

April 2018 • Volume 49, Issue 3



# BCIT FSA VOICE

ADVOCACY  
REPRESENTATION | NEGOTIATION

## President's Message:

## Advocacy Built for Members

For me, advocating for FSA members like you is about creating space for your interests, talents, and skills. Advocacy is also about listening to your stories, your concerns and your successes, and then pulling those stories together to illustrate and support the great variety of issues and concerns that we have. Stories are a powerful tool for advocacy and can be used to create a common understanding.

So, for the many members who have made time to meet with me, I thank you for your time and for the many stories you have shared. Your generosity contributed towards creating bargaining proposals like those focused on decreasing the widening gap between AIs or Tech staff and Faculty or on improving rights and benefits for our members working in Part-Time Studies. I have also been eager to help you share your successes with your colleagues, the institute, and the greater post-secondary community. This in turn helps break down the many isolating silos that exist and starts to build connections across the campus, across the province, and across Canada.

By affiliating with CAUT and doing a trial affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour we have gained connections and access to committee work that is of interest to members and our community at large. CAUT gives you national access to other professionals to share information and highlight work that is important to you and our students. The BCFed hits closer to home by helping BC unions amplify their voices around political issues such as childcare, the cost of housing, and a living wage. Many of the issues that CAUT and the BCFed advocate for are critically important to you as members and these affiliations provide us with opportunities to be a part of making positive change happen. *continued on page 2*

## From the FSA staff & board...

After six years as FSA President and five years as an FSA Director, Teresa Place is moving on to her next adventure. Teresa has made significant contributions to the FSA as a member, Tech Rep, Director, Treasurer, and President. Her empathetic approach to listening to members and speaking up for your rights has strengthened the FSA's relationships within the BCIT community and beyond. Working alongside other members on the board and the FSA staff, Teresa has worked tirelessly to amplify the voices of members and seek solutions to the issues you face. Thank you Teresa – for your work, your commitment, and your generosity. We know that you will continue to be an advocate for FSA members and all workers. We wish you our very best and we look forward to seeing what comes next for you!



**ADVOCACY BUILT FOR MEMBERS**  
(continued from page 1)

The FSA has talented and professional staff who support our members daily with accurate advice and are creative with ways to engage with, to advocate for, and to advance the rights of members. FSA staff provide significant stability to our office which will allow for a smooth transition to a new President and Vice President.

As our new President and Vice President start planning the FSA's strategic direction for the next few years and prepare for bargaining, they will be turning to all of you to ensure they are taking our union in the right direction. Their success and the success of the FSA depends on you and your participation. Speak up, share your stories, get involved, and help make our union stronger. Nobody leads alone and each success comes from many stories.

I also want to thank so many of you. Members, Tech Reps, past Presidents, and Board members: thank you for constant and ongoing support. Brilliant FSA staff: thank you for sharing your wisdom and advice. There have been many lunches, dinners, hallway conversations, coffees, office chats, phone calls, text messages, and of course many, many emails! I am so fortunate to have advocated for such amazing individuals, many of whom I now consider friends. Getting to know so many of you has been a highlight of my life. Thank you for your trust and your generosity.

Signing off,



# FSA 2018-20 ELECTION RESULTS

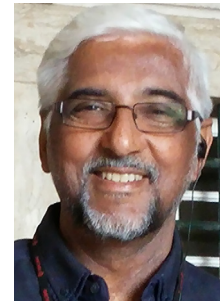
*Congratulations to the new directors!*



Peter Fenrich  
*Incoming President*



Vnit Nath  
*Incoming Vice President*



Charanjit (Chas) Bains  
*Director, Associate Members  
(Acclaimed)*

## NOTE FROM TERESA PLACE:

Congratulations to Peter Fenrich (Incoming President) and Vnit Nath (Incoming Vice President).

Peter has extensive experience at BCIT in a variety of different roles. Part of that experience includes teaching in Part-Time Studies (PTS) in addition to his current position as Instructional Development Consultant. This, and his long experience as a Tech Rep, will serve him well as leads our union over the next two years as President.

Vnit is a newer Tech Rep but has been active, has paid attention to issues, and has strong policy development knowledge. This, as well as his strong financial background, will be an asset as VP and a board member.

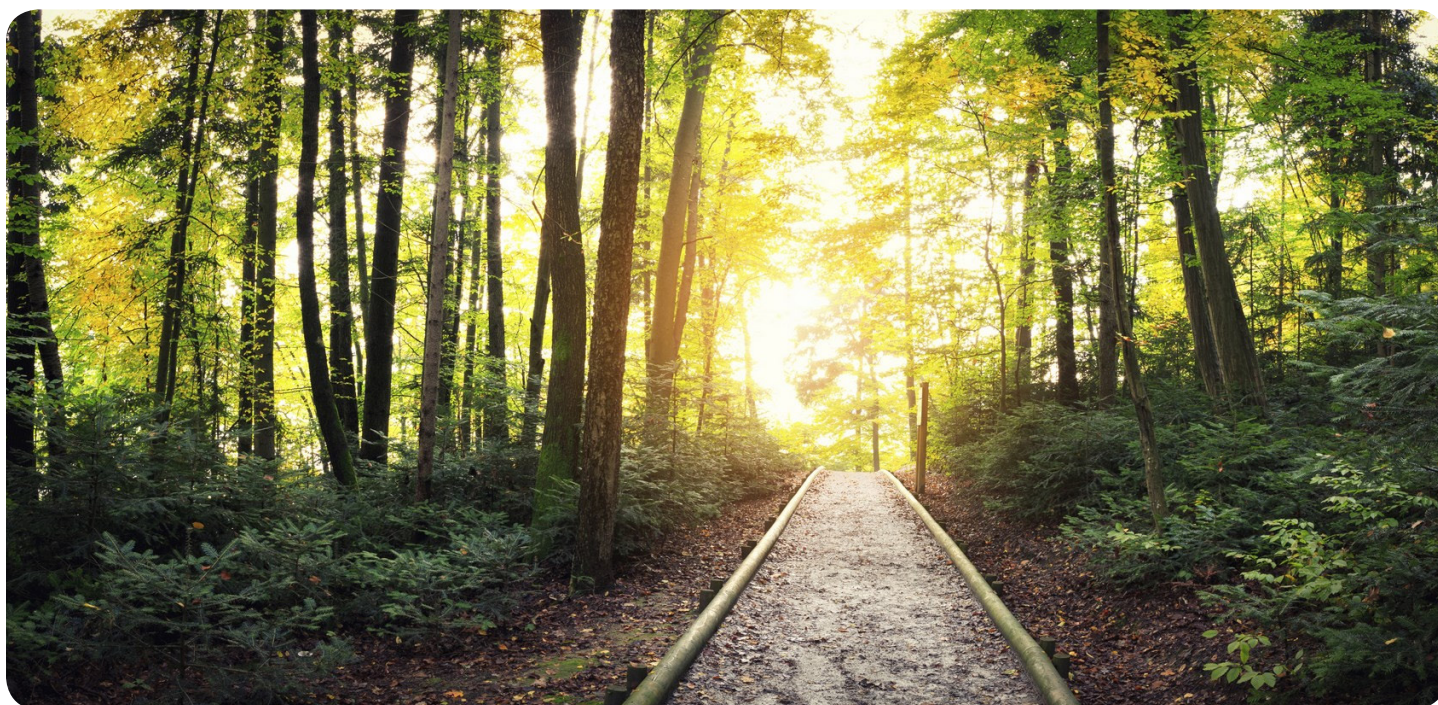
I also want to thank everyone who ran for the two positions.

A special thanks goes out to Kenzie Woodbridge who has contributed significantly to our policies, ensured we update our by-laws to meet new compliance requirements, and made significant contributions to bargaining for the FSA as well as leading the last round of bargaining with our CUPE staff.

Last but not least, thank you to our Returning Officer, William Oching, for overseeing the elections and thank you to staff who support the process and manage the extra work during elections.

A by-election was also held for a vacant Director, Associate Members spot and Chas Bains was acclaimed for this position. See page 8 to learn more about Chas!

## Executive Director's Message: Pathways for Advocacy



Advocacy might describe much of the work done by the FSA on behalf of members. When differentiated from our representation and negotiation work, advocacy is how we advance member interests when there are no existing rights to rely upon and no requirement that the employer deal with us on an issue. Advocacy happens when we have to create a path to meet the needs of our members.

The FSA's creation of caucuses in the past year reflects some of this advocacy work. The Caucus on Applied Research and Advanced Studies (CARAS) and the Caucus on Part-Time Studies (COPTS) are open to FSA members with particular interest in these areas. They reflect issues where the FSA has long-term interests in seeing improvements that will come through a combination of bargaining, grievances, consultation, government relations, and other means. The caucuses help define both the objectives and strategies for addressing these issues over the long term. They help ensure our activities are co-ordinated and that our work represents the interests and experiences of our members.

In both examples, we see that neither bargaining nor enforcing the current collective agreement are going to be sufficient to bring about the changes that members want to see. To make change, our advocacy needs to re-

fine and target messages and deliver them in impactful ways to a variety of influencers. That means identifying whom at BCIT and externally can change outcomes in these areas, determining the specific message that will move those people in the direction we want to see, and finding an effective way to deliver those messages. On PTS issues, for example, other faculty associations and the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) are important allies as they wrestle with similar issues and constraints. On applied research, we are more interested in differentiating ourselves from other institutions. Industry partners play more of a role in doing that. In both cases, we need to advocate with the provincial government so BCIT can get the authority it needs to make changes.

Diversity Circles represents another aspect of our advocacy work. The FSA undertook supporting the Diversity Circles project in part because it provided a concrete response to an issue we had been hearing from members and raising with management: How can faculty and staff better respond to a wider range of student needs and experiences? Some faculty and staff told us that they felt poorly equipped to respond to diverse student populations and that these challenges were contributing to climbing workloads. *continued on page 4*

## PATHWAYS FOR ADVOCACY (continued from page 3)

Diversity Circles has helped FSA members understand better how to respect and incorporate the diverse backgrounds and skills found in each classroom. Having the capacity to work in diverse groups supports our members to be even better at preparing students for the diverse workforce they are entering. At the same time, the project has given voice to the concerns and experiences of FSA members. Diversity Circles has animated the discussion of inclusion on campus and contributed to better learning and working environments at BCIT.



Diversity Circles has also been recognized across the province and across the country as an innovative, inspiring, and effective way for a faculty association to engage with change that is affecting our entire sector. The success of the project has raised the profile of the FSA as a capable and innovative organization and has provided us with new opportunities to show government and our colleagues elsewhere the kind of thoughtful and practical work our members produce.

A strength of the FSA has been our ability to find new paths to advance the interests of our members. Our advocacy work takes a long-term perspective that allows us to develop strategies to prepare for the success of our representation and negotiation work.



Paul Reniers  
Executive Director

### Selection Committees Should Recommend Where New Hires Are Placed on Salary Scales

Our collegial hiring process recognizes that our faculty and staff are the experts in their fields and are best able to identify who will do the best job of preparing and supporting the next generation of technologists. For similar reasons, Article 5.2.3.3.5 entitles Selection Committees to recommend where new hires should be placed on the salary scale. Article 11 sets out the rules for placement on the scales. Applying these rules often requires knowledge of the field and of the work to be performed at BCIT. Selection Committees can take initiative on placement by applying their informed judgement on questions like the equivalency of credentials and the relevance of employment experience. Make sure your new colleagues get proper credit for the education and experience that have prepared them to join your department.



# Best Practices

## Advocacy is a Strong Tool

*Christine Nagy, Labour Relations Representative*



The FSA has many tools at its disposal, and advocacy and representation can serve different functions. If you are at all unsure, please contact the FSA for specific labour relations advice as to whether you require representation.

In addition to providing representation and negotiation services on behalf of FSA members, a key function performed by the FSA is advocacy. The Labour Relations Representative's role in advocacy is to support members to voice their opinions, to stand up for their rights, and to ensure they have access to provisions of the collective agreement.

In an ideal world, members wouldn't need an advocate; each person in the union would be treated with fairness and equity. When mistakes are made, or worse, when some get preferential treatment and others do not, there is a need for a fair and objective process to ensure the issues are corrected. As an FSA member, you are part of a union, and you have a right to advocacy services from the FSA. We do this by listening when you tell us what is happening in your individual circumstance, or within your department or area. We can help to identify gaps, explore solutions or options, provide you with information, and then advocate on your behalf.

**A review of recent case files indicates many successful advocacy outcomes that were achieved in partnership with FSA members who brought the matters forward:**

- Issues that relate to compensation include advocating for additional salary step increases; application of administrative allowances; overtime pay; and the right to qualification differential and shift differential premiums.
- We raise awareness of how members are entitled to access leave provisions under the collective agreement, such as bereavement; compassionate care; general purpose; professional development; and retirement to name a few.
- The FSA has also acted as an advocate for members in circumstances such as obtaining medical accommodations, and assisting with implementation of return to work plans for those who have been away due to illness. In cases of interpersonal conflicts or members being bullied or harassed, we encourage and support members through these processes.

*continued on page 6*

## ADVOCACY IS A STRONG TOOL (continued from page 5)

The FSA's labour relations team are in the business of providing information and advice to members. Sometimes that involves us simply pointing a member in the direction of a collective agreement provision, or providing some technical interpretation on a clause. By imparting this knowledge to the member, our aim is to give them the confidence and courage to stand up for themselves, and empower them to be their own best advocate. A well-educated membership serves the union and the whole community well.

Whether it's about the workload, access to leave entitlements, right to employment, or departmental decision making, it's important to speak up. Your views are valuable and should be considered when decisions are being made. In turn, by bringing the matter forward, you may well play a part in resolving the issues, not only for yourself and your colleagues, but also for future faculty and staff.

A good union always encourages its members to stand up for their individual and collective rights. Whether it's advocating on an issue personal to you, or something affecting the whole department, we hope this article will inspire you to use your voice.

We appreciate seeing members at the general membership and Tech Rep meetings, and are grateful for your activism within the union. As always, the FSA encourages members to reach out to the FSA by email at [bcitfsa@bcit.ca](mailto:bcitfsa@bcit.ca), or by completing the contact FSA web form at [bcitfsa.ca/contact](http://bcitfsa.ca/contact).



### Pay Contract Employees for Attending "Mandatory" or Important Meetings

You can create an auxiliary (PTS) contract to pay part-time studies staff or temps who are between contracts to attend department meetings at the "PTS Admin" rate (around \$45/hour). While salaried staff have the benefit of being paid to attend meetings, why should non-salaried members of your department not share the same privilege? This will build morale, encourage department collegiality, and promote big picture thinking about how all staff contribute to teaching excellence and the welfare of the department.

# Best Practices

## STAFF PROFILE: Jude Morrison



*While our longstanding Union Counsel Heather Neun takes a one-year leave, we are fortunate to have Jude Morrison join us as Senior Labour Relations Representative. Jude is a seasoned union advocate, having provided representation in almost every aspect of labour relations with three previous unions, including several years in the BC Nurses Union education department.*

**What excites you about working with the FSA?** I am excited to be back in the post-secondary world again. Many years ago I worked for a variety of unions while attending SFU as an undergraduate and graduate student. Believe it or not, I also worked for the FSA for about a nano-second back in the late 1990s. All that to say, the work is familiar to me. I also worked close to 15 years for the BCNU so feel very at home with healthcare generally and nursing programs in particular. I am struck by how dedicated the FSA members are about the students they teach. That isn't always a given. Finally, I am blown away by the Diversity Circles project: what an amazing achievement! I am so grateful to have arrived while this initiative continues to flourish.

**What brought you to this work?** To be honest, I have been working in the union movement for years. I have a deep love of advocacy and social justice. That is inherent in most of the work (paid and unpaid) that I do. Sometimes I tire of the conflictual nature of working in the union movement as a representative. My most recent position prior to coming here was very conflictual, which takes a toll upon one's well-being. I am finding in my short time with FSA a refreshing collegiality and genuine desire to problem-solve issues. I have found the FSA members incredibly welcoming and stimulating to talk with and the wider campus community to be inviting and open.

**What is important to you when you interact with members?** Integrity, transparency, agency, and hopefully, transformation. It usually takes a lot for a member to come forward with an issue or concern. Buried beneath that

issue or concern is usually a host of other unresolved issues and concerns. My approach to labour relations is a holistic one. My hope is that together, we are able to surface some of the buried issues along with the presenting ones, in order to attain more meaningful and durable outcomes. And, while it may sound trite, it is important to me that individual FSA members have personal agency in this process.

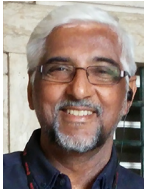
**Why do you think members should be involved in their union?** Engagement in the union leads to better outcomes. Unions are intended, by their very nature, to represent all members, not just the most vocal or visible ones. By being more fully representative, the FSA is better able to advocate for solutions, policies, and contract language that addresses a broader spectrum of circumstances and abilities. Unions are also able to "lift up" rights for all members of society by being able to entrench language (be it improved wages or accessible washrooms) that can become the best practice for all working people. I have been thinking a lot about conflict and diversity lately. Sometimes we have to struggle through some challenging conversations and views, but this often leads to better solutions and a better understanding of each other.

**What is important to you about public post-secondary institutions?** First, it is important to me that they remain accessible and indeed become more accessible (financially, physically, socially and otherwise). Also, that they continue to create positive, sustainable social change and innovation.

**A favourite...?** I love the labour movie "Salt of the Earth." It is an awesome labour film – I believe the only movie to be "blacklisted" during the McCarthy era. *"The movie and its creators were on the Hollywood 'blacklist' during the McCarthy era. A fabulous labour film, which takes on racism, sexism and issues of class in 1954! I used to rely on this film as an educator to expand the outdated view of unions being only relevant in terms of improving the lot for working class white men."* (Wikipedia)



## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: Charanjit (Chas) Bains



*Charanjit (Chas) Bains is a new member of the FSA board of directors in one of the Director, Associate Member positions. He has already jumped into the role by joining the Caucus on Part-Time Studies (COPTS) and engaging with FSA leadership to ensure strong representation of, and connection with, our members in PTS.*

**As the newest FSA Director, Associate Members...tell us a little about yourself:** I am of East Indian ancestry, born in England and a Canadian citizen by choice. Further; I am married to a wonderful woman from London, England with ancestors from Jamaica and we have three beautiful children. After finishing my Degree in Graphic Design and Masters in Advanced Graphic Design and Typography, prior to immigrating to Canada, my wife and I started our own design business in Central London. It was a fantastic learning experience. With zero investment, we grew the company with great success working with clients such as the British Government, BBC, Arts Council of Great Britain, Channel 4 television and many more.

Since the early nineties when I arrived in Canada with a very young family, business has been good. We have achieved much success. Along the way we have collected many design awards and worked with a wide spectrum of industries, nationally, internationally and with federal, provincial and crown agencies.

**How did teaching come to be part of your work?** Instrumental to my growth was the early Canadian experiences with Collingwood Neighbourhood House. First as a user of their services, then as board member and President. It informed me that Canada was the community I wanted to be a part of and where I felt comfortable in my skin, in many ways.

In our business, we have felt a strong responsibility to mentor and teach young designers, I have seen many go on to be successful in their own right. With that in mind, I slowed down my business responsibilities and started teaching in 2013. First sporadically, then after taking the excellent Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) I committed more time to teaching. With my

many years of design experience in all aspects of my industry, I discovered I had a lot to give my students, in knowledge, expertise and experience. Trends come and go, technology hurtles on but the principles and practices of good graphic design and communications remain robust, relevant, and fresh.

I was taught, through the design industry, to embrace change and to think of it as a challenge looking for applicable solutions. I have made efforts to let the hundreds of students I have taught see the passion, joy and benefits good design can bring to businesses and society. I have had the satisfaction of seeing my students get work all over the world and work in some great cities. A great reward for me.

**What made you want to get involved with the FSA?** During this time, I have had the opportunity to observe and appreciate the great practices that make BCIT such a valuable and unique teaching establishment for British Columbia and beyond. However, I've also experienced frustration, disappointment and downright bewilderment, on occasion, with some of the decisions taken.

I appreciate more and more we are living in a precarious society in a continuous state of flux, which seems to accelerate yearly. That being said, I believe precarious times do not need to lead to precarious work practices and conditions. Moreover, stronger cooperative and collegial practices need to be looked into and implemented. It stands for the common good that those that teach should be free from the pernicious effects of precarious work so that they can get on with their passions and teach in a safe and secure environment.

**What is your favourite part about teaching at BCIT?** Learning from my students and giving back not just my knowledge but my experiences. I've had some great laughs on occasion.

**What is something you would like to change?** I would like to do more about getting my industry to be a lot more diverse. Still a challenge to pursue after all these years in the business.





## Join your Collective Agreement Committee (CAC)

We could be back at the bargaining table in less than a year, so we're calling out now for members to join the Collective Agreement Committee (CAC).

### What is the CAC?

The CAC provides recommendations to the Board and the Bargaining Team on matters affecting FSA Collective Bargaining with BCIT.

This includes, but is not limited to, guiding consultation with FSA members on proposal development, setting bargaining priorities, considering strategies and tactics for the bargaining process, and nominating members for the bargaining team.

### Who is the CAC?

The CAC is a committee of FSA members – that's you! There are a maximum of nine committee members appointed by the Board, with a plurality of the members being current Directors on the FSA Board. The President of the Board will be a member and the Executive Director will be an ex-officio member.

Up to four additional FSA members will be appointed to the CAC by the Board. CAC membership is for one round of bargaining.

The members of the CAC shall be chosen to represent, as much as possible, a cross section of the FSA membership striving to be as inclusive as possible.

### What is required if I am selected?

- To meet as needed to prepare for bargaining
- To consult with members (or a sub-set of the membership or specific constituencies), as broadly as possible concerning issues related to collective bargaining and negotiation
- Obtain information from the membership, constituencies, comparable bargaining units, industry and other sources that may impact bargaining
- Potentially sit on the bargaining team

### Interested in joining the CAC?

The FSA Board of Directors will be setting a schedule for the selection and convening of the CAC in the next couple of months. If you would like to be considered for the CAC, you can submit an Expression of Interest on our website [Member Login required] that will be considered when the Board appoints the committee. Additional opportunities to indicate your interest will be announced once the Board sets the schedule. If you have any questions, please contact the FSA: [fsa@bcit.ca](mailto:fsa@bcit.ca).



## MEMBER PROFILE: Michael Bourke



*Liberal Studies compliments and enriches the study of technologies. The people who teach Liberal Studies can have the same impact on the people who teach technologies. As a colleague, instructor, co-ordinator, and former Tech Rep, Michael Bourke demonstrates the value of having an open and enquiring mind in the world of technology. He also finds joy in teaching Liberal Studies in a polytechnic setting.*

### **How long have you been at BCIT? What motivates your work?**

Twelve years, plus a few years of virtual residence teaching online PTS courses. Liberal Studies electives are offered to degree students; one of the general objectives of these courses it is to develop students' interpretive and analytic skills beyond their core disciplines. I admire and am motivated in my teaching by the maturity and adaptability of students taking on that challenge. I particularly admire the willingness of students respectfully to assess divergent, contrary points of view while dealing with controversial issues. I'm reminded of the Dean of Students at the University of Chicago's recent (2016) message to incoming students: an education can't take place in "intellectual 'safe spaces' where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own." That message strikes me as sound advice for character and intellect building, and it supports the vital educational aim of developing thoughtful, resourceful citizens and professionals in a "complex world."

**What would make your work even better?** I've learned a great deal from BCIT colleagues informally, over coffee, in hallways, walking to Lot 7, etc. So, assuming that my experience isn't unique, I would say that more opportunities to socialize with colleagues would improve our work.

**How does the FSA support your work at BCIT?** A recent example: Our department was helpfully supported by one of the Diversity Circles meetings sponsored by the FSA. A group of instructors were able to discuss a number of important pedagogical issues beyond the scope of a typical department meeting.

**What's something you want your colleagues to know about the Liberal Studies department?** We integrate instructors from a variety of departments, with backgrounds crossing STEM and humanities disciplines. This practice provides a modest opportunity to help bridge the solitudes of technology, sciences, and humanities at BCIT, and to improve the integrated nature of the academic electives we offer.

**As a PTS Coordinator, how do you see yourself as an advocate for the members in PTS that you work with?** The department aims to treat PTS instructors and faculty similarly. Yet the situation for PTS instructors is far from ideal, considering that they can't be paid adequately, or at all, for course preparation, D2L revisions, ongoing curriculum development, or office hours.

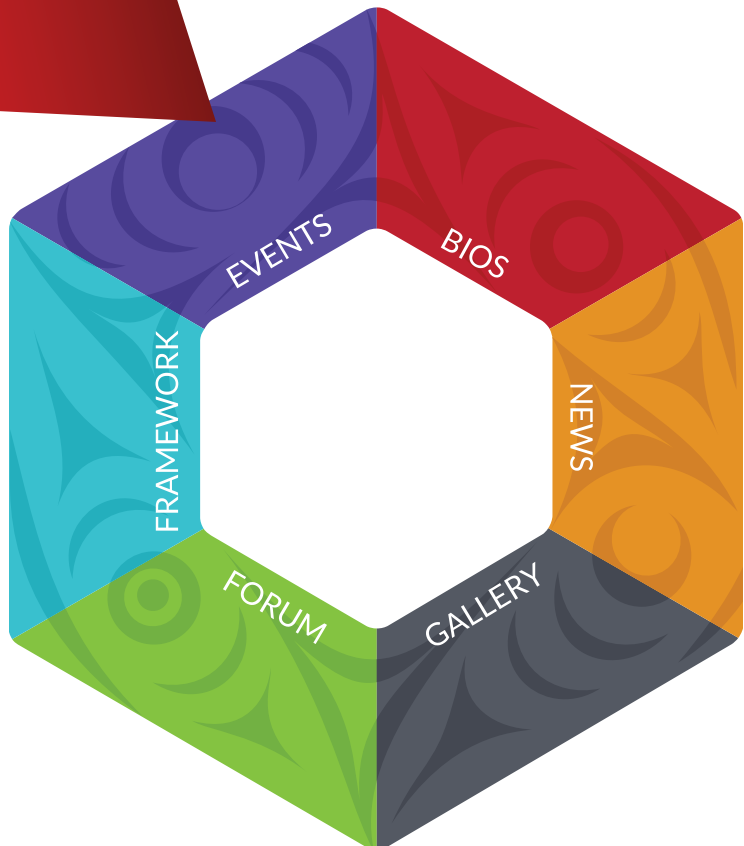
**What are you reading right now?** I'm reading (U of T professor) Jordan Peterson's *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. His name seems to pop up quite often, especially among young people. I was eating at a restaurant in Powell River over Spring Break and briefly joined a discussion with four young people (five including the bartender) talking about the change in marijuana legislation. One of them managed in passing to work Peterson into the conversation. I was prompted to buy his *12 Rules* after seeing him in an interview with Cathy Newman (Channel 4, UK) on YouTube.



**SAVE THE DATE!**



**Our next  
Diversity Circles  
workshop is on May 14.  
Find out more  
[diversitycircles.com](http://diversitycircles.com)**



DIVERSITY  CIRCLES



# 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 Kyla at 604.432.8569 or [kepstein@bcit.ca](mailto:kepstein@bcit.ca)

## Upcoming Events

- May 9** Tech Rep Social  
2:30pm-4:30pm  
TBD
- May 14** Diversity Circles Workshop  
12:00-1:30pm  
Town Square D
- May 16** Board of Directors Meeting  
4:00-8:00pm  
SE16-114
- June 6** Board Changeover Meeting  
4:00-8:00pm  
SE16-114

*find out more on [bcitfssa.ca/calendar](http://bcitfssa.ca/calendar)*

## Contact Us

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search 'BCITFSA Group'

[loop.bcit.ca/groups/BCIT-FSA](http://loop.bcit.ca/groups/BCIT-FSA)  
BCIT internal only

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, Tsleil-Waututh, and Squamish Nations.

## the FSA Team *at time of publication*



Teresa Place  
President



Kenzie Woodbridge  
Vice-President



Terry Gordon  
Treasurer



Chas Bains  
Director, Associate Members



Karl Hildebrandt  
Director



Zaa Joseph  
Director



Shannon Kelly  
Director



Nancy Knaggs  
Director



Paul Mills  
Director, Associate Members



Silvia Raschke  
Director



Paul Reniers  
Executive Director



Jude Morrison  
Sr. Labour Relations Rep



Heather Neun  
*(On Leave)*



Christie Nagy  
Labour Relations Rep



Tess Rebbitt  
Labour Relations Rep



George Talbott  
Labour Relations Rep



Sascha Swartz  
LR Information Officer



Kyla Epstein  
Member Engagement Officer



Maria Angerilli  
Operations Director



Debbie Kinequon  
Operations Assistant