counselling appointments in particular at BCIT.

Implications for FSA Members

The idea that violence and mental health are invariably linked persists in our community and may lead to stigmatization and unfounded perceptions. Mental illness does not equate to either violence or misconduct by students and such stereotypes do not promote open discussion or wellness.

Another implication of the increased incidence and complexity of concerns for students is the corresponding increase in challenges for FSA members, as instructors and frontline staff. In the spirit of promoting awareness and understanding, adequate training is needed that helps employees to understand student behaviours that may be confusing and adversely affecting other students, and which *may or may not* violate BCIT's policies on student conduct.

Dealing with challenging student behaviours can be stressful for all members of the campus community. Moreover, BCIT's policies and processes have not always been effective or consistently applied. The Institute has sometimes been insensitive to the implications of concerning behaviours and BCIT processes for its employees.

FSA staff have observed first-hand the stress that results from staff being kept unduly "out of the loop", as well as inadequately trained or supported in addressing concerning student behaviours. Members sometimes struggle with feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy around what the policies mean and how to respond to challenging situations.

A 2013 national mental health survey of Canadian post-secondary students revealed the following about their state of health within the previous 12 months:

- 89.3% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do;
- 56.5% felt "overwhelming anxiety";
- 37.5% felt "so depressed that it was difficult to function";
- 9.5% had "seriously contemplated suicide";
- 1.3% had made a suicide attempt.

www.cacuss.ca

There are cases where a student's conduct is such - whether mental health related or not - that the respective interests of the student in difficulty and the affected employees (and other students) must be carefully weighed. As challenging as this balancing act can be, the Institute's legal obligations are clear.

The FSA will continue to back efforts to ensure that BCIT policies and procedures reflect the best practices in a post-secondary education context. BCIT's employees need adequate support and training on the policies and procedures, as well increased understanding of mental health challenges and the duty to accommodate.

Resources and Initiatives: Campus Well-Being and Student Conduct

Fortunately, there are existing resources and a renewed commitment to equipping BCIT employees to deal effectively and respectfully with challenging student behaviours and students in distress.

UnMasking Distress is one such resource that helps employees recognize typical signs of distress and identify potential responses. Attend a session to learn more about how you can support the well-being and success of students in distress.

UnMasking Distress Resources

- Upcoming workshops (Oct 1 & Nov 5) - sign up: www.bcit.ca/hr/pd/options/workshops.shtml
- UnMasking Distress website: <http://commons.bcit.ca/counselling/unmaskingdistress/>
- Download a copy of Identifying and Referring Students in Distress: http://www.bcit.ca/files/counselling/pdf/identifying_and_referring_students_in_difficulty.pdf
- Contact hhyde@bcit.ca

The **Healthy Minds/Healthy Campuses** initiative is developing a comprehensive response to improving student mental health. For more information see: <http://healthycampuses.ca/> and Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach <http://www.cacuss.ca/PSSMH.html>

Chris Rogerson (office of Student Judicial Affairs) recently launched a **Campus Well-being Steering Group** to develop a "robust strategy that lays the foundation for a healthy campus community." The Steering Group will examine current strengths and barriers to campus well-being and how to positively influence the health of the community. We look forward to seeing what evolves from this multi-stakeholder initiative.

Suicide Prevention QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper training is available for all members of the BCIT community to make a difference and potentially help save a life. Learn how to:

- Recognize someone at risk for suicide
- Ask about potential suicidal intent
- Listen and persuade someone to seek help
- Access professional services on campus and in the community

Upcoming dates for QPR Training:

Sept 24, Oct 22 & Nov 26, 2014
2:30 – 4:30pm

Sign up: www.bcit.ca/hr/pd/options/workshops.shtml

The **Hi F.I.V.E.** campaign that recently arrived at BCIT aims to *eliminate stigma* towards those experiencing mental health distress or illness. For more information, contact Heather Hyde (heather_hyde@bcit.ca) and visit: <http://www.sfu.ca/students/health/HiFIVE/About.html>.

The **Harassment and Discrimination Advisor**, Jennifer Walker, provides advice about specific or hypothetical fact patterns.

Member Profile: Joanne Stone-Campbell



Joanne Stone-Campbell is an FSA member and the Coordinator in Aboriginal Services. The FSA and Aboriginal Services have been working together over the last year to support each other's work and strive towards a strong on-campus community. As a member-driven organization, we appreciate Joanne for taking the time to share her experiences and views.

What is the most exciting part of your work right now? I recently connected with a student who has grown up in foster care and doesn't know her family. As Aboriginal people we are always seeking connections and it turns out that she is from Ontario like me. It turns out that I know her family and am presently in the process of connecting her to them, which is also my niece's family. We all cried and hugged - this is what Aboriginal Services is all about! For me, I've been on this healing journey and connecting to who I really am and what makes me excited about life. I am the first generation out of residential schooling so have been dealing with the loss of my people, my culture, healthy family systems, and the effects of intergenerational impacts. Today I'm very passionate about education and have been for the last 30 years, 14 of which have been at BCIT. I appreciate BCIT for giving me the opportunity to grow and share my gifts and to walk with me in harmony and to paddle in one canoe together. That is what we teach at BCIT – teamwork.

My purpose in life is to “open doors so others can fulfill their dreams” and I believe education is one of those tools. Today we can have the opportunity to an education that once was denied to us and still be who we are as Aboriginal people. Free to sing, dance, speak/learn our language, and carry on our traditions/cultural ways without hearing things like: “Stupid Indian,” “go back to the rez,” “you guys get everything for free,” “black Indian,” and being told that you should leave school at grade 10 and go find a job because you won't graduate from Grade 12.

We provide holistic services, spiritual, mental, emotional and intellectual, in the Department. It is so rewarding to run programs like our Sweat Lodges, Elders-in-Residence, Aboriginal Gathering Space, Aboriginal Speaker Series, sharing circles, motivational speeches, and uplifting/gifting our students. This year was our 2nd Aboriginal graduation ceremony honouring the transformation and perseverance of our people. Celebrating their success with our grads, mentors, and alumni has been a great milestone. My goal is to change the face of every stereotype, racism, and derogatory remark with the chance to educate and change people's perception of Aboriginal people in all areas of life.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA? I just got involved these last few years and I'm so proud that we are being inclusive in representing all people today. Having a First Nation's person representing me on the FSA Board of Directors is a huge step in feeling a part of the organization. Also having our Aboriginal Elder involved with the FSA makes only positive pathways for us. When our elders are involved we know it's a good thing! It's building bridges and building a strong sense of trust.

How does the FSA support your work at BCIT? The FSA has always supported the Elder Contractors we hire for cultural ceremonies and the Elders-in-Residence. The last few years we have hired Aboriginal mentors and the FSA continues to be open to supporting what this means to our students. Acceptance!

Is there anything you'd like to see change as an FSA member? I would like to see more informal sessions to educate us on our rights and responsibilities as FSA members concerning workloads, changes in job descriptions, lieu time or overtime, expectations of reporting to Managers and what processes are in place. Maybe smaller working groups to provide an opportunity to share, which can bring about change and have their voices heard. Most people I notice won't share in a large group environment.

What keeps you busy when you're not at work? I have a beautiful 12-year-old daughter who is such a blessing and a miracle in my life and is my teacher in so many ways. I volunteer with her school to incorporate culturally relevant content and as a role model. I have also volunteered for 14 years as a personal growth seminar facilitator for Choices International, for the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business annual gala, and every summer I take in a Grade 6-7 class to my home on the Squamish Nation in West Vancouver for a week and do a cultural/educational/sports exchange from an Island community. In my spare time I try to take advantage of BCIT's courses.

What are you reading right now? Indigenous Intelligence by Jim Dumont, our elder Alf's brother who was the spiritual guide to our Commissioner Chief Justice Sinclair for Reconciliation Canada for Residential schools.

Board Member Profile: Terry Gordon



Terry Gordon is an Instructor in Financial Management and previously served on the Board of Directors from 2007 to 2012, including terms as Treasurer, Vice-President, and for several months as Acting President. He has also served on the last three Bargaining Teams. The FSA has benefited greatly from his skills as an auditor in understanding funding and budgeting issues at BCIT and his financial insights and analysis are well respected by management. We're very pleased he agreed to rejoin the Board of Directors this spring.

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

Helping my students plan their path to enter the accounting profession. The profession in Canada is going through a major structural change and it's both exciting and challenging to try to stay on top on the latest developments.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA as a board member? The FSA helps me to see the "big picture" at BCIT. It gives me the opportunity to meet people that I wouldn't normally have contact with and to learn about their issues and challenges that are often very different

Staff Profile: Tess Rebbitt



Tess Rebbitt joined the FSA office as a rep over three years ago and has always impressed us with her knowledge and insight into labour relations. In addition to assisting members with workplace problems, Tess currently monitors contracting out, selections, student hires and other processes requiring the agreement of the FSA. Tess is an avid learner and constantly seeks out opportunities for professional development, for transferring knowledge within our labour relations team, and for the implementation of best practices.

What is the most exciting part of your work right now? The FSA is embarking upon a member education project. I'm looking forward to creating materials and educating our members about their rights, so as to minimize or prevent violations of the Collective Agreement rather than trying to resolve them after they've happened. An educated membership gives members more power.

Why do you think the FSA is a vital part of the BCIT community? The FSA ensures that BCIT honors the employment rights that it has negotiated for FSA members. In order for our members to focus on their work that makes BCIT great, the FSA takes on the role

from my own. I can't think of a better way to learn about BCIT and its various complexities.

How does the FSA support your work at BCIT? The FSA staff are fantastic! I know that if I ever have a problem, I can count on them to give me accurate and timely advice. Our members are very fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and responsive group of people working on their behalf.

Is there anything you'd like to see change as an FSA member? I hope that someday soon BCIT senior managers become more inclusive in the way that they make decisions and set the direction for the Institute. They need to recognize and value the vast pool of talent and expertise that resides within the FSA membership and to use us more. Managers need to realize that they will make better decisions with us rather than without us.

What are you reading right now? I have spent the past year reading a long list of dystopian novels, both old and new. I know that's a little weird but I'm hooked on that genre!

of ensuring their rights are upheld. FSA members are never alone; the FSA is here to support them.

What is something the FSA does that many members may not be aware of? The FSA Labour Relations team works with BCIT to resolve issues without always utilizing the grievance procedure in the collective agreement. There is a lot of work that takes place behind the scenes before a grievance is ever filed and many issues are resolved through discussions without a grievance.

What surprises you when working with members? It often surprises me that members wait so long to come to their Union with an issue or for help. Often, if they had come to the FSA earlier we could have assisted with advice or taken the issue on before it escalated. I encourage members to contact the FSA if they are unsure about a situation that's going on and doesn't feel right. Our involvement can be minimal but the impact can be immense and result in reduced negative impact on FSA members, students and BCIT.

A little more...what keeps you busy when you're not at work? I love to travel and have been to 20 countries on every continent except Antarctica. I also love to dance; Bachata, Kizomba and Salsa are my favorites.

Call Out!

Do you have news or a story that you think other FSA members should know about? Consider contributing to the FSA Voice!

Contact Kyla at kepstein@bcit.ca

Upcoming Events

September 17
Board of Directors Meeting

October 6
BCIT 50th Anniversary Gala

October 8
Tech Rep Meeting

October 22
Board of Directors Meeting

October 29
Annual General Meeting
2:30-4:30pm
Town Square A&B, SE2
Burnaby Campus

Contact Us

Phone: 604.432.8695

Fax: 604.432.8348

E-mail: fsa@bcit.ca

Web: www.bcitfsa.ca

Twitter: @bcitfsa

SE 16-116

3700 Willingdon

Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2

The BCIT Faculty and Staff Association Team



Teresa Place
President



Silvia Raschke
Vice-President



Terry Gordon
Treasurer & Director



Derik Joseph
Director



Shannon Kelly
Director



Joe Newton
Director



Ted Rutledge
Director, Associate Members



Dave Shaw
Director



Kathryn Stewart
Director



Kenzie Woodbridge
Director



Paul Reniers
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Heather Neun
Sr. Labour Relations Rep



Christine Nagy
Labour Relations Rep



Tess Rebbitt
Labour Relations Rep



Ken Howie
Labour Relations Rep



Sascha Swartz
LR Administrative Analyst



Kyla Epstein
Member Engagement Officer



Maria Angerilli
Executive Assistant



Marian Ciccone
Office Assistant