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The BCITFSA and its members' workplaces are located on unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x̣m̄əθkwəȳəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.



Colin Jones
PRESIDENT & CHIEF NEGOTIATOR
BCITFSA

STATE OF THE UNION: FOLLOW OUR LEAD

There's no denying reality: BCIT's financial deficit is a problem. While some post-secondary institutions have seen enrolment – particularly international-student enrolment – return to pre-pandemic levels, BCIT has not. The Institute is on-track for a third consecutive annual deficit. Like most post-secondaries in Canada, BCIT grew overly dependent on the three (or so) times multiplier of international-student tuition—a process that traces back decades provincially and nationally, meant to recoup losses associated with chronic underfunding.

The province mandates that post-secondary institutions run balanced budgets. With BCIT's third year of approved deficits, the BC government is expecting a plan for the Institute to get back in the black. With no significant increase in BCIT's operating grant in the forecast, the Institute will need to look to FSA members, and other workers in the BCIT community, to provide insight and advice on the path forward.

FSA faculty and staff run the programs, work with the students, know their industries and their requirements, are professionals in their fields, and can advise management about saving and generating money. Institute management is rightly looking to us for ideas. We didn't create the problem, but we can provide our expertise to help turn around BCIT's financial outlook.

The FSA, along with the other unions on campus, has strongly advocated for a consultative approach to addressing financial issues at BCIT. The Institute has weathered storms in the past thanks to the co-operation of faculty, staff, and management. We want to see BCIT thrive and we know our efforts are essential.

At the same time, FSA members rightly expect transparency from the employer throughout this process and for BCIT to respect our Collective Agreement, including members' and Departments' rights to consultation. BCIT's deficit in no way weakens our Collective Agreement or lessens the employer's obligations to abide by it.

If you have concerns about changes to work conditions, workload, selection, advancement, or anything that seems questionable or a departure from usual practices, you can ask your manager directly (if you are comfortable doing so) and you can contact us at fsa@bcit.ca. We will get through this challenging time together.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Labour Relations Case Studies

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS: FINDING AND EXORCISING IMPROPER LABOUR RELATIONS LANGUAGE

This is one of those situations where an eye for detail greatly helped a group of our members. Thanks to FSA members that sit on the Institute Placement Committee, along with the FSA Labour Relations team, a legacy error restricting the initial placement of some Tech Staff was recently identified and redressed. The error placed an unnecessary restriction on the earnings of these members, violating recently agreed-upon Collective Agreement language.

The error has its roots in changes to our contract that were established in the second most recent round of bargaining. Prior to the signing of the BCIT/FSA 2019-22 Collective Agreement, contract language existed limiting the initial placement of Tech Staff to certain barriers, which were removed in the 2019-22 Collective Agreement. Recently, however, FSA

members on the Institute Placement Committee noticed that the barriers mistakenly remained on the Tech Staff Placement form, a legacy of the previous contract: “The maximum step that may be granted upon initial placement is 6, 11, and 15 respectively.”

The members brought this to the attention of our FSA Labour Relations team, who was able to trace the history of the problem and communicate it to the employer. After some back and forth, BCIT addressed the situation resulting in several FSA members receiving retroactive step increases. As well, the Tech Staff Placement form has been corrected on the BCIT HR website.

If you find yourself sitting on a Tech Staff selection committee, please ensure you are not using the old, incorrect forms.

TAKING BACK ARTICLE 14 RIGHTS

Members of the School of Business + Media (SOBM) Department recently came to the FSA with questions regarding Departmental selection committee processes and rights. In some cases, newly formed selection committees were not comprised of members with the necessary expertise and knowledge of the program area that Department members expected. The story of this Department subsequently coming together to establish new practices that did suit their interests speaks to some of the broader educational goals of the FSA. In particular, it highlights just how much power FSA members, as a collective, have over the day-to-day functioning of their workspaces when they choose to enact their rights.

As we've highlighted in numerous media over the past two years, Article 14 of the BCIT/FSA Collective Agreement provides members with a host of possible rights—almost 40, by our count. If any of these rights go unexercised by the Department, however, they may instead fall within management's scope. This was the case in the SOBM Department regarding the selection committee process for FSA hires. Article 5.2.3 of the Collective Agreement provides FSA members the right to choose selection committee representatives how they see fit, and therefore to fill the committee with individuals who best understand the qualifications and skills necessary for the available position.

Under the guidance of FSA staff in Operations,



This is also a great time to remind all members of any FSA Department selection committees:

- to carefully check language on placement in the Collective Agreement, do not rely solely on the forms
- to contact the FSA if you have any questions or concerns
- to let new staff members know that they can dispute their initial placement during their first six months of employment
- above all, to remember that initial placement is the responsibility of the selection committee, not BCIT management.

One broader lesson is that the Collective Agreement is a document that may have a presence in many places throughout the Institute... and Union. Just as the work of the Union includes upholding the Collective Agreement in between bargaining, so too do we all need to be vigilant and look for errors that may arise. If you think that your Collective Agreement rights are being violated, please get in touch. Visit the contact page on our website for more information on how to do so.

Labour Relations, and Member Engagement, the Department was advised they needed to meet to make and approve a motion to take back this responsibility from management, allowable under Article 14. The Department created a Terms of Reference (ToR) for selection committees, consulting with and working from the template of another BCIT Department that had already done so. The SOBM Department members working on the ToR then called a meeting of the Department (all the FSA members and the related manager), giving required notice, allowing for feedback, then coming together as a group via recorded Zoom meeting to vote. The new ToR passed unanimously, giving members reclaimed control of selection committee appointments, which had defaulted years ago to management.

In the FSA's view, this short story has wider

implications. FSA members' ability to control Departmental practices extends well beyond selection committee appointments. Our members have robust rights when it comes to Departmental planning, including but not limited to coverage/workloading, vacation scheduling, performance appraisal, PD release, backfill, and several notification and consultation rights.

The FSA provides Departmental Rights and Responsibilities training if your Department is interested in better understanding and utilizing your Article 14 language. Write your Member Engagement Officer for more.



Staff Profile

BABA OGUNTOYE

First and foremost, I'm an ambitious and enthusiastic person who is passionate about improving myself and helping others achieve their goals. My biggest passions are travelling, fitness, and going for adventures in nature – so much so that I am also a fully qualified Personal Trainer! In addition, I appreciate people who treat others with respect and kindness, and would say that this is a key trait that I love to see in others.

As for my career and education, I have a strong background in law, having graduated with a Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree from the University of Leicester, with a year of study abroad at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. I have worked as a Paralegal in various areas of law, most recently in healthcare and public law at Hill Dickinson LLP and London Ambulance Service NHS Trust. I have gained valuable experience in debt recovery, legal research and drafting, inquest law, Court of Protection matters, compliance, and have handled complex and sensitive cases with professionalism and diligence. I enjoy the way that I am able to use the law to help people find solutions.

In my spare time, I was also a Director of Artist Management. My role involved me overseeing the talent acquisition and development of emerging and established artists for Elusive Festival, an ongoing event that I co-created in March 2020 in Kent, England. I collaborated with a diverse and dynamic team of festival organizers, promoters, and performers, and leveraged my interpersonal and organizational skills to ensure the smooth and successful execution of the festival. I still support the team from Canada when I can.

How long have you worked at the FSA?

I started at the FSA in November 2023.

What motivates your work here?

I'm passionate about helping people be treated fairly in all walks of life and keen to learn more about how I can do so in the field of labour.

Are there differences in work culture separating England and Canada?

I haven't noticed many to date but work culture in Canada feels more relaxed than in England.

Which living person do you most admire?

Steven Bartlett.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

The island of Koh Rong, in Cambodia. I spent some time working on the island when I was younger and the pace of life, along with the nature was beautiful.



One way to make meetings better:
Snacks and drinks!

If you had one million dollars to give to a cause, what would you select?

Save the Children.

Do you have a passion or hobby?
Watching football (soccer), playing rugby, and going to the gym.

Do you have a favourite book, film, and/or television show?
Favourite book: *Daily Stoic* by Ryan Holiday / Film: *Coach Carter*.

What do you like to do on the weekend?

Kick back, relax, spend time with friends and watch sports on the TV if I'm not out on an adventure.

What makes a workplace healthy?
Good people, kindness, and respect.

What inspires you?
My mum and the quality of life she has been able to bless me with, despite her difficult upbringing.

What is the greatest issue facing the labour movement?

The rise of AI and the potential consequences this will have on employment.

What was your first paying job?

Silver service waiter at weddings, aged 16.

If you had to choose an occupation other than your current one, what would it be?

Rugby player.

What could you use right now if someone would invent it for you?

A teleportation machine.





Member Profile

GABBIE BADE AND MARTHA VILLA MARTIN

Gabbie and Martha are newer members of the FSA and attended the October 17 Fair Employment Week pub night. Member Engagement Officer Matt Greaves interviewed Gabbie and Martha in November.

Is there anything you'd like FSA members to know about you?

GB: Prior to being a lab assistant (aka to my students, TA) for the Front-End Web Developer Program at BCIT's DTC, I was actually a student of the same program.

MVM: As a non-traditional front-end developer, I bring a trilingual background, fluently speaking French, Spanish, and English. Surprisingly, I don't teach spoken languages; my focus is on computer programming languages. With a decade of experience in the

education field, I joined BCIT to further contribute to the intersection of technology and learning.

How long have you worked at BCIT and in what position(s)?

GB: After completing my program in April of 2023, I started working as a TA in May. And next year, I will be teaching!

MVM: I have been at BCIT since September. Currently, I am a teaching assistant for the Front-End Development Program, and I will be taking on the role of teaching some courses in the upcoming year.

What motivates your work?

GB: I sincerely enjoy helping the students. Since I was once in their shoes too, I know how overwhelming the program can be. The support that I received from my instructors and classmates helped me grow both as a developer and as a person. I simply want to pay it forward.

MVM: My motivation primarily comes from a passion for education and technology. I'm excited about helping students learn and grow in the field of web development. It's a dynamic and ever-evolving industry, and I enjoy being a part of that journey with my students.

What has working on a non-regular (limited term) contract taught you?

GB: Reading your contract is not enough! There's a plethora of documentation, guidelines and more that can help me navigate my position better. In my past contracts in other companies, I always felt like I was going in blind, and I'm so glad that it is not the case this time around.

MVM: Working on a limited-term contract has taught me to be adaptable and make the most of the time I have here at BCIT. It has emphasized the importance of making a positive impact and fostering meaningful connections with students in a relatively short span of time.

What accomplishment has given you the most pride?

GB: I guess successfully switching my career trajectory. I was in advertising and marketing for almost a decade and during that time. I knew that I wanted to go into technology, but I have always felt like it was too late. And now, here I am helping students. Pretty cool!

MVM: Beyond the fact that I became a permanent resident (now a Canadian citizen) and experienced a considerable amount of commitment, stress, and concessions to reach that point, my next proudest accomplishment has been successfully transitioning into a teaching role at BCIT. It marks a significant step in my career, and I look forward to the opportunity to inspire and guide future web developers.

If you could do one thing, what would it be?

GB: Travel the world!

MVM: If I could do one thing right now, it would be to road trip around North America with my dog and husband.

What lesson has working at BCIT taught you?

GB: There is so much room for growth. Even as an employee, I am learning a lot, and that goes beyond just front-end development.

MVM: There are always different ways to interact with students. Some prefer in-person

discussions, while others lean towards online interactions. As an educator, it's my responsibility to adapt my teaching approach to accommodate these diverse preferences, ensuring the success of all students.

What's one quick way to make working at BCIT better?

GB: I have not been with BCIT for a long time, so I cannot think of anything just yet. If I do think of something, I'll make sure to reach out to the FSA.

MVM: Encourage more collaboration and knowledge sharing among faculty, staff, and students. It would also be great to have more team building events. Building a strong sense of community and support can enhance the overall experience.

What is the greatest issue facing new workers at BCIT?

GB: The cost of living for sure. Whether you work remotely or in-person, it has just gotten so costly to transit or to even have the space for a home office.

MVM: The greatest issue facing new workers at BCIT may be the adjustment to the fast-paced academic environment and the demands of teaching or supporting students effectively.

One word to describe the FSA?

GB: Community

MVM: Welcoming

Which person do you most admire, living or dead, and why?

GB: There are so many, but I guess Grace Hopper—a pioneer in programming, and an inspiration for women in tech.

MVM: I admire my mom, who has consistently shown exceptional resilience and hard work in facing numerous challenging situations throughout her life. She will forever hold the most significant place in my heart.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

GB: I love beaches and Japanese food, so Okinawa.

MVM: If I could live anywhere, it would be Vancouver. I fought to stay in Canada, and being here aligns with my aspirations. However, if considering another place to start anew, it would be Switzerland. The stunning landscapes and proximity to my family make it an appealing choice.

What is the best thing you have read or watched or listened to recently?

GB: So just a disclaimer, this is not very academic, but I am in a major *Bluey* phase right now. I know it is a kid's show, but it is so good and has so much depth. I never knew how much I could cry over a blue Australian cartoon dog.

MVM: This past week, I've been learning fantastic CSS advanced techniques from one of my favorite YouTubers, Kevin Powell.

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What was your first paying job?

GB: I was a tutor for grade schoolers when I was in university.

MVM: My first paying job was working as a server during my first college years.

Do you have a non-work-related passion or hobby? What is it?

GB: I love baking, but lately I have been learning how to sew. I have successfully made some curtains (real hard, I know), a skirt, and a top—they're not all winners, but I am having a lot of fun with it.

MVM: I have been passionate about flamenco dancing for many years and have performed in various events in Vancouver. Additionally, I enjoy activities such as hiking, skiing, and creating paper art through quilling.

What makes a workplace healthy?

GB: Just being able to ask questions and getting answers right away. As an employee, being heard makes such a difference.

MVM: A healthy workplace is one where there is open communication, a supportive atmosphere, work-life balance, and opportunities for growth and development.

If you had to choose an occupation other than your current one, what would it be?

GB: Complete curveball? Like if I have a reset button in life and the chance to just try something else, I would love to be pastry chef.

MVM: If I had to choose an occupation other than my current one in education or web development, I would run or work at a shelter for wildlife. I have a deep love for animals, and creating a rescue for them would be a fulfilling and meaningful pursuit for me

What's your favourite place on the campus?

GB: The tech collider. I always see something fun brewing there and it is also a great spot for me, both to work and chill.

MVM: My favorite place is also the Tech Collider.

The future of public post-secondary education is...

GB: exciting.

MVM: likely to be increasingly shaped by digital advancements, including the integration of AI. This adaptation aims to meet the evolving needs of students and industries, leveraging technological innovations for enhanced learning experiences.

If you could learn something new, what would it be?

GB: I want to learn Blender 3D.

MVM: High up on my list is a deeper understanding of accessibility in technology. I have a strong desire to contribute to helping people with disabilities, recognizing that technology is not yet optimized to assist these minorities effectively. While the list of what to learn next as a web developer is extensive and will never end, some of my current

priorities include mastering SEO, gaining proficiency in Adobe tools, and be quicker at developing websites.

If you could have dinner with any person, living or dead, who would it be and why?

GB: I would cheat here a bit and have dinner with my whole family, we live in various parts of the globe, and I always cherish our time together.

MVM: My mom. Her incredible kindness, hard work in creating a safe environment, and constant support with my homework have shaped who I am. Thanks to her, I take pride in my proficiency in French grammar, a skill that even earned me a prize in my younger years.

What's the most important thing for the FSA membership to know about working at BCIT?

GB: You have, and you will get, a lot of support.

MVM: It's a dynamic and supportive community that values education and innovation. New workers can look forward to meaningful experiences and opportunities to grow here.



Board Member Profile

JOE BOYD

Joe's first degrees were in Physics at the University of Toronto, before heading off travelling and teaching high school and adult ed. He then did a Masters in Library Studies at UBC, working as a corporate librarian and knowledge manager at engineering fuel cell companies, and now at BCIT for 17 years as Research Liaison in Applied Research at Burnaby Campus. Joe is a Director at Large on the FSA Board, his third time on the Board, and is a Tech Rep and founding member of CARAS, the FSA Caucus on Applied Research and Advanced Studies.

What does a Research Liaison do?

I help support research at BCIT by connecting researchers, faculty and students across the Institute and with funding and potential collaborators. This support takes various forms: sitting on institute funding committees like the Institute Research Committee and International Mobility Fund Committee, managing the applied research websites, reporting data and stories on projects to external organizations and through BCIT News, organizing tours at CARI.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

I want to ensure the needs of researchers at BCIT are being met, and that specialized faculty are well represented. More broadly, I want to help build community.

How do you build community?

Well, sitting on a lot of committees helps. Institute committees, supporting and providing funding for faculty initiatives: research, teaching & learning, international travel, microcredentials. And volunteering, with the Green Team, Guichon Creek Day, Convocation. Mostly helping others meet their goals.

What's the most important thing for faculty researchers to know?

That it's not impossible. There are supports like the Applied Research Liaison Office (ARLO) and School Research Committees to help researchers find funding and time for their projects, and probably others at BCIT interested in collaborating with them. Please reach out to me directly and I'll see what I can do to help you, and connect you to what you need.

What's your favourite part of campus?

My favourite outside space is the big planter area below Tim Horton's and the Breezeway. Inside it's Mi Chap Tukw, the Indigenous Gathering Place, "a comfortable, welcoming and safe space for students, families and staff", and for me, very calming.

What outside interests do you have?

I cycle a lot, road bike, and have started kayaking. I'm also part of the Still Moon Arts Society, an organization that brings together art, environment and community in the Still Creek and Renfrew-Collingwood area of Vancouver. I've become involved with some of their community art projects, messy projects: cob shed building, living willow sculpture weaving, which exercises very different parts of my brain, and body.



SHORT-TERM DEVELOPMENT LEAVE AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

Article 10.6 contains some of the most well-utilized language in our Collective Agreement (CA). The Article grants certain FSA members up to six (6) weeks per year to attend conferences, courses, or visit other educational institutions or industry, all of which is at the employee's regular rate of pay. Until the most recent CA, ratified in July 2023, this benefit was available only to Technical Staff and Assistant Instructors, however, though not for lack of effort on the FSA's part. Going back a number of years, FSA bargaining teams had attempted to address the absence of Specialized Faculty in this benefit, which created a significant leave imbalance within our membership. With this balanced over the summer, FSA Board and staff turned our attention to communicating the changes. This is perhaps especially important information for Specialized Faculty, but the following may also be applicable to folks interested in looking at their 10.6 processes too.

The administration of 10.6 leave is controlled by Departments, in other words: all the FSA members and related Manager in one of the units designated as a Department in Appendix III of the Collective Agreement. In late September, the FSA held a training session with President Colin Jones and member-administrator in ITS Andrew Jackson, which functioned as a sort of "best practices" or "how to" training. We posted materials from the presentation on our blog on September 28, 2023, for interested members.

Contained therein are protocols for how to apply for 10.6 leave, how it's adjudicated, what the communication process will be, the composition of the standing committee, and the appeal process if member-applicants are unhappy with the outcome. If readers are interested in the finer points, please follow the QR code in this piece or navigate to our website to search through our posts. They're displayed in reverse chronological order.



FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK PUB NIGHT

On Tuesday, October 17, 2023, the FSA co-hosted a Fair Employment Week (FEW) pub night with the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE), the UBC Faculty Association, the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC), and the Langara Faculty Association. About 20 – 25 FSA members attended, with the total number entering Steamworks Pub's Uber Lounge closer to 50 – 60. The FSA has participated in FEW events for the better part of a decade, largely through our Caucus on Part-Time Studies (COPTS). Broadly organized by our national affiliate Canadian Association of University

Teachers (CAUT), FEW events are designed to raise awareness of precarious employment on campus and support local organizing efforts to improve the working conditions of non-regular faculty and staff like our members working in Part-Time Studies, now Flexible Learning.

The October 17 event celebrated the work of non-regular faculty and staff in local post-secondary institutions while providing an opportunity to build solidarity between unionized workers in the sector. Through an assortment of canapés, precariously positioned post-secondary workers in BC discussed how to better our lot by forcing

employers to seriously value our work. We strategized and celebrated. Speakers like the FSA's Colin Jones, FPSE's Brent Calvert, and Annabree Fairweather from CUFA BC highlighted the need for solidarity and leveraging the collective power of non-regular faculty. Indeed, all speakers expressed interest in combining forces to advocate for precarious members. The FSA hopes the event will generate momentum for our efforts to support members working in PTS and fellow travellers across the Lower Mainland.

In Solidarity.



Vision

A dynamic and supportive educational community.

Mission

Excellent working conditions for all members through representation, negotiation, and advocacy.

Values

- **Integrity:** We are transparent and accountable in our decisions and actions.
- **Solidarity:** We stand together to protect our rights and achieve collective change.
- **Empowerment:** We equip our members to understand and advocate for their rights.
- **Equity:** We recognize diversity and pursue inclusion and justice for all members.

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*Positions at time of publication



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