



BCITFSA VOICE



President's Message:

Trust the Process



Colin Jones
President

Welcome back! I hope each of us was able to take at least a few days off over the break to relax, reflect, and reenergize for 2020. For some of us, that means returning to the classroom - be it physical or virtual - with students. For others, it means ensuring the services and technology are in place for our students and faculty. And, for all of us, it means returning to the rewarding jobs that we have chosen - and the lineups at Tim Horton's which have returned to their natural state.

And, to those surprised to see me on the front page - hello! In early December, our Board of Directors appointed me to serve as President for the balance of the current term, ending May 31, 2020. As I wear both the Chief Negotiator and President hats for the next few months, I look forward to the challenges ahead of us. It is an honour and my pleasure to represent you.

While I will save my remarks on bargaining for page 4, it is consuming much of our time at the FSA office. Each staff member has supported your Bargaining Team and their efforts to secure the meaningful changes you have mandated us to pursue. Not surprisingly, I rarely walk across campus without a member asking about the status of bargaining. My standard approach is to tap dance briefly and emphasize how important it is to "trust the

process". The bargaining team is accountable to members and we are careful not to share information that might compromise any advances we are able to make at the table.

Back to your FSA office staff, I would like to make note of the exceptional work done by our team. Having spent just over a year in the FSA offices, I have had a unique opportunity to see each in action, on a day-to-day basis, serving each of us as they protect and advance our rights. I am 100% confident when I say our members would be severely disadvantaged without our skilled, dedicated and hard-working staff. Thank you!

Finally, I want to encourage each of us to further engage with the FSA. Volunteer to sit on a committee, read FSA materials, and attend an FSA general meeting. Take your Tech Rep for coffee! They are more than conduits for information. Volunteer Tech Reps provide valuable visibility into the realities faced across programs and departments, but they need hear your stories. Elections are coming up for the President, Vice President and one Director-at-Large positions. If you are at all curious, please reach out to me. I would be happy to walk you through the election process, the duties of each role, and discuss how rewarding it is to represent your talented colleagues. Last, but not least: vote. Casting your ballot, whether to ratify a collective agreement or elect your union leadership is an important way to have a say in your FSA.

FSA Staff Report:

Working Together

Serving Members

As a member-driven organization and a member-based association, the FSA belongs to its members. In its first decade, the FSA, then known as the BCIT Staff Society, was solely operated by member volunteers; but, beginning in the 1970s, the member-elected board began to hire a staff complement to ensure members have people whose work is dedicated to representing, negotiating, and advocating for them.

Embedded in this model is a practice of “customer” (member) service; and, for years, the FSA office has built a service model that seeks to advance the following commitments:

- fostering high standards of excellence in education,
- improving members’ employment conditions, working environment, and opportunities,
- maintaining transparency in FSA activities,
- fostering a well-informed and engaged membership,
- promoting participation in decision-making, and
- nurturing a sense of community amongst our members and all of BCIT.

As member inquiries and service needs have grown and changed, the FSA staff have continuously adapted and improved our approach to service, we continue to look at ways to improve our services. Information we receive through the baseline member survey – an all-member survey held every other year – and our regular interactions with members inform those changes. Additionally, we make changes that make our internal processes more efficient and support the well-being of the staff in the office.

What can you do?

Explore your Options

BCIT is accountable for adhering to BC’s labour laws and the BCIT-BCITFSA Collective Agreement. If you believe they aren’t meeting their obligations or are in violation of the collective agreement, and you believe you can raise your concerns safely, we encourage you to notify the appropriate person, such as your manager or BCIT’s human resources, and request that they rectify the issue.

Where that does not work, reach out to your union so that we can work with you to explore additional options.

Contact the FSA Office, not a Person

The fastest way into our system is through our general email (fsa@bcit.ca); or check out our contact page (www.bcitfsa.ca/contact), which has our office location, phone number, or an online contact form. This ensures your request or inquiry goes directly into the process described below.

If you choose to contact a person directly – either a staff person or a board member – there is a greater chance that there will be a delay in responding to you. An individual might be away or might not get to your email/call as regularly as the general email inbox is checked. Our office is busy and the workload of our staff fluctuates depending on demand. While there may be delays in getting back to you because of other urgent matters, we don’t want the delay to be because your inquiry didn’t reach us!

Provide Information

The more information you provide in your initial inquiry, the less we have to ask you when we initially contact you. In addition to your name, details such as your employee A-number, School/Division, Department/Program, and specifics about your matter can be helpful for our staff in preparing to get in touch with you and address your concern/question.

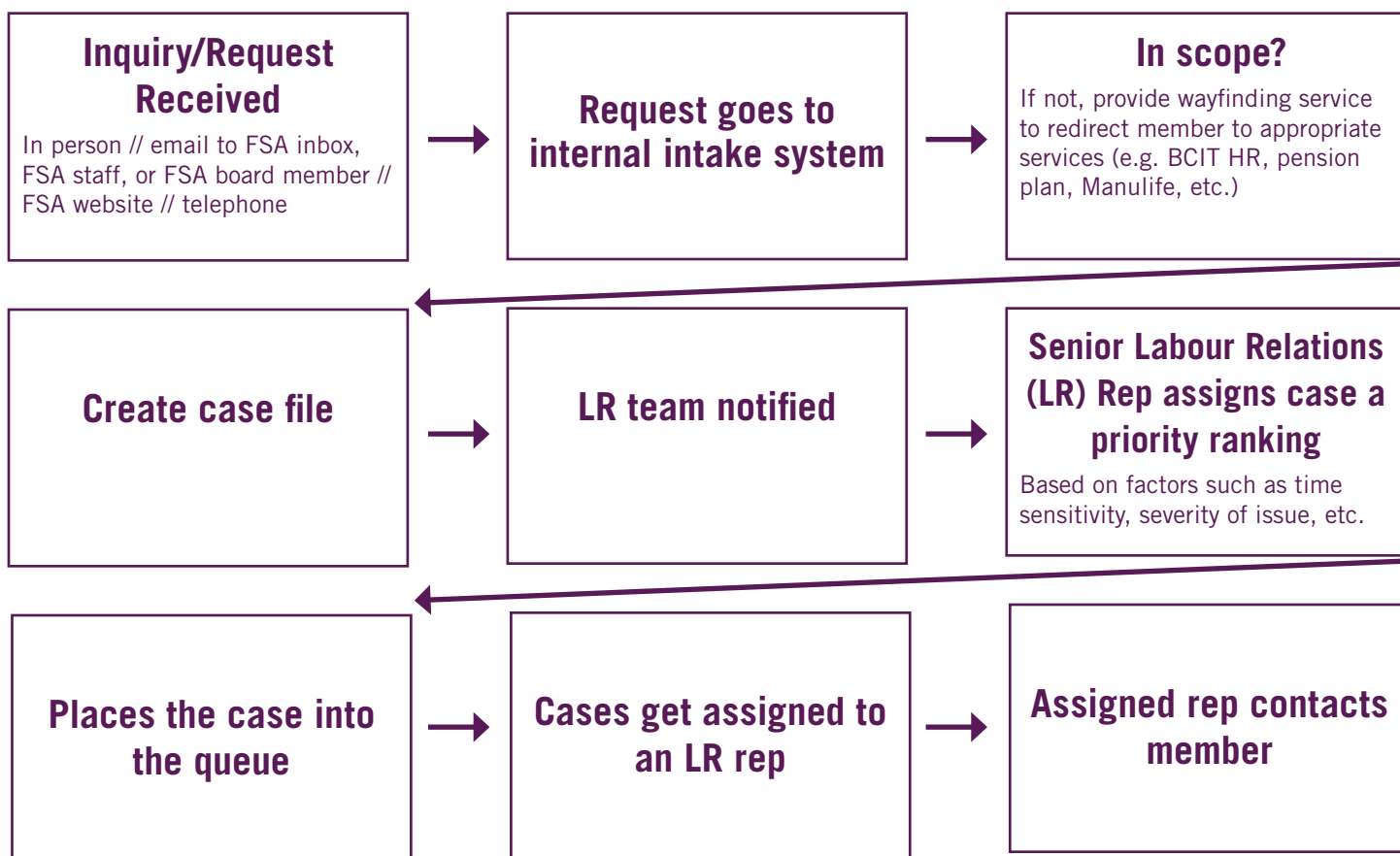
Communicating with FSA staff

The “business” of the FSA is to protect and advance the working conditions of FSA members. As an employer ourselves, we must ensure that FSA office staff, most of whom are protected through a collective agreement with CUPE, have a healthy and safe workplace. This includes ensuring a reasonable workload, respecting hours of work, and providing a respectful workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying. FSA members are expected to be respectful with FSA staff and we encourage all members to work collaboratively with the staff team to engage, celebrate, protect, and make gains for all members.

The Collective

The FSA staff team, guided by your board of directors, is committed to its work. We don’t see this as being work we do in isolation. When members inform themselves about their rights, exercise their rights, speak up for the rights of others, and participate in the FSA’s works, we are stronger. An underlying principle of a member-association and of a union is that of solidarity. As members of the FSA you have opportunities to find shared interests, learn about each other, and take action together. We are honoured to work alongside you in building unity, recognizing difference, and supporting each other.

What happens when you reach out to the FSA?



Chief Negotiator's Message:

It Takes Two to Tango



Colin Jones
Chief Negotiator

Your Collective Agreement Committee and Bargaining Team spent more than a year preparing for this, our 18th round of collective bargaining. The dance began, officially, when we sat down with BCIT's bargaining team to exchange proposals on October 7, 2019. It was not until that afternoon that we were introduced to the changes BCIT tabled to alter our collective agreement.

Our initial days of bargaining focused on "housekeeping" changes. These types of proposals, tabled by both parties, are intended to bring our collective agreement in line with legislation that has changed in recent years, address minor errors, or create consistency throughout our contract. Largely, these were agreed upon with little debate. More recently the bargaining teams have delved into the incorporation, renewal, and withdrawal of various Memoranda of Agreement ("memags"). The creation of enduring Memags has been a longstanding labour relations practice at BCIT – the oldest of those still in force was signed in the mid-1970s.

Next, we turned our mind to substantive changes, ones that could serve as the basis for not only our employment, but for colleagues hired going forward. We have tabled a number of meaningful proposals that, if agreed to, would be beneficial to our members and the BCIT community. Our proposals are designed stand the test of time, enabling BCIT to put its best foot forward in this new decade – and beyond.

Many of the conditions in our current agreement were negotiated in a much different era. Were we working toward our first collective agreement, it would look nothing like it does today. There are clauses in our collective agreement that we don't particularly like. We have heard from members over the years that a little more flexibility here and a little less restriction there would be appreciated. And, yes, some additional money spread across the wage scales would be welcome. But, there are some areas of our contract that are more valuable than gold – or, in this case, cash. We have heard, loud and clear, that our members will not be tempted by the money PSEA and BCIT puts in front of us to buy the rights we hold so dearly. Shared, collegial governance is the foundation on which BCIT was established and the bedrock upon which much of our rights rest. If we were foolish enough to be swept off our feet by this, we would never be able to bargain it back.

Our focus has not changed since the FSA membership voted on the bargaining themes for this round; we continue to fight for Equity & Fairness, Recruitment & Retention, and Climate Change & Sustainability. We regularly hear from you, our members, that the status quo is not sufficient, and that we need to make meaningful improvements to our collective agreement – without selling the farm. Your Bargaining Team and I are prepared and committed to pursuing the mandate you have given us.

We've done our preparation, arrived at the dance, and know our moves on the dance floor. As we listen to the tune sung by PSEA and BCIT, your Bargaining Team will stand strong; all without treading on anyone's toes.



BARGAINING

Member Profile

Emily Chen is an FSA member and Assistant Instructor in BCIT's Medical Laboratory Science department. Emily started at BCIT in 2016 and brings her skills and knowledge from her experience and the Masters she completed in 2014. Emily's Tech Rep shares that she is a positive contributor to the MedLab team and great to work with!

How long have you worked at BCIT?

3 years.

What motivates your work?

Raising awareness of Medical Laboratory Technology & creating MT's I would like to work with.

One word to describe the FSA?

Haven't had much interaction with the FSA, take that to describe them as you will.

What lesson has working at BCIT taught you?

Ask for what you need. It's surprising how much you can accomplish.

What motivates you to be involved with (or support) the FSA?

Supporting colleagues.

Which living person do you most admire?

AOC (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US congressperson).

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?
Honolulu

What is the greatest issue facing BCIT?

Communication! Why do some projects seem to disappear and some come out of nowhere?

What is the best book you have read recently?

I Might Regret This by Abbi Jacobson. If you like the antics on Broad City, you'll probably enjoy this.

What was your first paying job?

Retail - it was terrible.

One way to make meetings better:

Remove agenda items that could be e-mails.

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

Hunger & homelessness. No reason anyone should go hungry in Vancouver.

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

Travel & eating ice cream. Best if done together.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Honesty & autonomy.

What most inspires you?
Passionate people - I want to be as excited as them!

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

Let's not open this can of worms!

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

In the courtyard when it's sunny & warm.

The future of public post-secondary education is...
Free education (I hope).

What is a course/class you would like to take?
All of them - I want to know all the things!

What could you use right now if someone would invent it for you?
Invisible noise cancelling headphones.



For this feature, the FSA borrows from Marcel Proust (and others who have popularized the French author's questionnaire), as a way for you to get to know our members, board members, and staff.

That Manager's Bad Decision Might be Mine?

Departmental planning powers in an environment of collegial governance.



George Talbott
Senior Labour
Relations Rep

An Associate Dean makes last-minute assignments of work, or a Director imposes surprise alterations to coverage during Winter break, or management tries to control the creation and approval of vacation plans: What do all of these incidents have in common?

They stem from a Department's failure to understand its rights regarding planning. A well-functioning Department meets regularly, and democratically strategizes for the future. It determines

before a school year begins the amount of prospective work, and the allocation of assignments, and builds a vacation schedule such that members know when and how to obtain their vacation days and their month free of teaching (if they are teaching faculty).

When a Department fails as a group to meet and plan, often one or two individuals assume the Department's powers. Problems arise when lack of proper discussion leads to confusion or unanticipated problems around work assignments or leave.

The answer to these problems lies in a Department's ability to fully flex its rights under the Collective Agreement. In one Department FSA members grew weary of management attempts to control the assignment of work, and the flow of departmental meetings. Rediscovering the power to plan their own meetings, they used voting software to formulate and pass resolutions. This was done in the face of stiff management resistance.

What do FSA members need to know about Departmental powers?

You need to know that you have a right to be consulted in the formation of departmental objectives and plans. And that the entire Department must devise a plan to determine service coverage, allocation of professional

duties, a vacation schedule, and break periods including the month free of teaching (where the Department has instructors).

Departments at times acquiesce, allowing their managers to take on the role of sovereign who fails to consult with their subjects. Perhaps this is due to ignorance about the rights that FSA members have, or due to the heavy demands placed on members by their roles, including administrative tasks and work on committees. In rare cases, this delegation to one person has actually been decided by the Department as a whole at some point in the past. If that is the case, the Department has the right to oversee any individual who is exercising the Department's powers, and to take back those powers and place them in the hands of the entire Department. (See Articles 1.8.5.2 and 14.4.)

A quick look at the Collective Agreement shows FSA departmental members have serious muscle:

- Article 14.1 requires managers to determine a Department's objectives by consulting with the Department. Consultation is defined in Article 1.8.4 as the serious exchange of information and ideas before action is taken.
- Article 14.2 is even stronger than the consultation right found in 14.1. It states that the Department "shall" devise a plan that deals with coverage of services, allocation of professional duties, creating a vacation schedule, and planning break periods and month free of teaching. These are typical of the rights FSA members can oversee and claim as a Department.
- Others departmental powers include workloading (Articles 8.8 and 8.9), vacation scheduling (Article 9.2.3.1), approving General Purpose Leaves Without Pay (Article 9.7.1) and Professional Development Leave Without Pay (Article 10.7.1). And the list goes on.



Photo by Headway on Unsplash

What happens if the FSA members in a Department are locked in a dispute with their manager regarding departmental plans? Article 14.3 requires a three-member panel be created: one member appointed by FSA members in the Department, one appointed by their manager, and those two panelists chose a dean or other manager to act as a chair. The panel makes recommendations to the disputing parties.

There are other nuggets hidden in the Article 14's circumscription of departmental objectives and operations:

Article 14.3.4 is clear that any management action done under this article (i.e. regarding departmental planning) must be “reasonable, fair to each Employee.” Failure to be reasonable and fair is grievable. Employees may consider using individual grievances under Article 3.4 to enforce this language.

Article 14.5 mandates that each Department shall have a procedure, approved by a majority, “through which appeals of departmental decisions may be processed.” By creating such a procedure, each Department may ensure members are treated fairly, and not simply delegate such powers to managers.

Please reach out to your Tech Reps if you want to know more about departmental planning powers.

What is a Department?

Departments under Article 1.8.5 include all the FSA members plus the manager of a departmental unit. Thus, managers only have one vote in the exercise of departmental rights. To find out what department you belong to, have a look at the list of departments in Appendix 3 near the back of the Collective Agreement—a copy of which is available at bcitfsa.ca under the Employment Agreements tab.

I WAS CONTACTED BY THE BCIT RESPECT, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION OFFICE TO BE A WITNESS IN AN INVESTIGATION. DO I NEED AN FSA REP TO COME WITH ME?

You're being called as a witness to what's happened allegedly between the parties and you do have a requirement to speak to BCIT as your employer. We would encourage you to attend. If you are not the complainant nor the respondent, you're unlikely to face any legal consequences for your participation.

The process is fairly straightforward. You would meet with them at a defined time and place, and answer their questions to the best of your knowledge. If you don't remember or you don't know, then be clear and say you don't recall or know. If you think of something after the meeting you forgot to tell them, you can email them. You can always ask to take a break from the questions if you need a bio break. Some snacks or a coffee is good to bring if you think your energy might decrease during the meeting.



Best Practices

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS (IAP'S) & TESTS MISSED WITH MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

Associate Members (PTS instructors) may be asked to do extra work supporting students with accessibility accommodations (IAP's or Individual Accommodation Plans) and making up tests or classes missed with approved medical documentation.

While these situations are somewhat case-specific, BCIT has been clear in the past that in the case of the legal Duty to Accommodate, "the Institute must bear the cost of duty to accommodate". If a PTS instructor needs to spend significant extra time prepping different materials, doing an extraordinary amount of liaising, or grading extra assignments outside the usual course tasks, they can be compensated through a PTS administration contract.

For making up tests or classes missed with approved medical documentation, it depends on the situation but if a PTS Instructor needs to create a new assignment or supervise a student outside of contract class hours to write a test, they can be compensated through PTS administration contracts as well.

Are you doing work outside of your contract terms? If your manager refuses to address this issue, please let the FSA know.



Best Practices

Staff Profile

Kristie Starr joined the FSA's labour relations team in September 2019. Kristie brings decades of union organizing and representation experience to the FSA and started her work in this sector at a post-secondary institution where she was a leader in achieving a first contract for teaching assistants. Kristie's skills in servicing union contracts, member engagement, and grassroots organizing are a great addition to the FSA team.

How long have you worked at the FSA?

I started in September 2019.

One word to describe the FSA?

Unusual

What motivates your work?

I grew up in a steel mill town and then I went to grad school in a university town, and in both cities I learned that people (both "blue collar" steelworkers and "white collar" academic workers) employed by any company or university benefit from joining a union and collectively advocating for better working conditions.

What lesson has working at the FSA taught you?

FSA members have a lot of power within their own departments to make positive change.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

It's crucial for teachers and researchers at post-secondary institutions to demand and maintain a strong say in their conditions of work and their students' conditions of learning.

Which living person do you most admire?

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

I think Vancouver is an ideal place to live, but I'd love to also have a home in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

What is the greatest issue facing the labour movement?

Unions must cooperate and prioritize organizing young workers, contract/precari-ous workers, and workers in the private sector.

What is the best book you have read recently?

The Idiot by Elif Batuman

What was your first paying job?

Babysitting. I was an incredibly busy babysitter from the age of twelve through the end of my high school years.

One way to make meetings better:

A check-in, person by person, at the beginning of the meeting, so that people remember we are each human beings trying to work together.

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

Never Again MSD (the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who are advocating and acting for gun control in the U.S.)

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

Knitting. I love that it's a craft that has been practiced for centuries, but is still so useful in the modern world.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Open communication with my co-workers.

What most inspires you?

One person working for a cause who decides to act in a way that invites and inspires others to join them.

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

Stage manager in a theatre company.

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

I haven't seen a lot of the campus yet, but I do like the library.

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

Staffed with an increasingly precarious and part-time workforce, unless we take a strong, united stand for the creation and maintenance of full-time, secure jobs.

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

I'd take a Spanish immersion class somewhere in Mexico or Central America.

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

It sounds trite, but, as a former historian, I really would love to have access to a time machine. I'd like to go back in time to visit with my ancestors and see the world they were living in and talk to them about their lives. That would be so cool.



For this feature, the FSA borrows from Marcel Proust (and others who have popularized the French author's questionnaire), as a way for you to get to know our members, board members, and staff.

Contribute to the FSA Voice!

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

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

Vision

Outstanding careers through outstanding employment conditions.

Mission

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

Values

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

Contact Us

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



Colin Jones
President /Chief Negotiator



Silvia Raschke
Vice-President



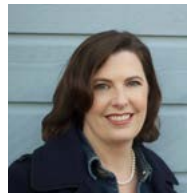
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Treasurer



Kevin Cudihee
Director



Shannon Kelly
Director



Holly Munn
Director, Associate Members



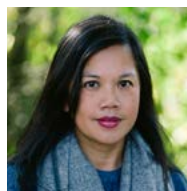
Paul Mills
Director, Associate Members



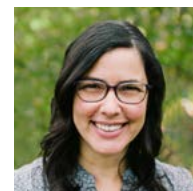
Ken Zeleschuk
Director

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Member Engagement Officer /
Interim Co-Executive Director



George Talbott
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Kristie Starr
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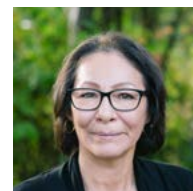
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