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BCIT FSA VOICE

Let's Make it
FAIR!

FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK | OCTOBER 24-28, 2016

FEW Graphics courtesy of CAUT

President's Message:

It's Time to Move the Dial on PTS Issues



The FSA's vision of

***“Outstanding careers through
outstanding employment
conditions”***

cannot apply only to those who teach in or support regular programs or who work 35 hours/week supporting students and their colleagues. We must apply this aspiration to all FSA members, including and perhaps especially contract academic staff doing precarious work.

The members I'm referring to are not all the same. Some may be working full-time in industry and

also teaching in Part-Time Studies. Some may be teaching solely in PTS here or also at other post-secondary institutions. Some will be less reliant on income from their BCIT work and some may be wholly dependent upon it. What they have in common is that they have insufficient rights under our Collective Agreement; they are part of a growing trend towards auxiliarization in post-secondary education; their working conditions often hamper the quality of education students are receiving; and they are a significant driver of BCIT's revenue generation and in providing a majority of the education being delivered at BCIT.

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It's a start!

The FSA has...

- Created a second seat for Associate Members on the FSA Board
- Proposed bylaw changes to make members on PTS administration contracts Associate Members of the FSA
- Adopted policy changes to ensure Associate Members can serve their full term as a board member...even if their contract with BCIT ends
- Formed a PTS Task Force
- Affiliated with CAUT
- Attempted to ensure all members, including PTS instructors, have a Tech Rep
- Joined the CAUT Fair Employment Week campaign
- Used publications and events to increase awareness of precarious work

ITS TIME TO MOVE THE DIAL ON PTS ISSUES (continued from page 1)

77%

of members in PTS whose primary source of income is from BCIT say that the fixed term contract nature of their employment is a source of concern.

Source: FSA FEW Survey, 2016

It's time to do more than tell our members in PTS that they matter. It's time to make changes that show them that their work is valued equally, like the course credits they deliver. It is time for their dedication to BCIT to be reflected in their employment conditions and for the precarious nature of their work to end. And it is time to work together – across Departments, across classifications, and across the sector – to meet these goals.

A significant change occurred in my personal life when allies began to stand up for the rights of LGBTQ+ people. It moved the dial. It left us less alone. My hope for our members who work in PTS is that they won't be left alone to stand up for their rights but that every FSA member will join them to right these wrongs.



Teresa Place
President

Together we can make change.

“PTS members often work in their industry outside of teaching and can share their experiences in “real time” with students. We keep current and this is a valuable asset to BCIT and its reputation for applied studies. The fact that we may be on campus less than full-time faculty shouldn't be a point to offer us less in pay and benefits. Look instead at what we're doing when we're off campus and the value we provide by bringing this back to BCIT.”

Source: FSA FEW Survey, 2016

An Indigenous model for post-secondary teachers and academic staff to utilize professional mentoring and community outreach for engaging student and community diversity.

We are thrilled that the FSA Diversity Circles project is a recipient of the Community and College Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)!

Find out about upcoming events and get involved:
bcitfsa.ca/diversitycircles



Executive Director's Message:

What Success Looks Like in PTS

The huge gap in employment rights, pay, and working conditions between our members working in Part-Time Studies and our regular and temporary members may be the biggest issue facing the FSA.

Two-thirds of BCIT's registrants are in PTS. BCIT's budget is banking on growth in PTS.

A PTS Instructor teaching the same number of contact hours as a full-time regular Instructor makes about 60% of the salary, has no sick leave, no professional development rights, no severance rights, likely no office or private space to meet with students, and likely has been excluded from participating in departmental decisions.

The FSA has been very open about its frustration with attempting to bargain around PTS issues. The government's strict financial mandate and requirement that BCIT maintain the relationship between our faculty scale and the provincial sector scale have left no room for closing the gap between PTS and regular instruction. What the FSA has been able to do is increase our outreach to members in PTS and take up their issues based on the rights that they do have as well as our ability to argue for improved working conditions that are within BCIT's control. These efforts will not create a dramatic change in the overall standing of PTS instruction. They can, however, make a significant difference for individual PTS Instructors and even for entire programs.

The FSA is making headway on several issues relating to PTS. In the last couple of years, we've seen successes in shifting the employer away from staffing new programs only through PTS contracts. Partly through our advocacy and partly for business reasons, there are a several examples where BCIT has moved away from PTS contracts for new programs and new offerings.

In some PTS intensive programs, we have been able to work with members to identify key shared issues and to advocate for the employer to make changes. Sometimes this has required the union and individual members to file grievances and find other ways to press these

concerns. Through these efforts, we have been able to improve working conditions across some PTS programs through mechanisms like agreements on how course loads will be distributed and ensuring the right for PTS Instructors to take leave.

The FSA's Labour Relations Representatives have been successful in advocating for individual members in PTS who face workplace problems. These have included improper discipline, being wrongly denied courses, bullying and harassment, having their academic freedom compromised, and not being paid on time. As we've reached out to members in PTS, the proportion of the issues we are dealing with on behalf of those members has steadily grown. PTS Instructors are not without rights, and the FSA is able and eager to defend them.

"When considering the concept of fair employment, I have to ask:

With approximately 60% of BCIT student enrollment attributed to part-time studies, would it not be fair to offer PTS Instructors the same pay rate, array of benefits, and support resources that are provided to their full-time counterparts?

This is my hope for me and my colleagues."

Laurie Izgorean, PTS Instructor

We also know that BCIT can be doing more, even outside of bargaining. If BCIT were inclined to do so, regular and temporary contracts could be used in many places where Instructors are now employed on PTS contracts. Regular and temporary employment outside of normal hours does require the agreement of the FSA, which we've shown is quite possible to obtain. There is certainly no reason why BCIT needs to employ Instructors in cohort programs offered during regular hours; like in full-time programs such as ISEP and Interior Design. We are pushing BCIT to reduce the use of PTS contracts in situations like these.

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WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE IN PTS (continued from page 3)

BCIT has also refused to pay PTS Instructors for all the work that's expected of them. PTS Instructors typically aren't compensated for office hours, even though regular Instructors are. They are not compensated for course administration and often are not paid for program and department meetings even when they are expected to attend. BCIT could issue contracts that recognize this work. It's the fair thing to do, and some programs already do this, at least in limited ways. In addition to being fair to PTS Instructors, it's also about fairness to the students and educational quality. If PTS courses are equivalent to day-school courses, why doesn't BCIT expect the Instructors to hold office hours, to remain under contract during course appeals, to undertake professional development, or to contribute to departmental functions?



Between now and the next round of bargaining, the FSA will continue to push BCIT to take the steps within its power to enforce Collective Agreement rights and to improve conditions in PTS. BCIT can reduce its dependency on PTS contracts, implement fairer systems for administering those contracts, ensure that PTS Instructors can expect the same respect shown to regular and temporary staff, pay PTS Instructors for all the duties that are expected of course Instructors, and improve the space and services that facilitate quality instruction in PTS courses. To make these changes, the FSA needs its members in PTS to work closely with their union, sharing their issues and ideas. We also need the entirety of our membership to step up to support fair employment for all FSA members and a higher standard of education for BCIT students.



Paul Reniers
Executive Director

Together we can close the gap.

Fair Employment Week

Today, about one third of all academic staff in post-secondary institutions in Canada struggle to find decent work. They are hired on a per course or limited-term basis. They are denied the opportunity to participate in all aspects of academic work — teaching, research, and service to the community. They can't fully exercise their academic freedom because of the possibility of not being renewed.

Many are trained to do research, find new ideas and innovate, but are prohibited to do so.

They are often poorly paid, have little or no benefits, no job security, and no academic freedom. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) opposes the casualization of academic work and advocates for the full employment and the fair treatment of all academic staff regardless of their appointment status.

Let's Make it Fair!

FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK | OCTOBER 24-28, 2016

Let's Make it FAIR!



PTS Task Force's Message:



One of the ways we can begin to identify precarious employees within our membership is by their FSA membership category as “associate members”, a group that makes up approximately 30% of all FSA members. Compared to regular members, associate members encounter significant structural barriers and inequities in their employment at BCIT. A significant subset experience precarious employment, meaning they have relatively little job security or income predictability, enjoy limited or no access to health and welfare benefits, have no access to professional development funding or leave, receive less pay for the same work, and are often excluded from participation in decisions concerning their program or department.

The prevailing stereotype of associate members teaching in the evenings for “beer money” on top of their salaried jobs at BCIT or elsewhere is increasingly proving to be inaccurate. Many associate members are employed ‘full-time’ or close to that at BCIT, in some cases entirely during “day school” hours, or they combine one or two BCIT contracts with contracts at other colleges

and universities to achieve something approximating a living wage. With two-thirds of BCIT’s registrations being in PTS, the work of associate members is central to BCIT’s success, yet they continue to experience inequitable working conditions.

There are many highly skilled and experienced associate members who work at BCIT. However, not only does precarious employment and poor terms and conditions for these academic staff increase instructor turnover and inevitably reduce instructional quality, it also normalizes exploitative conditions and devalues the expertise and work of all FSA members. It is impossible to reconcile the skills and professionalism that our committed associate members bring to BCIT with the undignified way they are treated.

The FSA is organizing to try to remedy this problem. Attempts to correct this inequity at the bargaining table have been met with protestations from BCIT or the government that there is no money available. We will tackle this position head on during the next round of bargaining in 2019, but the FSA is taking other actions

as well. A year ago the FSA added a second “Director, Associate Members” to its Board of Directors. We are revising FSA policies to increase representation of associate member concerns, such as through access to Tech Reps, and facilitating participation for associate members in FSA affairs. Last year, we formed a task force to build awareness about the plight of associate members, to create solidarity within the membership, to take creative steps to challenge the myths of this form of employment, and to build and communicate the complete case for why this model of employment is so problematic for students and the post-secondary public education system.

BCIT’s increasing reliance on precarious workers is not unique. The trend towards casualization – or “auxiliarization”, to use language drawn from our collective agreement - in post-secondary education exists both Canada-wide and internationally. The FSA is also far

from unique in opposing this trend. Indeed, unions and activists from various countries have been increasingly successful in making visible the problem of precarious employment in post-secondary education, and its implications for society. During Fair Employment Week, October 24-28, 2016, the FSA, with CAUT and CAUT member organizations, joins a coalition of unions and faculty associations across North America in highlighting the overuse and exploitation of contract academic staff. We are all affected by the inequitable conditions that exist within our membership, and if we as a union and as individual members do not undertake the important work of combatting this phenomenon, then we will at least partly share responsibility for its continued spread.



Heather Neun
Union Counsel &
Member of FSA
PTS Task Force

Profile of an Associate Member/PTS Instructor

In a BCIT-FSA arbitration decision from 2008 concerning auxiliary employment for a particular group of Part-Times Studies (PTS) instructors, Arbitrator John Steeves made a point of distinguishing between regular employees/faculty in the FSA’s bargaining unit who pick up extra PTS instructional contracts and earn additional income, or individuals with full-time jobs outside of BCIT who have PTS instructional contracts, and the FSA members who rely for much or all of their income on this form of employment. Several decades ago, the former profile was the prevailing one for these “Auxiliary Employees” who worked as PTS instructors. That profile still exists but is no longer the most common.

Think now about the professional who teaches courses during normal hours of work (“day school hours”) and outside of those hours, without knowing if the PTS instructional contracts will continue to flow. Perhaps they have a family or are planning one. I am thinking about a single mother with a young daughter, who cobbles together income from BCIT and other sources. A group of employees who have regularly received notice of their contracts a few days before classes begin, also comes to mind.

A couple questions may help you conjure up the profile of this newer and more commonplace associate member. What does this instructor do when they’re sick or their child is sick or they have an ailing parent (with no sick leave or compassionate leave)? How does this instructor stay professionally current without access to continuing education? When do they meet with students who need extra help or are struggling with a combination of academic issues and psychological issues? And in some cases, where do those meetings happen? How does our associate member deal with classes with increasing numbers of students that need language assistance or other forms of support? How does our member contend with mounting class sizes and student/instructor ratios when they’re on a fixed-hours contract? What about meetings with the department that are unpaid or curriculum work or departmental coordination demands? The list goes on...

“Fair Employment Week is important because the work we do is important. It’s an opportunity for us to remind everyone of this. It’s also a chance for all of us to connect with colleagues and share experiences with each other as a way of building community and support for each other.”

Paul Mills, PTS Instructor



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: Paul Mills



Paul Mills is a Part-Time Studies Instructor in Computer Systems Technology at the Downtown Campus and the newest member of the FSA Board of Directors. When Paul began reaching out to the FSA regarding PTS instruction a few years ago, we immediately recognized the insight and dedication that he brought to the issues. He's found his voice at the FSA board table very quickly, bringing a strong sense of fairness and responsibility to every discussion and ensuring that the perspective from PTS is considered in every situation.

What is the most exciting part of your work right now?

I would say meeting new students and getting to know them better. I'm always impressed at how eager many of them are and very much appreciate the opportunity to help prepare them for their careers. I think those are the main reasons I became a teacher in the first place.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA as a board member?

After nearly 16 years of slugging it out as a PTS [Part-Time Studies] Instructor I'm surprised at how little recognition and support BCIT provides me in the work I do. After having heard the same thing from many more of my PTS colleagues, I felt drawn to be a voice on their behalf. I believe that, if the future is going to be any different, changes have to be made. PTS staff in general deserve to be respected and compensated in a way that is commensurate with our importance to BCIT's bottom line. With the growing dependence on revenue generated by Part-Time Studies, there is growing need for our status to evolve into one that reflects the important work we do. Being a member of the FSA Board provides me with one vehicle by which I can put momentum behind change.

Why is it important that the FSA board includes directors who are Associate Members?

I believe that only Associate Members, a label I would like to see changed by the way, can speak for Associate Members. You have to be in the trenches to know what works and what doesn't work. The FSA needs first-hand

witness to the conditions members work under in PTS in order to fully understand how to represent us.

How does the FSA support your work at BCIT?

At present I'm supported by the work the FSA does on my behalf through representation and helping me understand my rights as a PTS employee. My overall goal is to work with the FSA to foster avenues of communication with and between our members in PTS. Currently there are initiatives under way that could lead to just that. In order to elevate our status at BCIT, we have to work together as a united and strong voice. This is what has been missing in the past. I'm happy to say that the FSA leadership understands this and is very much on the same page with respect to overall outcomes.

Is there anything you'd like to see change as an FSA member?

Stronger and more dedicated representation for FSA members in PTS. Specifically, I would like to see a stronger push for PTS concerns leading up to and during our next contract negotiations. Patterns of the past cannot be repeated if we are to make any meaningful gains. PTS members have to be considered in their own right and no longer as adjuncts to the full-time programs. The message sent to BCIT has to be assertive and supported with full PTS participation so that our gains are more than just fallout from terms negotiated for someone else.

What keeps you busy when you're not at work?

Aside from marking and upgrading my own skills, I'm actively involved in music. I've played guitar for 45 years and spend much of my free time playing and composing on one of my many guitars. Presently I'm in a 12 string mode after having bought a beautiful new instrument a couple of summers ago. I'm also one of those who has seen the light and believe vinyl is better than digital. Over the last few years I've been acquiring and reacquiring vinyl albums with a particular focus on this band from Liverpool, England. Off hours are also spent walking our two German Shepherd dogs while getting away from that infernal computer. I have also owned a 1979 Corvette since 1990, and spend time on sunny days leaving a modest carbon footprint on the BC roads.

MEMBER PROFILE: Kimberly Thompson



Kimberly Thompson works in the ISEP (International Student Entry Plus) program at BCIT. ISEP is an intensive and comprehensive program that provides students with speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The program not only assists students in improving their overall English language ability, it also focuses on academic preparation, cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. Kimberly has been an engaged member of the ISEP team, and a valuable ally in the efforts to improve the workplace for her colleagues.

How long have you been at BCIT? I started working at BCIT in 2008, the month after ISEP became a part of the BCIT family.

What motivates your work? I love teaching international students, watching them challenge themselves in so many ways is inspiring. These are students who have decided to leave their homes and country to learn a new language and live in a new country. That takes courage.

What lessons has working at BCIT taught you? Teaching in a large institution like BCIT has taught me to have patience, and that things take time. Change does occur, but it is a slow process. I have also learnt the importance of collaboration; working with talented and skilled colleagues has improved my teaching.

What would make your work even better? We at ISEP are classified as Part-Time Studies Instructors, or "Auxiliary Employees" to use the collective agreement term, but

we work in a full-time "day school" program. I feel that our employee category limits how much support and resources we are able to give our students and our support staff. It is very frustrating. Although things have improved, our classification means we lack such basics as office hours, a private office, and the ability to meet with students to offer the extra support they need to succeed.

How does the FSA support your work at BCIT? The FSA has supported ISEP instructors countless times over the past 8 years. They have taken on our right to better work conditions in terms of personal leave and instructor hours. We are a better program now because of their continued involvement and support, and that of Andrea Matthews, ISEP's interim program head. I also have to credit our current manager and several employees in Labour Relations who supported the positive changes as well.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA? I grew up in Northern Ontario, where Big Nickel companies ruled the roost. The union has always been a part of my life; my father was a union rep and worked endlessly for the rights of his coworkers. I see this as my aim too. I can only succeed if we all succeed.

What keeps you busy when you're not at work? When I do have free time, I like to spend it with my family. I have two young daughters and a busy husband. I'm usually the family chauffeur on weekdays, but on weekends we like to head out into nature and get recharged.



STAFF PROFILE: Heather Neun



As the FSA's Union Counsel and senior representative, Heather Neun has had a transformative impact on our labour relations. She has greatly advanced our move to a more strategic approach to handling issues and has fostered more rigorous standards in our representation work. Those

approaches have considerably improved our credibility and influence within BCIT and have had significant impacts on issues and programs where problems had previously been seen as unresolvable.

What brought you to this work? An interest in being involved as an advocate before disputes move on to litigation between unions and employers, and a desire to enhance union effectiveness and relevance for members, and to challenge some of the ways that 'things have always been done' in union-employer relations.

What do you spend most of your work time doing? Strategizing about how to be effective and persuading others that we can create positive and systemic change.

What have you found yourself doing at work that you never expected? Learning a lot about what makes people tick. Addressing conflict head on and figuring out how to manage that in creative and effective ways.

What surprises you when working with members? How resigned some members are that things will never change.

This newsletter's focus is on the Part-Time Studies work of FSA members. What would you like to share about this work? Soon after I started at the FSA, I became concerned about the situation of FSA members who work in "Part-Time

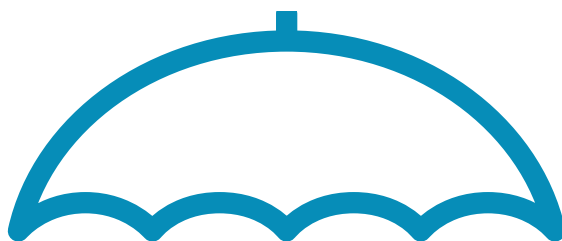
Studies" and for whom employment at BCIT is a major or even solitary source of income. The level of precariousness and the lack of attention to their basic interests as employees raised serious concerns about how their professionalism and dedication to BCIT and the students was being recognized. In addition to tackling particular groups of PTS employee pools that were exceptionally toxic, I became interested in probing the prevailing ideas that circulated surrounding this type of employment. I came to understand that some of these ideas had passed into the realm of urban myth. I also came to see that we needed to challenge the popular conceptions about the model of employment, not just of FSA members but the employer, regarding what is truly in the interest of an employer and educational institution like BCIT. In law, the employee owes a duty of loyalty to their employer. Work has been recognized as fundamental not only to providing basic needs but to dignity. I think we are working to ensure that the loyalty in this relationship is always mutual.

What was the last conference or course you went to? I recently attended a workshop called "Deep Diversity" and one on "Conflict to Calm: Dealing with high-conflict behaviour in the workplace".

What's your favourite word? Audacity

What profession other than your own would you love to attempt? Instructor

What are you reading right now? Short Walks from Bogotá: Journeys in the New Colombia



Upcoming Events

Oct 26

Annual General Meeting
2:30-4:30pm
Town Square A&B

Nov 5

Board of Directors Meeting
9:00am-4:00pm
Location: TBD

Nov 9

Tech Rep Meeting
2:30-4:00pm
Town Square D

Nov 23

Board of Directors Meeting
4:00-8:00pm
SE16-116

find out more on bcitfsa.ca/calendar

Visit us at the DTC!

In an effort to provide greater access for our members, we now have FSA labour relations staff at our new shared DTC office space (Room 502) every Thursday (1-6:30pm).

Make an appointment with Ken, Christine, or Heather by emailing the FSA today: fsa@bcit.ca.

FSA leadership and other staff will be available in the DTC office as well on an ad hoc basis.

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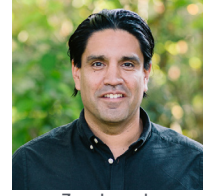
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Shannon Kelly
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Paul Mills
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Joe Newton
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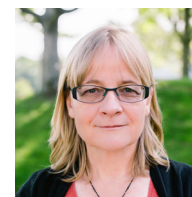
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