



January 2017 • Volume 48, Issue 2



BCIT FSA VOICE



President's Message:

Why Diversity Circles?

We all notice that our student population is becoming increasingly diverse – in areas like intercultural diversity (different cultural, ethnic, and first-language groups, including Indigenous Peoples), cognitive diversity or neurodiversity (learning differences such as Autism, Asperger's, ADHD), and gender diversity (recognition of different gender identities and also recognition that some gender groups are underrepresented, such as women in Engineering and Computing, for example).

The FSA's Diversity Circles project is a partnership with other stakeholders at BCIT and exists alongside many other programs and initiatives supporting inclusion. Because the FSA is acting as a community partner, Diversity Circles was eligible for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Community and College Social Innovation Fund and has been granted over \$150,000 in funding. Diversity Circles' core ideal is the belief that educators welcome diversity and embrace the increase in diversity of our student population as a positive change. But, at the same time, Diversity Circles speaks directly to the corresponding reality that supporting an increasingly diverse student body requires more resources, awareness, and new knowledge.

Benefits to FSA Members

Diversity Circles was co-created by FSA Directors Zaa Joseph and Shannon Kelly. Back in 2015, following detailed proposals, the FSA Board voted unanimously to support the project. Why? Diversity Circles was proposed to the FSA Board as being, 'by members, for members, and benefiting members as well as the entire BCIT community.' We saw that the peer-to-peer networking and mentoring model proposed for the Diversity Circles project was a way to have our members' voices heard on issues of diversity and their impact on students. The model is meant to empower FSA members and the entire BCIT community to better understand and meet the needs of their students and speak to what faculty and staff need to support diversity in the workplace.

continued on next page

Representation. Negotiation. Advocacy.

Thank You Marian!

Marian Ciccone showed up in the FSA office in 1996 to help out on a casual basis with some filing. At the end of January, she'll retire as our Office Assistant. From the beginning, Marian has been tireless in finding ways to help her colleagues and to make things work better. Her unrelenting desire to contribute made it an easy choice to make her a regular employee. Her unwaveringly positive attitude made it a popular choice too. She's been a caring and generous supporter of the many staff, directors, and members who have stopped by her desk. Marian has always sought to understand everything we do in terms of how it helps our members. Now Marian will be more able to share her helpful and caring nature with her families and friends. With grateful hearts, we wish her good health and much happiness.



WHY DIVERSITY CIRCLES? (continued from page 1)

This project has gained considerable positive attention from organizations that the FSA is seeking to influence as part of our long-term bargaining strategy, including BCIT's leadership, the Ministry of Advanced Education, and our colleagues in the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE). This project has had a real impact in raising our profile and credibility as a partner with BCIT and within our sector.



Diversity Circles directly supports our mission "to create an outstanding workplace," and to "engage, celebrate, protect, and make gains for all our members," by openly acknowledging that demographics in our workplace and in the classroom are changing, and by helping to equip ourselves with positive awareness and knowledge to better support these changes, thereby reducing workplace stress, enhancing educational excellence, and creating opportunities for engagement, innovation, and community building.

Diversity Circles has several events coming up in February and in the following months - get involved, take in new information that will enhance your work here at BCIT, join in the discussion at www.bcitfsa.ca/diversitycircles.

Diverse Governance

With our upcoming board elections, I encourage all our members to reflect on the importance of having a diverse board with directors who are committed to advancing the well-being of our diverse membership. Watch for announcements coming soon from the FSA about board elections. Consider nominating someone who will enhance the strength and inclusiveness of our association.



Teresa Place
President

FSA ELECTIONS

5 Directors-at-Large
2 Directors, Associate Members
1 Treasurer

Election Schedule

Wednesday, February 8 (noon)
Formal Call for Nominations

Friday, February 24 (noon)
Nominations Close
Deadline: Candidate Statement Submissions

Wednesday, March 1
Candidate Statements Posted to Website
Candidates' Names Released to Membership

Wednesday, March 8
All Candidates Meeting

Friday, March 10 (noon)
Electronic Voting Turns On

Friday, March 31 (noon)
Electronic Voting Turns Off

Tuesday, April 4 (noon)
Election Results to Membership

*Schedule subject to Board's approval on January 18, 2017
Check bcitfsa.ca for final approved schedule*

Election Eligibility

- Be a Member in good standing,
- Be nominated in writing by a Regular or Associate Member,
- Consent to the nomination, and
- Not be disqualified from being a director of a company under Section 124 of the Business Corporations Act.

Who can vote? All current FSA members!

We are pleased to announce that our Returning Officer for 2017 is William Oching.

Creating Balance

Aaron "Splash" Nelson-Moody, Diversity Circles Collaborator

I was honoured to work on the logo for the Diversity Circles project. The red colour we call temlh; it represents the blood of the earth or the blood of the cedar tree so it's a sacred colour for us here in Coast Salish territory. You could say it is sort of an inner strength. It's not completely explained in Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and hard to translate into English but I think it refers to the inner strength that we all have.

If you see an old, old canoe here, there's not too many around, but they would be painted black on the outside - the kind we take out to sea - so we say that when we go out into the world there is an external strength that we face the world with but it doesn't really take us anywhere unless we have the inner strength as well. Sometimes they will refer to male and female aspects of ourselves and that needs to be in balance so the inner part of the canoe is painted red and represents that inner strength that gives us heart and sustains us on those long journeys. We talk about a balance between the two. In designing this I was thinking more about the feminine at BCIT; I wanted to add a bit more of the female energy - in this logo design and in the house post I was a part of with BCIT.

I drew out some elements of the house post into this logo. Some people will tell you it doesn't mean anything; that those shapes don't mean anything, and some people will tell you long stories about those shapes. There's one in the upper right of the design that kind of looks like an eye and they say sometimes we are like that centre circle and we deflect the energy around us like a rock in a stream and we hold fast to who we are. Some people say it is the eye of keke7nex siyam, the eye of our creator. Some people will tell you it is the ripples we make in the world that spread out and interact with other people as the ripples cross each other as if we are all pebbles being dropped into a pond. So some people will say it means absolutely nothing and some people will tell you it means everything.

We wanted to draw on the elements of the house post and reflect on the strong values that hold up the house of BCIT. It was a great honour for me to do that work for you and be a part of the great work you're doing. O'siem.



Diversity Circles: An Overview

Shannon Kelly, Diversity Circles Project Co-Lead; FSA Director; Faculty, BCIT School of Computing & Academic Studies

What is Diversity Circles?

Our project description reads, "An Indigenous model for post-secondary teachers and academic staff to utilize professional mentoring and community outreach for engaging student and community diversity."

But what does that mean on a daily basis when we arrive at BCIT for work?

One way to describe it is a series of panels, workshops, conversations, tools, and connections to support all of us to effectively engage with our increasingly diverse students.

Another way to explain our project is an approach to positively, sensitively, and strategically address diversity, by leveraging existing knowledge within our own BCIT community and the wider community too.

We will achieve these goals through strengthening our community with knowledge sharing, networking, and mentoring initiatives. The Diversity Circles website provides more detail on all these elements.

So, how exactly is Diversity Circles relevant to educators?

Because my son has Autism, I studied ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) extensively on my own, in particular regarding learning and education in relation to ASD. One day, I realized that I was regularly adapting my teaching at BCIT to support students with learning differences in my classes. Very small changes to the way I delivered my labs made a big difference - not just to those students who identified as having learning differences, but to the entire class.

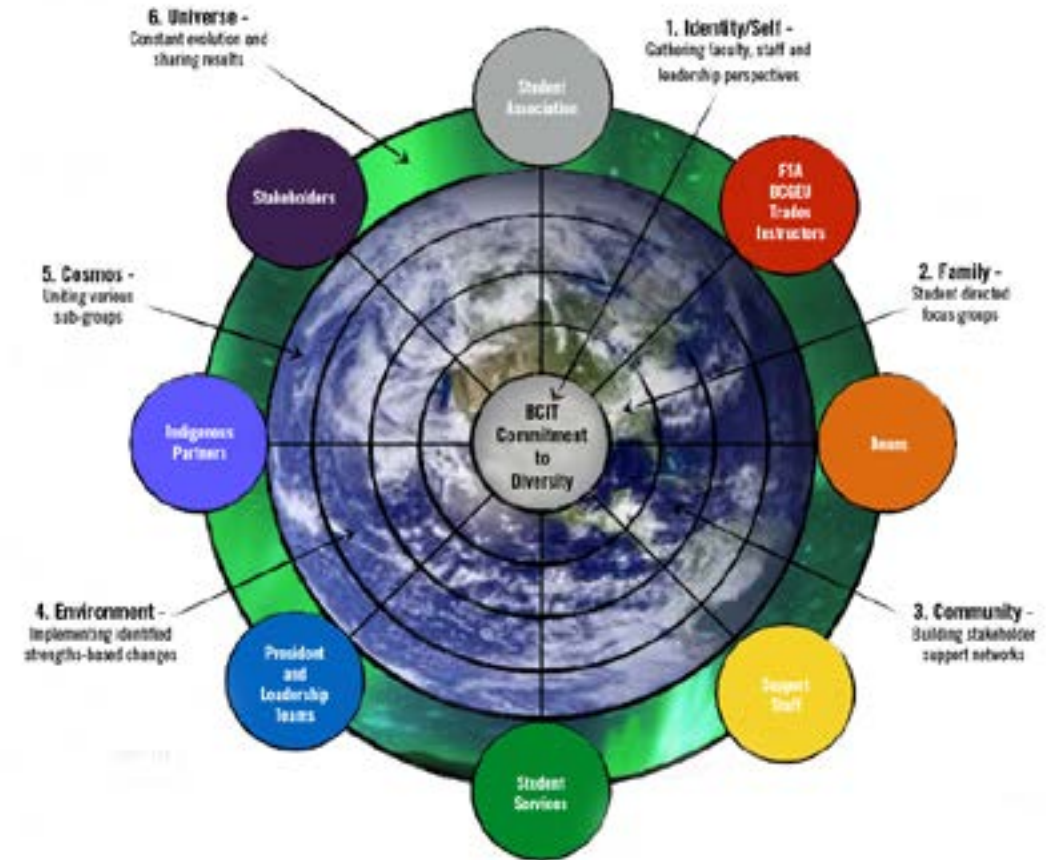
But more than just curriculum delivery, it was the social and interpersonal aspects of the student group dynamics where I really noticed how a little healthy facilitation on my part went a long way to securing better interactions and better results with diverse groups of students.

These experiences got me thinking about my fellow instructors at BCIT. Surely other people had encountered similar things in the classroom. Maybe my experiences could help others - and maybe other instructors' ideas could help my teaching too!

But, from a wider perspective, I also started to think about the entire post-secondary landscape, and how diversity in general is increasing and becoming more complex. Are we fully prepared to help our students and communities in this changing landscape? My colleague, Zaa Joseph, and I began discussing how peer-to-peer and community building strategies could help employees at BCIT, and from those discussions Diversity Circles emerged.



Diversity Circles is thrilled to be a recipient of Community and College Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF) funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).



An Indigenous Model

Framework Image courtesy of Andrew Judge and is an adaptation of work by Rheault (1999)

What is the framework?

Sometimes people ask me, what do you mean by "an Indigenous model" for supporting diversity at BCIT? To receive the full answer to that question, you need to come out to some of our events. At its core, an Indigenous model is best suited for this project as it inherently reflects the complexity, diversity, and interconnectedness of life. It provides a necessary counterpoint to traditional institutional thinking, which is driven by the "normalization" of educational outcomes. When educational approaches are purely outcome-based, they tend to lead to a deficit model, where students don't measure up and are "weeded out." In contrast, a more process-oriented approach leads to a strengths-based model, allowing individuals to use their own strengths and gifts to succeed on educational paths.

For the whole community

Diversity Circles is not just about helping our students realize their strengths and gifts, it's also about all of us fully using and sharing our own strengths and gifts. We want to hear your ideas about diversity, including your suggestions for topics and speakers. We are always looking to partner with people and with departments to co-host Diversity Circles events, and we welcome ideas for guest speakers from the community and from industry which are relevant to these discussions.

Like me, you don't need to be a formal expert with degrees in the area of every diversity topic; your passion or interest may be fueled by involvement with community groups, student groups, or even by experiences with family and friends. Or maybe you are simply motivated to do the best you can to support your students' success. Bring your ideas to the next Diversity Circles event or contact us directly with your insights.

We look forward to having you join the conversation!

Executive Director's Message:

FSA Engages Its Own Diversity

Engaging in a discussion about diversity on campus required the FSA to do some self-examination, and changes are underway as a result.

As with Diversity Circles, Indigenous teachings about connectedness have been instrumental in making the FSA more engaged with both our own members and our community. When we made the choice to recognize the unceded lands of the First Nations and to begin our general meetings with a welcome from an Indigenous Elder, we took a big step on a path toward recognizing the diverse relationships and networks within the FSA and beyond.

Although dissatisfaction with our bargaining environment was a big driver toward affiliation, the membership decision to join CAUT must also be seen as a recognition that the FSA is neither alone nor homogeneous. We share common cause with other faculty associations, other unions, and other entities seeking fairness, recognition, and a voice. By joining CAUT and participating in the BC Federation of Labour, we are opening up our union to ongoing initiatives seeking better representa-

tion from equity-seeking groups in our workplaces and our society generally.

Those varied identities also live within the FSA, and we have a lot to learn from other organizations on engaging the diversity within our membership. For decades we have wrestled with the underrepresentation of the large number of auxiliary instructors within the FSA. More recently, we have come to recognize that issues relating to employment in Part-Time Studies are issues for all our members. Injustice for these members is an injustice to all FSA members. Issues arising from PTS have taken on greater prominence in bargaining and in our advocacy work. As an organization, we've adjusted in other ways as well, such as by adding a second seat on our board of directors for associate members, by scheduling regular office hours at the Downtown Campus late in the day, and by giving PTS Instructors a voice at Tech Rep meetings and general meetings. We are continuing to look at how we can better reach and engage the 30% of our membership employed in PTS. In addition to spending more time listening to our members in

PTS, we will also look for assistance from CAUT and the extensive work it and its members have already done on behalf of Contract Academic Staff.

Overcoming the perceived division between members employed on regular and on temporary or auxiliary contracts is only the beginning of making the FSA a more inclusive organization. We need to continue examining how we contribute to divisions within our membership and recognize who we hurt and what we lose when we do so.

The FSA is not always the follower on matters of diversity. Diversity Circles has already attracted a lot of interest from CAUT and other faculty associations, unions, and institutions as a potential means of tapping into organizational strengths that have been suppressed. Mental health in the workplace is another area where the FSA is taking initiative. In addition to the neurodiversity focus within the Diversity Circles, FSA representatives have been strong advocates for mental health in the workplace. Within the FSA office, we have initiated the implementation of the national psychological

health and safety standard. Doing so is leading us to examine experiences of discrimination, threatening environments, and other risks to mental health and safety that undermine the well-being of FSA staff and compromise our ability to carry out the work of the union. As we encourage BCIT to implement the psychological health and safety standard for FSA members and all employees, we will be prepared and well positioned to advocate for a healthy, safe, and inclusive workplace.

Embracing our diversity is making the FSA a better union. We are taking steps to better represent all our members. Engaging members in a wider variety of ways is allowing us to tap into new strengths and to create new opportunities. Reaching out to the world around us is creating opportunities for us to overcome the challenges we face and to connect members with issues that are relevant to them. Examining how we can change our own practices to reduce marginalization and alienation within the union will make us more inclusive, fairer, and stronger.



Paul Reniers
Executive Director

Supporting & Understanding DIVERSITY

is vitally important, not only to BCIT but to educators in general. As an instructor in Computing, I have seen first-hand how cultural differences, as well as physical and cognitive differences impact student learning. I have also seen how a diverse student body contributes to a rich educational experience. I am very happy to be collaborating with Shannon and Zaa on this project, providing high-level guidance and support for the technology portion. I find the energy that they put into this work inspiring, and I expect I will learn a lot working with them. At a practical level, this project is also putting BCIT on the map in terms of humanities research. This is an impressive achievement that should be celebrated.

Aaron Hunter, Faculty, BCIT School of Computing, Diversity Circles Collaborator

Collaborating on this project is about building relationships, both with Indigenous knowledge, as well as with those committed to recognizing the value Indigenous knowledge has in contributing to well-being for all students and staff at post-secondary institutions. The Diversity Circles project is a logical next step for me in progressing ways that Indigenous knowledge can be utilized to enhance post-secondary social and intellectual infrastructure. There has been a long history of Indigenous scholars and community leaders making important contributions to academic institutions with respect to Indigenous knowledge and scholars today owe much to their work. Today, those contributions are culminating in waves of new knowledge exchanges and translations that are positively transforming the educational environment for Indigenous and all students alike. I believe we have a responsibility to our ancestors to ensure the legacy of their knowledge is utilized to enhance learning experiences for all in humility and respect.

Andrew Judge, Diversity Circles Contributor



Getting Serious about Deep Diversity: What about the implicit bias revolution?

Last spring, two FSA staff took part in a “Deep Diversity” workshop sponsored by the BC Federation of Labour. The workshop was billed as an introduction to unconscious bias, stereotypes, and how they relate to diversity inclusion in the workplace, and it aimed to provide tools to “diminish the effects these biases have on our workplace and community.” The concept of cognitive or implicit bias became topical last fall during a U.S. presidential debate when Hillary Clinton used the term in reference to concerns about policing and the justice system’s response to the many killings of African-American men.

What does this have to do with the FSA and Diversity Circles?

Interest in implicit bias arose from our involvement on the Harassment and Discrimination Steering Committee, along with representatives of the GEU bargaining units, the BCIT Student Association and BCIT. The Institute’s recent respectful workplace training efforts have prompted deeper reflection on the nature of discrimination and how to effectively address discriminatory attitudes and conduct at BCIT.

The fact is that when faced with complaints or questions about our own biases, most will say they are not racist or sexist (or other) and that they did not intend to be discriminatory. It’s also clear that negative stereotyping of individuals from minority or other out-groups is incredibly persistent. To create more inclusive and respectful workplaces that celebrate difference, we need more than directives, good policies, and sanctions. What’s called for is more thoughtful strategies and interventions because research establishes that all of us are programmed at a cognitive and usually unconscious level to be, well, biased against individuals and groups we view as different from us. Research also confirms a tendency to have less empathy for people who are perceived as dissimilar.

While most of us think we are rational actors, in reality we operate under the influence of cognitive biases that distort our thinking, influence our beliefs and empathy, and sway decisions we make every day. Researchers regard cognitive biases as a genuine deficiency in our thinking and judgment. Despite the best intentions, people frequently and automatically classify information in ways that are biased, and these biases are “implicit”, meaning they’re hidden and unintentional. Most of us make split second assumptions about the value and competence of others based on differences in traits like race, gender, and gender identity.

Society’s cues help to cement our biased views about “normalcy” with respect to these traits, and we’re continuously socialized to see the world in terms of in-groups and out-groups or ‘other’. All of us are susceptible to these problematic dynamics in the media and politics. However, the natural categorization of experiences and people on the basis of similarity versus difference begins in babies under a year old. In this sense, we are hard-wired to favour homogeneity over diversity. The categorization that leads to stereotyping is a normal aspect of our cognitive process. A typology of different cognitive biases has emerged. As one example, confirmation bias causes us to seek information that confirms our pre-existing views while downplaying information that threatens those views.



The problem is that the implicit biases and mental constructs we carry have adverse effects on our decisions and interactions in the real world, including workplaces.

Stubborn biases condition the individuals we oppose or dislike or fear, creating in-group and out-group biases that skew attitudes in ways that prejudice members of out-groups. Research shows that the correlation of race with negative stereotypes operates at a neural level. Recent neural imaging studies of empathy for pain have revealed a racial in-group bias in human brain activity in response to other group members’ suffering, as compared to out-group individuals.

Alarming, the activation of unconscious stereotyping is easily triggered by the cognitive phenomenon known as “priming”, which operates when people view photos or read names or hear music. These triggered biases play out in decisions like the rejection of applicants for job interviews based on the ethnic origin of their names. Studies confirm unintentional bias and stereotypes amongst healthcare providers: stereotyping based on race, gender and other traits influences their interpretation of behaviour and symptoms and influences clinical decisions, leading to disparities such as in the administration of pain treatment as between in-groups and out-groups. There is evidence within the U.S. criminal justice system of harsher sentencing and differential weighing of evidence based on traits like race. Interestingly, both men and women harbour particular stereotyped traits of leadership that are commonly associated with males with implications for the evaluation of candidates for leadership positions. In job competitions, women are as likely as men to choose male candidates over female candidates who are similarly or better qualified. The brain’s quick computing of these constructs affects our judgment of candidates for leadership, leading to less gender diversity.

These biases are powerful and natural, and where subtle and unconscious, they are highly resistant to change. So how can institutions hope to alter these habits of the mind?

Until recently, discussion of implicit biases was rare. This emerging understanding of our shared frailty in judgment has been dubbed the “implicit bias revolution.” Parallel to the growth in understanding of the significant consequences of the operation of implicit bias on decisions by those in positions of authority, there is also a better understanding of how to address implicit biases. Greater self-awareness can be cultivated through thoughtful exercises and skill-building that motivates change and works to cultivate empathy and interrupt the link between past experience and impulsive responses. Such interventions have been shown to reduce patient treatment bias, for example. The recognition that we are all subject to these implicit biases that need to be re-coded is proving to be key to approaching this challenge in a more informed and open way. This framing creates opportunities for change that don’t exist when shaming and other punitive exercises are employed.

Taking a page from Diversity Circles and the FSA’s value of fostering solidarity, it’s incumbent on us to get serious about promoting equitable, discrimination-free workplaces. Until we face our implicit biases, harmful attitudes and actions will continue to perpetuate in workplaces and other spaces where not everyone feels included and equal, much less appreciated for who they are and the gifts they bring.

Join us for upcoming Diversity Circles events!

Language & Diversity, Feb 3, 2017

12:30-2:00pm, BCIT BBY, Town Square A/B
Lunch and ASL interpretation provided.

This will be a panel and forum about celebrating and supporting students with multi languages, celebrating the vitality and cultural benefits of language diversity at BCIT, and discussing how best to support multi-language students at BCIT.

bcitfsa.ca/diversitycircles

Culture of Mentoring, Feb 10, 2017

11:30am-1:00pm, BCIT BBY, Town Square A/B
Lunch and ASL interpretation provided.

For all members of the BCIT community who are involved in any mentoring activities, for a great discussion and workshop on “the culture of mentoring.” We are excited to announce that our returning facilitator will be Andrew Judge.

Nurturing a Culture of Mentorship

Zaa Joseph, Diversity Circles Project Co-Lead; FSA Director; Advisor-Student Success, Aboriginal Services

My experience with the Aboriginal Services Peer-to-Peer Mentorship program has provided a great foundation for my contribution to the Diversity Circles mentorship project. Stories of successful Indigenous students lay the groundwork for role model programs in the field of Indigenous education through mentorship.

My own thesis research contributed to an emerging body of scholarship that underscores the distinct form of knowledge that an Indigenous paradigm provides. This qualitative research provides a better understanding of the personal, educational, and cultural factors that need to be present for First Nations students to aspire to, enter, and then successfully graduate from post-secondary institutions. Drawing on the perspectives of our Indigenous students has contributed positively to the BCIT Aboriginal Services program, enabling it to flourish.



The Diversity Circles project presents an Indigenous model with which post-secondary teachers and academic staff can better and more fully engage with diversity within student populations and communities. The project hinges on the fundamental notion that educators welcome diversity and embrace the increase in diversity of our student population as a positive change. At the same time, our project speaks directly to the corresponding reality that supporting an increasingly diverse student body requires more and different resources, awareness, and knowledge for faculty and staff. As well, this knowledge and the discussion of what is needed to support diversity should not be confined to the educational institution.

Critical to our ability to respond to and leverage these demographic changes for the betterment of society is the mobilization of an effective mentoring model to engage with our increasingly diverse populations in ways that are positive, sensitive, and strategic. Mentoring leverages the power of community-based expertise to drive responses to diversity and empower all participants in the diversity conversation. Mentorship provides a pathway for BCIT faculty and staff to collaborate to benefit the students in our classrooms. Diversity Circles is an attempt to embed such mentoring in our organizational culture. It can be something that takes time but it can also be built into the relationships we support and nurture every day.

The Diversity Circles mentoring project will focus on three target circles to begin with: Indigenous, learning differences, and gender. We will begin learning from the members of our community about their strengths and how they can contribute to these and other intersecting areas. We have begun by presenting the concentric circles (living) framework for ongoing feedback, followed by taking communities' strengths and incorporating them into workshops and gatherings to evolve, share and invest in these gifts. Through a strengths-based approach, Diversity Circles looks to build upon BCIT faculty and staff's gifts that can help fill a gap for underrepresented or marginalized groups.

Through this newsletter, our January general meeting, and a special event in February, we seek to acknowledge and celebrate the intersectionality of our knowledge and family history at BCIT as well as National Mentoring month.



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: Zaa Joseph



As the only FSA board member from Student Services, Zaa Joseph combines two perspectives that really represent the FSA as a whole: a great concern for individuals and a great interest in the health of BCIT as a community that shares an interest in serving students. Zaa has also embraced the need for the FSA to look beyond BCIT and engage with what's happening in the broader community.

What does diversity mean to you? Diversity is a shared perspective, finding common ground to support each other, collaborate and progress at work and in life.

Why do you think the Diversity Circles project is important for the FSA to support? Creating a dialogue about equity in the workplace is a community building process. Discussions enable us to relate to and support each other and, most importantly, benefit our diverse student body by creating institutional change that includes us all.

You recently underwent a name change, can you share what that decision was about for you? My father named me after his dad Aba's (my grandfather's) best friend, Zaa. The reason for this naming was that Zaa and Aba shared a close and playful relationship. They joked, hunted, fished, and sat together as the head of the balhats (potlach) in Middle River and the Joseph Keyoh. Keyoh is a representation of trapline, family maternal lineage, and closeness of community. It is this playfulness that I have strived for in my life.

My identity was shaped with a lot of teasing and bullying when I was young and grew up as Zaa in Vancouver and Vancouver Island schools (this did not happen in

Middle River - Elders there know me as Zaa). One day I came home and said, "Mom, I do not want to be Zaa anymore." At that time in the late 70's cool names such as mine were not commonplace in non-First Nations society. My Mom's dad made sure I had the second name Derik in order to fit in. I chose that name when I was 5 to avoid constant teasing and bullying. Fast forward to present day, and digging into my culture through connection with Tl'azt'en Nation and all the students that frequent Aboriginal Services, I have gone back to the core of who I am and now go by my given first name, Zaa.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA as a board member? Working in solidarity with faculty and staff, there is room to be creative, strategic, and gain leadership skills. It allows me to stretch my wings a bit and most importantly has allowed me to learn from others including board members with years of experience.

How do you contribute to your community when you're not at work? I travel to Middle River to visit family. The northern part of BC and specifically my reserve has a lot more poverty than in the city. I feel very honoured to be a part of this community and to be able to drop in and see my family and share knowledge and stories and kid around with no judgement from either side. This says a lot. On my reserve, there is a very complex system of fluency in language and culture, mixed with the devastating realities of colonization and residential schools. Contributing to my community including making an effort to learn my Dakelh language and teaching my daughter Ila about her culture and language through regular visits to our territory means a lot to me.

I believe intellectual monocultures put everyone at risk when the one-size-fits-all approach inevitably falls short. Diversity Circles has the potential to nurture important alternative views as we navigate change, whether it be social, environmental, or economic. It serves the needs of individuals, and the community as a whole.

The bcit.ca/housepost website that I co-developed is an experiment in providing a different model for interacting with content on the web. It's designed to engage visual learners, and it reflects the exploratory nature of the Indigenous approach to education.

MEMBER PROFILE: Christie Little



After less than a year of working here, Christie Little has jumped into life at BCIT and as a member of the FSA. Christie attends FSA events, keeps up with FSA news, and has been a strong supporter of the FSA Diversity Circles project since it launched.

How long have you been at BCIT? I started at BCIT in February 2016. When I was hired, a wise soul told me that starting at (and learning about) BCIT is like taking a drink of water from a fire hose. I can confirm this is true! Lots to learn, but it has been an exciting, interesting, and rewarding journey so far.

What motivates your work? I am motivated by the intriguing, passionate, and inspiring students I am privileged to work with every day. As a counsellor, it is humbling to be able to listen to and share in people's stories, celebrate their resiliency, and support them in overcoming their challenges. Being able to collaborate with students in their efforts to empower themselves in their education and growth is deeply rewarding.

What key lesson has working at BCIT taught you? Balance is everything! For both students and staff it is imperative to be intentional about taking care of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing – whatever that means to each of us. This is a unique learning and work environment – full of innovation and drive, and balance is key to sustainability in such milieu.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA? I have been supported and protected by unions for most of my working life – in social work, community development, and educational environments. It's my turn to get involved and give back, and the FSA is a fantastic place to dig in.

What does diversity mean to you? Diversity means awareness, inclusivity, respect and honoring of all individuals and cultural groups. It means recognizing and understanding differences as well as similarities and commonalities. It means acknowledging the impact of intersectionality of identities and lived experiences.

Why do you think the Diversity Circles project is important for the FSA to support? It is a tremendous opportunity for staff and faculty to mine the diverse resources we have both on campus and, through collaboration, off campus. We have so many folks around campus that have knowledge and experience to share, allowing us to learn from our peers, build our own knowledge and capacity, and engage in community building. We can ask questions and break down barriers to better support students and one another. As a person who identifies as both queer and nonconforming in my gender identity, it is affirming to see the community that is building around these conversations and creating stronger, safer and more accepting communities on campus!

What keeps you busy when you're not at work? Gardening, riding my bicycle, yoga, enjoying local craft brew and wine, reading, watching reality TV, and spending time with my partner, friends, and family.



The FSA is proud to join with the BCIT community on February 22, 2017 to stand up against discrimination, bullying, and harassment!

FLEX YOUR TEACHING SKILLS

- Have fun!
- Receive Peer To Peer Feedback
- Create Lesson Plans
- Plan for Learner Engagement

ATTEND AN INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS WORKSHOP!

Contact Us!
Learning and Teaching Centre
T: 604-432-8927
E: develop@bcit.ca
bcit.ca/ltc/workshops/isw

STAFF PROFILE: Sicily Ng



Sicily Ng joined the FSA office on January 9 in anticipation of the retirement of Marian Ciccone after more than 20 years with the FSA. Sicily immediately impressed us with her enthusiasm, industriousness, communication skills, and her desire to help. Please introduce yourself to Sicily when you stop by the FSA office.

What are you most excited about in your new role with the FSA? I am excited about assisting our members on a day-to-day basis in my new role as Operations Assistant. I have never worked in a unionized environment, so I am mostly thrilled and a little bit worried about all the new information to absorb but I always welcome a new challenge and look forward to things I can learn from this position.

What key lesson(s) have you learned in your past work? Learning what I am good at and what I need support for are the key lessons from my previous work. Having to work for different companies with different responsibilities has offered me a chance to try my hand in a wide variety of tasks. Knowing what my limits are allows me

to know when to ask for help and when to step up to offer help. It has been an important lesson for me to learn as I often work in a small team environment.

What FSA value speaks to you the most? The FSA value of 'empowerment' speaks to me the most. Workers are often not told what their rights are nor told how to exercise their rights in BC, so I really see the FSA's work as valuable. Empowerment leads to action that creates change.

What is something you're passionate about outside of work? I have many passions – sometimes it seems like too many. I love language learning and I am currently trying to learn kindergarten-level Japanese. I also volunteer with various animal rescue organizations because I can't say no to the face of baby animals.

What did you want to be when you grew up? I wanted to work on the set of Bill Nye the Science Guy. It looked so fun to blow things up all the time and make models all day. Unfortunately, it stopped production before I grew up. I still enjoy watching re-runs of that show from time to time and am still finding new information I didn't know before.

Increasingly diverse populations in post-secondary have the capacity to enrich our individual and collective understanding of the world, to spark innovation and creativity in classrooms and workplaces, to broaden and deepen our shared humanity, and much more. At the same time, "difference does not magically translate into benefits" (Page, 2007). Most of us are too busy to radically rethink how we do what we do every day, let alone to think about the systems in which our learning and working are embedded. Inspired by Indigenous ways of knowing and being in an inter-dependent world, the Diversity Circles team had the vision to convene an inter-related array of dialogues and workshops aimed, in part, at generating concrete, faculty-specific ideas about catalyzing the great potential embedded in BCIT's growing diversity. I am delighted to be collaborating with the Diversity Circles team on a fascinating initiative of great value to the BCIT community and the communities in which we live and work.

Robert A. Daum, Fellow and Lead in Diversity and Innovation at SFU's Centre for Dialogue, Diversity Circles Contributor

Upcoming Events

Feb 8

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

Feb 15

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

Mar 4

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

Mar 8

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

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 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.

Contact Us

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search 'BCITFSA Group'



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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



Teresa Place
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Kenzie Woodbridge
Vice-President



Terry Gordon
Treasurer & Director



Karl Hildebrandt
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Shannon Kelly
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