

BCOUFA Newsletter

November 2008

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President's Report

It was great to meet many of you in Kamloops at the general meeting after the workshop.

For those of you who were not there the issues covered included:

- The continued reluctance of management to call us Faculty.
- The need for more help – **we still need a meeting secretary** and would also like people to become involved in researching issues for bargaining and to begin training as shop stewards.
- The need to be vigilant about contract violations. If you feel you have been wronged, PLEASE contact any member of our executive.
- The need to be part of the campus groups that have been given academic control over us.
- Removal of our old website and soon to be started new website. The favored domain name was: 'truolfa.ca'.

Meetings:

1. **With Dr. Kathleen Scherf**, new TRU President.

I met with Dr. Scherf the day before her installation as our University President.

The issues we discussed included:

- Dissatisfaction with our title as 'tutor'. She mentioned that she had been told (presumably by someone in her management group) that TRUFA (the campus faculty association) owns the title 'Faculty'. The reaction from the TRUFA executive when I told them that was: 'What kind of b*** s*** is that!'
- The unhappiness of our members with how management has been twisting the meaning of our contract wording and the consequent large number of grievances. I also mentioned that several members have been getting fed up with how they are treated and how they are allocated work, thus a number have been quitting TRU- OL.
- Her current vision of OL's place in TRU. She stated, tentatively, that she would like to see more integration but wants to give herself some time to examine the issues.

2. **With TRUFA Executive.**

Some of our BCOUFA Executive had an informal breakfast meeting with some of the TRUFA Executive while we were in Kamloops. It was quite interesting in that we found out how some of the decisions on (academics and hiring credentials ???) were made and

that TRUFA also has a large number of grievances. At one of the tables there was also a discussion on whether or not our unions should merge.

I'd also like to note that Donna Petrie (TRUFA President) and I are in frequent contact regarding issues that impact both groups.

3. **FPSE meetings.**

I have actively involved with the FPSE President's Council. It's a great place to get information and tips about various issues that affect all of us. FPSE has been approving financial help for our grievance cases that reach the arbitration stage – none have been refused to date. And our staff representative, David Piasta, has been invaluable in helping us with our issues and in providing training. FPSE also covers travel expenses for faculty association representatives to attend their meetings and special events.

FPSE is also one of the partners in our **College Pension Plan** so we are apprised of what is happening on that front. The main part of the pension fund is in good shape in spite of the current financial turmoil (see: college.pensionsbc.ca). However, the Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA) needs an infusion of funds. The IAA is what pays for the annual inflation adjustments to the base pension amounts and also pays for extended health and dental benefits for retirees.

Three of us (Trudy Temple, Don Stanley and myself) attended the FPSE Bargaining Forum held in Richmond November 7-8. During the Forum the faculty association representatives reviewed the strategies used in past bargaining rounds and brainstormed about strategies for the 2010 round coming up.

June Williams, president

FPSE Equity Audit

Cindy Oliver, President
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC

The FPSE Equity Audit has been posted on our website www.fpse.ca<<http://www.fpse.ca>>. We are encouraging members across the province to participate in the Audit by simply clicking on the Equity Audit icon on the right-hand side of the FPSE web page and follow the instructions to complete the questionnaire. The Audit is part of our on-going commitment to research and develop equity strategies for our members. Over the years, mostly through Convention resolutions, post-secondary educators continue to stress the importance of greater equity in their workplaces. The Audit questionnaire will provide FPSE with the data necessary to substantiate our efforts to identify and resolve workplace equity problems.

Two important points about this Equity Audit need to be stressed to all our members. First, the Audit questionnaire has been designed to guarantee the confidentiality of all respondents. Second, the more questionnaires that are completed, the more useful the data becomes. For that reason we want to encourage the greatest level of participation possible.

I am asking all locals to circulate this email alert to their members, highlight the Equity Audit in your regular bulletins to members and provide a link to our home page so that they can fill out the questionnaire. Thanks in advance for your support on this very important research initiative.

Grievances

For your information here are some of the grievances and issues BCOUFA has been dealing with:

- Pay for Senior tutors. Management unilaterally reduced the paid Senior Tutor hours in contravention of the hours specified in their individual contracts. This is just about resolved. The Senior Tutors will receive back pay and continued payment of their contract hours.
- Senior Tutor role in academic consultation and decision committees. Management took these duties unto themselves.
- Increased workload without increased pay. This grievance has gone to arbitration hearings and we are awaiting the decision of the arbitrator.
- Inappropriate posting of course work. We have been grieving all instances of inappropriate posting and allocation of work as we become aware of them. Management has been posting available work in a number of courses which should have been automatically offered to members currently teaching the courses. Forcing members to apply for available TAP in their courses is frustrating to the members and also, in some cases, may put them at risk of not getting the work. Management is now properly allocating web TAP to members teaching the print version of their courses. However, management is still not automatically allocating TAP to members who taught prior versions of courses which have been revised, who teach the web version of courses that have print TAP which become available, and for face-to-face courses which are to be offered in a web version.
- Splitting existing TAP. One member had his TAP reduced by half when management hired a second person for the courses. On a similar front, management used to split course TAP when a member who taught a course at 100% TAP resigned the course. Management is now posting and hiring such work at 100% TAP as it should be.
- Hiring of administrators and program coordinators to do BCOUFA work. This should not happen.
- Changing credentials needed by current members to be deemed 'qualified' to get more course work. Management has refused, so far, to 'grandfather' current members teaching in a particular field of study, stating that the members must have the new requirements (e.g. more advanced degrees) to get further work as it becomes available. Experience and past history in teaching equivalent or more advanced courses are not taken into consideration – contrary to how the current faculty (in TRUFA???) are treated. Campus faculty have been grandfathered and are not prevented from teaching further or different courses in their specialty.
- Safety of members. An incarcerated student was able to obtain his tutor's name and home address, causing concerns about safety (possibly from the incarcerated student's associates and from the student himself if/when he leaves prison).
- OL courses being taught without involvement of a BCOUFA member. (are their examples?)

Report of FPSE Ed Policy Committee November 14-15, 2008

By Veda Abu-Bakare

The greater part of the meeting was taken up by local reports from which arose the following issues:

1. **Marked increase in management positions and salaries.** Phillip Legg and Jeff McKeil, staff reps at FPSE working on a report for March, 2009.
2. **Funding cuts, reductions, layoffs and cancellation of programs** (Selkirk, CNC, VCC).
3. **Disability Support Services directly influencing grading** - instructors told not to take marks off for spelling and grammar (Camosun).
4. **Strong pressure to list all courses as PLAR** (Camosun). Argument is that new immigrant labour coming to Canada... Works for skills-based trades but not for academic courses.
6. **Rank and title at the institutions recently made into universities** very complicated and divisive. At UFV, rank and tenure known as 'rancor tenure'. TRU rep said that there are 31 documents relating to rank and tenure making their way up the channel. Some of the new universities being encouraged to adopt the TRU system of bipartite and tripartite.
7. **CE courses and programs not in bargaining unit.** Also many positions from special funding such as the Aboriginal Service Plan not in bargaining unit.
8. **FPSE having a special conference on Governance**, Feb 2, 2009.
9. **FPSE Equity Audit.** From www.fpse.ca (more information above, in president's report)

Report from FPSE committee on Workplace Health, Safety and Environment Meeting October 31, November 1, 2008 Attended by Be Harris

Although we are not (often) in a building provided by our employer, we do sit at computers and desks. A workshop "Ergonomics and Back Health" by Anne-Kristina Arnold (School of Kinesiology, SFU) during the meeting gave some suggestions :

After sitting a long time do not get up to immediately lift something.

Move keyboard to be in front when entering lots of data on the numeric keypad

Bring shoulders down to neutral –ie when using mouse

We are built to MOVE—try to do some work from a standing position

Do not twist neck to see screen, nor twist back to see screen (ie when lecturing) There is a "sit-stand stool".

Have computer screen perpendicular to the window, not facing it nor the window behind it

Adjust the height of chair—put a foot board to raise the feet. (want knees not higher than hips).

Top of screen should be at eye height BUT if using bifocals, lower the screen.

If inputting documents, the document holder should be at eye height, adjustable and on

Dominate-eye side. To determine your dominate eye: with elbow straight, from a looney-size hole with thumb and finger, centered on something. Then close each eye and see which eye KEEPS the image stationary. That is your dominant eye.

CSA office-ergonomics guidelines exist—and can be found in libraries.

Professional & Scholarly Development Committee (Oct 24-25, 2008)

Rosalie Hilde

The one and a half days of meetings have expanded my view in the importance of Professional and Scholarly development. The meetings covered a range of topics that included:

- FPSE Education Program
- FPSE Website
- Scholarly Activity Conference Report and De-brief
- Workshop and speakers suggestion for the next conference
- Development of a white paper on scholarly activity.

It was especially interesting in the discussions as well as the presentation by TRUFA about what “scholarly activity” is and how the “scholarly activity” has been or will be used for bargaining table when it becomes criteria for appointment and promotion within the University environment.

Please NOTE:

We expect to send newsletters frequently. . If you have something you would like to report or see in a newsletter to our members, please contact Be Harris, Membership Secretary (beharris@tru.ca; VOIP 6925)

THANK YOU.
