

TRUOLFA NEWS

2010 December

<http://www.truolfa.ca>

Do take a look at our website (address above). There you will find, in addition to interesting new photos (!), the complete changes to the Collective Agreement etc.

Watch for new Collective Agreement summary and ballot soon! Vote by the end of December!

Note regarding payroll:

For Distance Faculty Members ... everything they enter in as of midnight on Wed Dec 15th will be included in the last pay of December (payday Dec 30th). Anything entered after this will be on paid on the first pay in January (payday Jan 13th)

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- Report for FPSE Committee on Governance Nov.13, 2010
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- Report of FPSE Education Policy Committee
- Vacancies on FPSE committees: expenses are covered.

Pension

A member can now pay into the Pension Plan for more than 35 years. This means that that at 2% per year, one can achieve a greater than 70% pension, if one has started early enough. If a member works for TRUOL and for another college which is in the Plan then it appears that one can pay into the Plan for greater than the maximum provincial scale salary for a full-time person (because of the piece-work way we are paid). In other cases if a member works at 2 or more colleges which are in the Plan, the excess contributions over a maximum salary are returned.

One must retire from all colleges of the Plan in order to begin receiving a pension. If one is rehired, the pension can continue, but at least in our case, the seniority at TRUOL that one had will have ceased.

At the end of the year in which a member reaches 71 years of age, the pension will be paid, since one has been deemed to have retired (just as funds have to begun to be removed from RRSP at that age). One can continue to work, but will not be paying into the Pension Plan.

Weldon Cowan has provided Power Point slides of his talk; if you would like them sent to you, send a request to me: beharris@tru.ca

Report on 2010 Governance Conference - Nov 13, 2010

The session started at 9:00 am with a welcome from George Davidson, FPSE Secretary-Treasurer. An initial panel presentation on governance issues established the challenges faced by Senate. Cindy Oliver President of FPSE, Elizabeth Hodgson PhD Associate Professor at UBC and Jim Turk Executive Director of Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). A second panel met after lunch that shared their experiences at individual Universities. The key points that I picked up from the conference included:

1. The signed Collective Agreements must be followed
2. Support Senate volunteers
3. Be active with your Senate representation
4. Be patient when embarking on change
5. Become educated about Senate, Sub Committees, agendas and minutes
6. Recognize that Management may be directing Senators to support programs and to reject other initiatives
7. Use Court decisions to support our position on Governance
8. Lobby efforts to increase funding with our MLAs

My overall recommendation: Senators and wanna-be Senators need to attend FPSE Governance conferences on a regular basis.

John O'BRIEN

BC Federation of Labour Meeting Nov. 29-Dec.3

Raiding (trying to represent members of another union) is apparently common: last year the BC Nurses Union was ousted from the BCFed for raiding. This meeting raiding was an issue due to raiding several years ago by NUPGE, the National Union of Provincial Government Employees with the BCGEU & HAS (Health Sciences Assoc) being BC affiliates. Those members were allowed to participate in the convention, because they were convinced to postpone resigning until January 2011. In protest to that one-month cooling off period, another union (CUPE-BC) objected to those unions participating in the BC Fed if they were going to be out soon so they did not join the convention. Their assigned large number of seats remained empty the entire convention; behind the scenes were people working to resolve the dispute.

FPSE is not into raiding but has organized some ESL (English as a Second Language) instructors at two private institutions in a new local of FPSE. IF you know someone who teaches at such a place, please let us know, as FPSE needs personal contacts to attempt to expand the organizing effort. What we desire for ourselves we desire for all.

Carol James was a guest speaker at the convention, and of course we know what happened soon after. We seem to be our own worst enemies.

The BC Fed meeting will hereafter be held only in even-numbered years in Vancouver (which has large enough capacity for the meeting). Necessarily smaller meetings will be held around the province during the odd-numbered years. One person speaking in favour of the change said It is NOT the Vancouver Federation of Labour

Be Harris attended the meeting of hundreds of delegates, along with other representatives from FPSE.

Workplace Health and Safety meeting Nov. 19-Nov.20

An accident in an Open-Learning members work-place home office might be covered by WCB. Even stress is a health and safety hazard. There may be reason to document and file compensation claims; no co-worker would be around to suggest it to you, so try to think of it.

Submitted by Be Harris

FPSE Education Policy Committee (FPSE Standing Committee) November 19-20, 2010.

1) Phillip Legg, FPSE liaison reported.

a) The Ministry of Advanced Education is now split into two: 1) Universities and 2) Colleges and Institutes. This move seems to be not carefully thought out.

b) FPSE has been working on 1) Bargaining re provincial Common Table and provincial bargaining, roadblock of NetZero, looking for things beside compensation such as regularizing language, 2) Campaign for non-regular faculty, 3) Changes in institutional governance, and 4) Membership revitalization push at UFV as an example of engaging and educating membership about the Collective Agreement (CA) and the benefits it provides. Presidents of Locals were asked to give the top 10 things of their CA and to remind faculty that CAs didn't just fall from the sky; their rights are a product of many rounds of collective bargaining.

2) Reports from each Local. The following themes were common to many of the Locals: Turnover in Senior Management, Increase in enrolment, Increase in international students, Bargaining slow, greater demand for faculty to adopt technology in their teaching.

3) The big issue for the meeting was the Learning environment (LE). The issue of the LE came up when FPSE was dealing with the effects of increasing class sizes and realized that they needed to educate themselves on how teaching was being carried out in each institution, the process and environment by which the learning outcomes occur, and how they related to workload.

Some of the factors discussed were: Diversity of student body (disability, immigrant, literacy levels, indigenous culture, cultural and religious diversity), issues of waitlists, competition with private institutions who are not providing support such as libraries and counselling, the external environment including reduced government funding resulting in decreased funding for libraries and student support and counselling, increased utilization resulting in increased class sizes, changes in the learner experience (fewer assignments, more open-ended questions, and major drop in use of databases), less support for faculty and less training to cope with demand for increased use of technology in teaching, faculty burnout, space shortages (night and Saturday classes), requests by administrators for increased adoption technology in delivery such as videoconferencing leading to issues of copyright, and increased use of BC Campus (students being asked to pick up courses at BC Campus when there are people on campus who can do that teaching).

A paper will be written as a base for a Workshop in the February 2011 FPSE Spring Conference.

Veda Abu-Bakare, TRUOLFA Rep.

Delegates are needed for 2 FPSE committees: second (and final) meeting of this academic year is Feb. 25 and 26; many FPSE committees meet only twice a year (Friday evening and Saturday). It is expected that a person who attends will write a brief report to be included in the next issue of this newsletter:

Human Rights & International Solidarity Committee (HRISC)
Status of Women Committee (SWC)

To volunteer to represent TRUOLFA at one of the above committees, please contact John O'BRIEN; jobrien@tru.ca

Comments and suggestions regarding the newsletter are encouraged:
beharris@tru.ca Thanks.