



President's Message An Engaged FSA Membership



Colin Jones, President

In an era where we hear so much about *engagement* - employee engagement, student engagement, and community engagement, just for starters - I am forced to wonder what that really means for us as a member-based association. As noble as "engagement" sounds, I think we are pursuing, at its most basic meaning, *involvement*. And on the road to *involvement*, it's tempting to settle for *participation*.

To *participate* is to take action - by signing up for and attending a workshop, for example. Someone who is *involved* takes it to the next step - to internalize the material and apply it. Finally, someone who is *engaged* will take it a step (or 5!) farther - set personal goals, make it part of their lifestyle, try to make change, and share what they are doing with others. It's that *change* - that level of *engagement* - that we strive for, that I hope for from my co-FSA members.

My preferred definition of *engagement* stems from mechanics: *the state of interlocking*. When it comes to the BCITFSA, my vision is for our members to be engaged with their union, as gears are interlocked in a machine. As one turns, so does the other. In fact, neither can move without having an effect on the other. This means that when one member, or a group of members, sees the possibility for improving their working conditions, their engagement has the potential to act as advocacy for others as well.

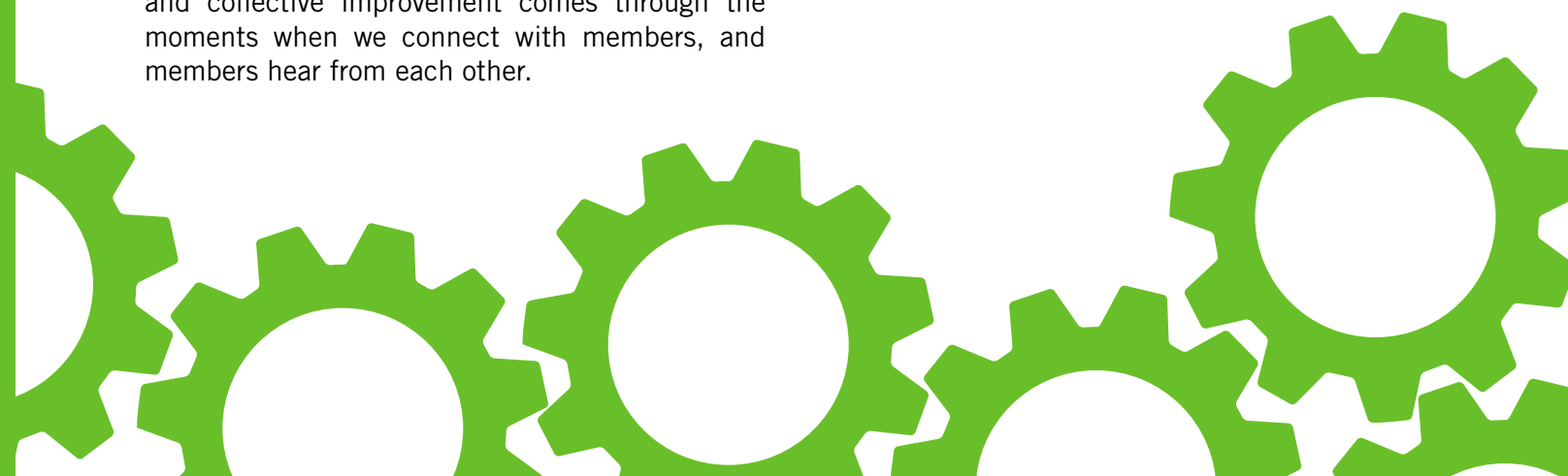
In a membership with interests as diverse as ours, and with needs that change as often as our members', it is no easy feat to find those interlocking interests. With the possible exception of parking, there are few issues that universally impact - and unite! - a membership as varied as ours.

This is where I turn to communications - informing members, reaching out to you, being here to listen to you, and finding out what is important to you. Finding the sweet spot of individual interests and collective improvement comes through the moments when we connect with members, and members hear from each other.

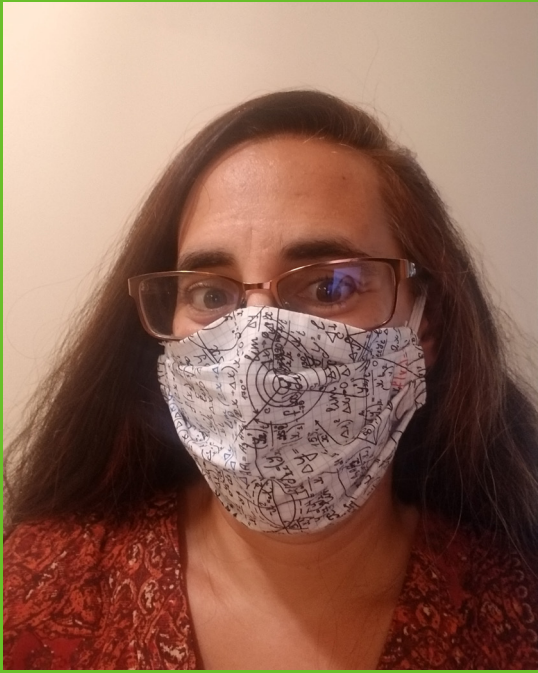
In those opportunities for communication and connection we build relationships, which are crucial for true engagement.

I'm often asked whether I enjoy working from home. Sure, there are some benefits, but my story quickly moves to what I miss most - being engaged with others. It's strange to confess, but I miss the lineup at Tim Horton's. I miss walking across campus, late for yet another meeting. Those are the chances to chat, smile or wave to someone. I miss standing around the water cooler chatting with my colleagues. Those are the mechanisms of relationship-building, and are what serve an association like ours when we have to defend our rights and negotiate new ones.

All of this takes time. If I could give anything to all FSA members, it would be more time. Like gears, we need to be connected. Without connection and relationship, it is impossible to advocate for each other. My challenge to us all, is to step back from our individual circumstances, and rally for each other. Make 15-minutes - you'll never "find it" - for that virtual coffee break with a colleague, stay on Zoom a few minutes extra for some post-meeting chatter, and find other ways to connect with each other. Those moments will be what we need to build upon when an issue comes up that requires us to come together to change. We, like always, will rely on each other.



Member Profile



Brenda Fine

Brenda is an FSA member and faculty in BCIT's Mathematics Department. She has been an active Tech Rep for a number of years and a strong advocate for members working in a variety of conditions.

Brenda can often be spotted with her FSA mug around campus!

How long have you worked at BCIT?

12 years this coming fall!

What motivates your work?

I'm motivated by the knowledge that my students will be using math long after they graduate my course - and that it's up to me to provide the tools for them to do so effectively.

One word to describe the FSA?

Dedicated.

What lesson has working at BCIT taught you?

The value of strong leadership and solid teamwork in curriculum and course development. I'm lucky to have benefited from the insight of faculty whose skills and experience complement my own.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

I want to help keep my Department informed about our rights and responsibilities.

Which living person do you most admire?

JK Rowling. She achieved unimaginable success on her own terms, while staying true to her principles and never losing sight of her roots.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

A version of Vancouver in which I could own a house without winning the lottery.

What is the greatest issue facing BCIT?

Preparing students for a workforce that is changing more quickly than ever before.

What is the best book you have read recently?

Fiction - The Lost Man by Jane Harper, a gripping and atmospheric crime novel set in the Australian outback.
Non-Fiction - The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University by Benjamin Ginsberg, which is equally haunting but for entirely different reasons.

What was your first paying job?

Tutor at a Kumon Learning Centre when I was in high school.

One way to make meetings better:

Schedule them only as needed.

If you had \$1-million to give to a cause, what would you select?

Some kind of mentorship program that matches kids and teenagers with adults who share interests. I participated in one when I was in grad school and it was so rewarding for both me and my student.

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

Irish traditional music. I can occasionally be found playing fiddle at pub sessions around town.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Strong and respectful leadership. People give their best under good leaders, and every workplace challenge is manageable under a good boss.

What most inspires you?

Watching people come back from failure to achieve their goals. It takes guts and tenacity to persevere after major setbacks.

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

Definitely something involving a combination of creativity and technical problem solving. Maybe software engineering? But I'm really quite happy with my current career.

What's your favourite place on the campus you work at?

When I have some free time on a nice day, I like to take a stroll near Guichon Creek.

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

Flexible programs geared at so-called non-traditional students.

What is a course/class you would like to take?

Everything in the Forensic Science and Technology program looks fascinating.

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

A self-cleaning home.



From Your FSA Labour Relations Team: Employee Grievances (Article 3.4)

A grievance initiated by an employee, when done properly and in good faith, provides a mechanism to get your leaders to meet with you to address a problem and discuss solutions. If the grievance cannot be resolved, it could ultimately lead to arbitration, but that should not be the exclusive goal of an Employee Grievance ([See FSA Voice, Oct 2019, pp. 6-7: To Grieve or Not to Grieve](#)).

Below we outline how to do your investigation, write the grievance, prepare the evidence, consult with the FSA labour relations representative (LRR), and conduct yourself in step meetings.

Investigate

Begin by tracking, in detail, the incidents that led to a violation of the [Collective Agreement](#) (CA). Use this template, [Workplace Activity Report](#), and ask other Department members to use this report as well. Request information from your manager and take notes or follow up with an email confirmation.

Write the Grievance

Once you have determined that an article of the [Collective Agreement](#) (CA) has been violated and you have sufficient evidence, write the grievance by answering the following:

1. Which Article of the CA was violated? What incidents created the violation?
2. Who is involved in the disagreement?
3. Where did it happen?
4. Why now, i.e. what is the context of the events that brought us to this disagreement?
5. How to remedy the situation, according to the CA or by past practice?

Keep the grievance succinct, less than one page. Draft it like a letter, but cite Article 3.4, and indicate that this letter is a grievance. You will elaborate with evidence and details during the meetings at the various steps of the grievance.

Prepare the Evidence

You need evidence to support your case! For example, if an issue concerns the violation of a Departmental decision or practice, use minutes of the meeting where the decision/practice was made; if you have been told to perform duties in a manner that violates your rights under the CA, use an email thread where the manager tells you to do so.

Evidence presented at grievance meetings can be used in future meetings by the employer or union, so consider your evidence carefully before presenting it. If you are using evidence supplied to you by a co-worker, obtain their permission.

(cont.)

From Your FSA Labour Relations Team: Employee Grievances (cont.)

Consult with FSA Labour Relations

Now that you've written your grievance and determined which evidence you will use, and *before you submit your grievance*, [contact the FSA's labour relations team](#), with an advance copy of the grievance and evidence, and to discuss strategy.

While you may have an issue that pertains to a single person or situation in your department, an FSA Labour Relations Rep (LRR) will bring our perspective on how it impacts members of the entire bargaining unit. We may have useful information that pertains to the grievance, such as an arbitral award on a similar issue, a Memoranda of Agreement (MemAg) that informs your remedy, or other members facing similar issues.

Follow the Steps

The CA outlines three steps for the Employee Grievance process, before reaching arbitration. Each step, procedurally, mirrors the first, but involves different persons and carries different deadlines. Here are some best practices that apply to all steps and key differences in the later steps. *Peruse Article 3.4 for exact details.*

At each step, give the employer the written grievance; meet them in person, receive their decision in writing, and decide with an LRR whether to proceed. During each meeting you should present your grievance and evidence, listen to the employer's responses, explore remedies, and, if this is a later step, state why you are rejecting, in full or in part, the previous employer decision on your grievance.

Each meeting is an opportunity for you to present your issue to a different person with a fresh perspective on the matter. You may request to have an LRR accompany you or the LRR may decide it is imperative that a representative accompany you. Take good notes during the meeting! We will use them to evaluate the employer's decision at each step.

Your active participation in the process is important. At each step, you and an LRR may:

- accept or reject the employer's decision;
- proceed with, resolve, or withdraw the grievance;
- request more information from management or members.

However, you must adhere to timelines in the CA. Failing to do so will result in grievance forfeiture.

Finally, Article 3.4.3.1 shifts responsibility to an LRR to decide whether to advance the grievance. The grievor's participation at this step remains crucial; however, arbitration is an important legal responsibility of your union. We must consider the entire bargaining unit, as well as your specific case, before proceeding.

Employee grievances *and* their meetings at each step are *meant to be productive, not simply procedural*. Their purpose is to bring focused attention to an issue that might otherwise be overlooked and the ensuing discussions may lead to straightforward or creative solutions to right a wrong.

Did You Know?



Considering running for office? Did you know you can get time off work for your campaign?

Article 9.10 of the Collective Agreement allows for leave without pay for any employee who is seeking elected office for municipal, provincial, federal or Indigenous government. If an employee wins the election, they are entitled to further leave without pay while holding office. A member seeking this leave must provide notice in writing to the Institute.



End-of-Term Work on Part-Time Studies (PTS) Contracts

When you are teaching a Part-Time Studies (PTS) course on a PTS contract, what is a reasonable expectation of “end-of-term” work? Your contract ends on the last day of class, but you know you have many activities to complete after that date. How much is too much?

While this is a somewhat contentious topic, it's safe to say that PTS instructors should do “the expected” amount of work finishing off outstanding grading and submitting the grades, but they should not be required to do an “extraordinary” amount of work without additional compensation.

Finishing your outstanding grading for the assignments and exams that are listed on your course outline and submitting the final grades for the students enrolled in your class, are “reasonable” expectations. But, for any significant amount of work that goes beyond that, you should potentially receive some additional compensation. Some examples could include extra re-writes, formal grade re-assessments, student academic misconduct investigations, or, in some cases, the extra work needed to address student medical accommodations.

Check with your program head, program coordinator, or manager if you need clarity. If you require further advice, contact the FSA.



Best Practices

Board Member Profile



Joe Boyd

Joe first served on the FSA board of directors in 2010-12 and then was elected again earlier this year as a Director.

Joe is a highly engaged and participatory FSA member and is actively involved in both the FSA's Equity Caucus and the Caucus on Applied Research & Advanced Studies (CARAS).

Joe has also served as an FSA Tech Rep and has been instrumental in conveying his efforts as part of BCIT's Green Team & Bicycling Committee over to the FSA with presentations on the work of those groups at FSA meetings.

How long have you worked at BCIT?

13 years. I started at BCIT in Jan 2007.

What motivates your work?

Helping others, and learning something new.

One word to describe the FSA?

Engaged.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

Helping members (directly and by sharing what I know with other members of the Board and FSA staff) and learning more about BCIT.

What lesson has serving on the FSA board taught you?

There's a lot going on across BCIT and FSA staff work really hard to answer members concerns and questions and then share/apply the solutions with all members.

Which living person do you most admire?

My children, now young adults but even more my children somehow.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Hornby Island. A feeling of warm dryness, and calm: listening to the bark peel on an arbutus tree on a quiet summer afternoon, the rhythms of nature – eagles taking their first flights, the tides rising and falling, sunsets 'til late on a summer night.

What is the greatest issue facing BCIT?

Poor internal collaboration and communication, made harder now by (necessary) COVID-19 restrictions. I suppose a loss of collegiality.

What is the best book you have read recently?

The Alchemist, by Paulo Coelho. I'm not sure I understood it the first time so I'm reading it again.

What was your first paying job?

Library page – sorting and shelving books – at North York Public Library in Metro Toronto

One way to make meetings better:

Agenda, minutes and follow-up actions for every meeting, no matter how consequential or inconsequential the meeting.

If you had \$1-million to give to a cause, what would you select?

HUB Cycling, I guess. I don't have a particular cause but donate to several.

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

Cycling. Just riding.

What makes a workplace healthy?

A shared sense of community.

What most inspires you?

Observing nature.

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

Astronaut maybe, but I'm not focused enough, and decades too late in considering it.

What's your favourite place on the campus you work at?

The trails on the south side of Burnaby campus, and the big rock beside Guichon Creek, especially with the sun shining on it. The Great Hall is a favourite too. So – away from everything and in the middle of everything.

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

diverse, hopefully in a Diversity, Respect and Inclusion way, but also with multiple models of delivery – in person – online - virtual, part time - fulltime and in between, on campus – off campus. For BCIT the “get your hands dirty, learning by doing” way of education will always be important. The challenge will be in learning by doing while keeping those hands clean and socially isolated, at least for the near future, and possibly longer.

What is a course/class you would like to take?

Ecological Restoration

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

More time?

The FSA Landscape



Michael Conlon, FSA Executive Director

With the fall term well underway and the announcement that the BCIT Winter Term will also be delivered primarily remotely, it is clear that we will be dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic for, at least, the majority of this academic year. Almost imperceptibly faculty, staff, and students have shifted from a sense of crisis management to adjusting to a 'new normal.' All the while, anxieties remain high about the health and safety of our families, friends, and colleagues. These are challenging times with difficult days still ahead, but as I continue to learn about our members and BCIT I am consistently struck by the resilience and innovation at the core of what our members do. These signature elements of BCIT's mandate make the institution well positioned to address the economic, social, and cultural challenges that will emerge on the other side of this pandemic.

However, in the short term, some of the very real effects of the pandemic are starting to emerge. On Sept 29th, BCIT posted an announcement to the employee community on the financial outlook which includes – unsurprisingly – a shortfall. After years of declining provincial funding there is no doubt that this funding gap will be felt across the institution. In addition, like most other post-secondary institutions in BC and Canada, BCIT is facing a shortfall in revenue from international students. Like others in the sector, BCIT had become dependent on international students to address aforementioned provincial funding gaps. Despite the recent federal announcement reopening the border to international students the reality is that enrolment was down significantly for international students this fall and is unlikely to recover until Fall 2021 at the earliest.

On the provincial side, the government has spent heavily to ameliorate the economic effects of the pandemic as well as provide increased funding to the health care system. This increase in spending comes at a time when unemployment is over 10% and tax revenues

are down sharply. The net effect of those fiscal pressures is a forecast deficit of \$13 billion in the 2020-21 fiscal year. Given the crisis we are facing, there is widespread public support to carry a deficit of this magnitude. However, the reality is that the government will have to stem the tide of spending sooner or later and there is some concern that spending on higher education could be vulnerable to cuts. After fifteen years of either stagnant or declining funding, any reduction in the provincial share of funding for BCIT would be difficult to absorb. In the recent political campaign, neither major provincial party made post-secondary education a significant priority and it unlikely that we will see any substantial shift in policy regardless of who formed government in this strangest of elections*.

Amidst this uncertainty the good news is that BCIT has assured the FSA that there are no plans for layoffs. Given the realities faced by other institutions this is indeed good news for our members. However, the institute has also officially announced a policy of 'vacancy management' which will almost certainly pose workload issues for FSA members. BCIT staff and faculty already carry significant workloads and in most areas of the institute there is little room for any expansion in workload.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing workload challenges in some Departments and the pivot to remote teaching has substantially increased the workload of all staff and faculty at BCIT. Fortunately, there is strong language in our [Collective Agreement](#) about the need for robust consultation and collegial processes are in place to ensure faculty and staff have a voice in any changes to their workplace. In addition to these more immediate realities, I believe it is also important to keep an eye on the long-term risk of burnout and other mental health challenges members will face in the wake of the pandemic.

With bargaining now complete and a full FSA staff team in place, our number one priority at the FSA is ensuring our members have the resources they need to manage through this crisis and that their rights are respected as they pivot to meet unprecedented pressures in the face of this pandemic. BCIT has asked a lot of our members as we all work together to serve our students and to fulfill BCIT's mandate and the FSA will continue our work hard to ensure that BCIT holds up their end of the bargain in recognizing and respecting the work our members do on a daily basis. In the same way that our members have had to adjust to working remotely, the FSA continues full operations remotely and we continue to serve and support members everyday.



*This publication was authored and designed prior to the announcement of the election results.

Staff Profile



Steve Kwon

Steve joined the FSA's labour relations team in January 2020. Steve comes to us with over 7 years of experience in the labour movement at the United Food & Commercial Workers 1518 where he advanced his career from temporary intern to the lead for all grievance and contract administration.

Additionally, Steve is currently enrolled at the UBC Sauder School of Business for an executive certificate in Advanced Management and at SFU for a certificate in Human Resources Management.

How long have you worked at the FSA?

About 10 months.

What motivates your work here?

Helping find answers and solutions for the faculty and staff.

One word to describe the FSA?

Revitalized.

What lesson has working at the FSA taught you?

Given the complexity of this collective agreement, understanding the importance of the 2nd and 3rd order effects of interpreting the collective agreement.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

The dedication of the faculty and staff to their students and work.

Which living person do you most admire?

My wife, who is the smartest and most compassionate person I know. I learn from her every day.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Tofino on Chesterman Beach.

What is the greatest issue facing the labour movement?

The changing pattern of employment from regular full-time towards contract, gig, side-hustle type work.

What is the best book you have read recently?

Why We Sleep by Matthew Walker.

What was your first paying job?

Delivering the local newspaper (very poorly).

One way to make meetings better:

Having walking meetings.

If you had \$1-million to give to a cause, what would you select?

Local food banks.

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

Landscape photography, hiking, and surfing.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Respect.

What most inspires you?

To teach and assist others.

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

Does reading and learning whatever you want all day count as a profession?

What's your favourite place on the campus you work at?

I enjoy the energy at the Student Association area in SE2.

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

Growing, changing, and diverse.

What is a course/class you would like to take?

Labour relations courses on arbitration and investigations.

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

Skytrain line to BCIT.

We acknowledge that the BCITFSA and its members' workplaces are located on unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Vision

Outstanding careers through outstanding employment conditions.

Mission

To create an outstanding workplace: engage, celebrate, protect, and make gains for all our members.

Values

- Empowerment
- Influence
- Principled Action
- Social Justice
- Solidarity
- Strength


Contact Us

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BCIT internal only



Out of the Shadows:
**EXPERIENCES
OF CONTRACT
ACADEMIC STAFF**



OPPORTUNITY. SECURITY. RESPECT.
MAKEITFAIR.CAUT.CA



Affiliation Spotlight: Make It Fair

Fair Employment Week is CAUT's annual campaign to raise awareness about precarious employment on campuses and support local organizing to improve the working conditions of contract academic staff.

The 2020 campaign included a series of national online events and actions and we encourage members to check out the event recordings and campaign resources at makeitfair.caut.ca.

The FSA TEAM

At the time of publication

BOARD

Colin Jones	<i>President</i>
Shannon Kelly	<i>Vice President</i>
Terry Gordon	<i>Treasurer</i>
Joe Boyd	<i>Director-at-Large</i>
Kevin Cudihee	<i>Director-at-Large</i>
Thomas Lane	<i>Director-at-Large</i>
Holly Munn	<i>Director, Associate Members</i>
Judy Shandler	<i>Director-at-Large</i>
Ken Zeleschuk	<i>Director-at-Large</i>

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Michael Conlon	<i>Executive Director</i>
Maria Angerilli	<i>Operations & HR Director</i>
Kyla Epstein	<i>Member Engagement Officer</i>
George Talbott	<i>Senior Labour Relations Representative</i>
Kristie Starr	<i>Labour Relations Representative</i>
Michael Thompson	<i>Labour Relations Representative</i>
Steve Kwon	<i>Junior Labour Relations Representative</i>
Pierre Cassidy	<i>Information Officer</i>
Debbie Kinequon	<i>Operations Assistant</i>

currently on leave:

Christine Nagy	<i>Labour Relations Representative</i>
Tess Rebbitt	<i>Labour Relations Representative</i>

Contribute to the FSA Voice!

Do you have news or a story that you think other FSA members would be interested in?

Consider contributing to the FSA Voice! Contact us at 604.432.8695 or fsa@bcit.ca