

Return to Campuses Fall 2021 | BC Post-Secondary Sector Response

(xʷməθkʷəj̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səlilwatał (Tseil-Waututh) Territories – Vancouver, BC, May 11, 2021) – Today union leaders from the post-secondary sector met with Dr. Bonnie Henry, public health officials, as well as post-secondary administrators to discuss concerns about the return to campus planned for September.

“It is incredibly valuable to have these conversations now so that we can all return to a safe campus in the fall,” says Dr. Daniel Laitsch, President of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC). “While today’s engagement was helpful, we look forward to further consultations that offer greater opportunity for exchange and dialogue regarding key issues for faculty, staff, and students.”

Following the meeting, unions representing the majority of faculty and staff across all BC post-secondary institutions issued the following statement:

Consultation is a key factor in the successful operations on our campuses. We appreciate that this was the first conversation of its kind with the union groups and BC public health officials, and look forward to continuing our discussion. Working together, we can ensure the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students on all campuses.

Every post-secondary institution in BC is complex, with different needs based on campus populations, programs, and proximity to nearby communities. We were encouraged today that public health officials recognize many plans will need to be made on the ground on an institution-by-institution basis. Now, post-secondary institution administrators need to work collaboratively with the faculty, staff, and their representing unions on site to come up with local solutions based on the needs of the campus community. The only way to properly plan for the reality of hundreds to thousands of people on campus is to speak to the front-line educators and staff who will be in direct contact with students.

This discussion also reinforces the need to commit to fair and sufficient funding for BC post-secondary institutions to make much-needed long-term investments in campus infrastructure and programs. Properly investing in ventilation systems as well as campus health centres available to all members of the campus community will be necessary to support a safe environment for everyone.

Signed by:

Brent Calvert, President and Sean Parkinson, Secretary-Treasurer, FPSE
Daniel Laitsch, President and Annabree Fairweather, Executive Director, CUFA BC
Colin Jones, President and Michael Conlon, Executive Director, BCITFSA
Cindy Battersby, Vice-President Component 7, BCGEU
Christy Slusarenko, Vice-President and Nathan Beausoleil, Union Representative, MoveUP

BC Post-Secondary Education Sector Group

Representing over 24,000 faculty and staff, teaching and supporting 175,000 full-time-equivalent students in post-secondary across British Columbia.

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC: CUFA BC

<https://www.cufa.bc.ca>

CUFA BC represents over 5,500 faculty members, professional librarians, lecturers, instructors, and other academics at the five research-intensive universities in British Columbia, which include University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and University of Northern British Columbia. CUFA BC celebrates fifty years of working closely with the member Faculty Associations at each institution. Our purposes are to support high-quality post-secondary education and research in British Columbia and to advocate for the interests of our members.

President - Dr. Dan Laitsch, dlaitsch@sfu.ca

Executive Director - Annabree Fairweather, executive.director@cufa.bc.ca

BC Institute of Technology Faculty & Staff Association: BCITFSA

<https://www.bcitfsa.ca>

The BCIT Faculty & Staff Association (BCITFSA) is a certified trade union and a member-driven association that represents 1,800+ full-time and part-time technological faculty and staff at the B.C. Institute of Technology (BCIT). The BCITFSA has worked since 1964 for excellent working conditions for all members through representation, negotiation, and advocacy. The well-being of BCIT as a unique educational institution in British Columbia is at the heart of our work.

President - Colin Jones, cjones@bcit.ca

Executive Director - Michael Conlon, mconlon@bcit.ca

Movement of United Professionals: MoveUp

<https://moveuptogether.ca>

The Movement of United Professionals (MoveUP) represents more than 12,000 union members at public and private sector companies in Western Canada. MoveUP is Local 378 of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE-SEPB).

Vice-President - Christy Slusarenko, cslusarenko@moveuptogether.ca

Union Representative - Nathan Beausoleil, nbeausoleil@moveuptogether.ca

BC Government & Service Employees Union - Component 7

<https://www.bcgeu.ca/component-7>

Component 7 is the Education, Scientific, Technical and Administration unit of BC GEU, and includes members who work in colleges and institutes as instructors and support staff, in private environmental testing laboratories, legal services, and other related fields. Employers include community colleges, the B.C. Institute of Technology, the Justice Institute of B.C., private labs, BC NDP Caucus and Constituency Offices, legal services to the public and many more.

Vice President Component 7 - Cindy Battersby, Cindy.Battersby@bcgeu.ca

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC: FPSE

<https://www.fpse.ca/>

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators is the provincial voice of 10,000 faculty and staff at BC's teaching universities, colleges, institutes and private sector institutions.

President - Brent Calvert, president@fpse.ca

Secretary Treasurer - Sean Parkinson, secretary-treasurer@fpse.ca