

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK



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The BCITFSA and its members' workplaces are located on unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x^wməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

WELCOME TO YOUR UNION

Welcome to the BCIT Faculty and Staff Association (FSA)!

You have joined a union of over 1,800 faculty, researchers, assistant instructors, tech staff, and even some student employees at BCIT.

Unions are democratic, member-driven organizations, and the FSA's work rests on three core principles: **representation**, **negotiation**, and **advocacy**—the themes of this handbook. Rank-and-file members, elected union representatives, and staff all work together to make the FSA an organization that, day-in and day-out, strives to achieve better working conditions, benefits, and compensation for our membership.



Colin

Colin Jones
PRESIDENT



Matt Greaves

Matt Greaves
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

WHO IS THE FSA?

You are the FSA! What social issues the union addresses, the direction of collective bargaining, and the education programs that representatives deliver are all informed by the membership, in consultation with staff and your Board of Directors.

You are now part of an organization of BCIT employees from across the Institute. Our members are educators and education professionals dedicated to providing a quality learning environment for BCIT students. FSA representatives are equally **committed** to providing our members with an excellent working environment.

The job of FSA staff and representatives is to make your working life better in a variety of ways. The **FSA Board of Directors** is comprised exclusively of our union members. Ten Board members are elected for two-year terms, including the President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. The Board sets the strategic direction of the union, reviewing and establishing policy, and upholding our legal and financial responsibilities.

Tech Reps are representatives chosen by each Department. They provide essential links between FSA Board, staff, and the membership. Representation is a core function of the FSA, and Tech Reps are a vital part of membership consultation. Tech Reps' contributions allow the FSA to improve our policies and respond effectively to ongoing changes at BCIT.

At the FSA, we have our own **committees** and **caucuses**. We also appoint members to BCIT committees, and to organizations where we are an affiliate, like the Canadian Association of University Teachers. In our more than 50 years of service, the FSA has always depended on member-volunteers to direct a broad range of union activities.

The FSA has professional **staff** to support the operations of the union. Staff members implement the direction and policies of the organization through work in the areas of strategic leadership, labour relations, data management, communications, member organizing, and operational support.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE FSA

By phone: 604.432.8695

By email: fsa@bcit.ca

 [@BCITFSA](https://twitter.com/BCITFSA)

Web: bcitfsa.ca

BCIT FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION

SE16-116 3700 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2

SEVEN QUICK ACTIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS

- 1. Review your Collective Agreement (CA):** Available on bcitfsa.ca.
- 2. Check your initial salary placement:** Compare your salary placement against Article 11 of the CA. Is it correct? Contact fsa@bcit.ca if you think it isn't.
- 3. Find your Tech Reps (which are like union shop stewards):** An up-to-date list of FSA Tech Reps and the areas they cover is available at bcitfsa.ca/tech-reps.
- 4. Attend a general membership meeting:** General meetings occur three times a year, with dates available on the Calendar page of our website. Email your Member Engagement Officer for an invitation.
- 5. Join a caucus or committee:** The FSA and its affiliates have dozens of committees and caucuses for members to join. See the Get Involved menu on bcitfsa.ca.
- 6. Read the most recent newsletter, the BCITFSA Voice, at bcitfsa.ca/newsletters:**
Among other things, the Voice contains profiles of members and staff, reports from your President, and labour relations advice.
- 7. Set up your website profile** at bcitfsa.ca/members-portal/ or email fsa@bcit.ca.

WHAT CAN THE FSA DO FOR ME?

Members contribute 1.85% of their gross salary (tax deductible) to the FSA. You get a lot for that money. Data from Statistics Canada shows that the media unionized worker in Canada earns on average over \$7 more per hour than their non-unionized counterpart. Yet the FSA does a lot more than fight for fairer wages. Our mandate is to **represent, negotiate, and advocate** on your behalf.

Representation

FSA staff and representatives act on behalf of the membership in a variety of areas, most notably in negotiations with Institute management over the terms of your CA. More frequently, however, they represent individual and collective member interests in meetings with the employer. The FSA **Labour Relations (LR) team** handles problems arising in the interpretation and application of the CA. LR staff can also assist in navigating related labour agreements signed by the FSA and the Institute as well as potential violations of the BC Human Rights and Labour Relations codes by the employer.

Representation may indeed take a variety of forms and proceed through a variety of people. The many committees and caucuses in which you can represent your fellow members encourage comprehensive representation, meaning that we're able to confront a variety of issues broadly related to the labour relation.

Negotiation

The FSA negotiates with BCIT every few years to get our members a new employment contract. A **CA** governs your working relationship with the Institute. It covers a range of topics like the terms of your work, benefits, pay, and professional development. CAs are traditionally bargained between the employer and the union. In BC, however, the provincial government complicates this relationship through its Public Sector Employer’s Council, which sets bargaining mandates for public-sector employers like BCIT. The FSA has nevertheless made tremendous gains at the bargaining table.

Our broader collective bargaining group strives to represent membership interests. The Collective Agreement Committee (CAC)—comprised of members, the Executive Director, and resourced by staff—conducts extensive research of the membership to determine what proposals are given to the employer. The Bargaining Team—members and staff—conducts negotiations with the employer after the CAC has translated member priorities into proposals.



Advocacy

The FSA advocates for its members outside the Institute as well. We work with similar unions and organizations looking for improvements in areas like workplace standards, post-secondary education, and safety regulations. FSA representatives are registered lobbyists with the provincial government and advocate on our members’ behalf to elected officials like the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and Premier to bring about positive change.

SEVEN RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

1. There are roughly 20 different kinds of **leave** distinguished by your CA, including sick leave, bereavement leave, and leave to run for public office.
2. You have the right to **refuse unsafe work**.
3. **Vacation** days vary for different categories of FSA members. Faculty, Assistant Instructors, and Technical Staff, for example, have between 25 and 43 days of annual vacation allotted by the CA. All employees can carry over a maximum of 10 vacation days per year. See **Article 9** for more information.
4. The provincial Labour Relations Code, Employment Standards Act, Workers' Compensation Act, Human Rights Code, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms **protect** FSA members, like all workers in BC, irrespective of citizenship.
5. Maternity, parental, and adoption **entitlements** are detailed in your CA.
6. You have the right to employment **free from discrimination**.
7. There is language in our CA that governs how your wage is determined. Within six months of your initial hiring, you have the right to appeal your **wage-scale** placement.

For more information, consult your CA or contact the FSA office through fsa@bcit.ca.

FAQS

Are my conversations with the FSA private?

You can contact the FSA in confidence to explore your specific concern. There are strong protections in place to ensure that management cannot retaliate against a member who seeks union advice.

What is Collegial Governance?

It is the right of members to participate in the decision-making and administration of their Departments and a cornerstone of our collective agreement. Among other areas, our members hold rights in hiring, departmental planning, breaks, and vacations.

Is my program head my manager?

No. Your program head (or PTS Coordinator) is not a manager to you or any other FSA or BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) member. They are your colleague. In our CA, we categorize program heads as departmental or administrative positions.

What's the Month Free of Teaching or MFOT?

Just what it sounds like. The CA gives teaching faculty one month "...free of teaching and student evaluation (examination, marking and marks review) duties."

How can I get involved?

Our website lists the different ways that you can support your union to make BCIT a better place to work. Please do not hesitate to contact us! See page three of this handbook for contact details.



