



President's Message

Solidarity is Not Feeling Alone



Colin Jones, President

Solidarity is one of the amazing parts of unionism.

Now, I know some of you don't think of yourselves as traditional trade union members, and I'm not sure I always do either, but whether or not we feel we can relate to Jimmy Hoffa, there is some real magic in the principle of solidarity.

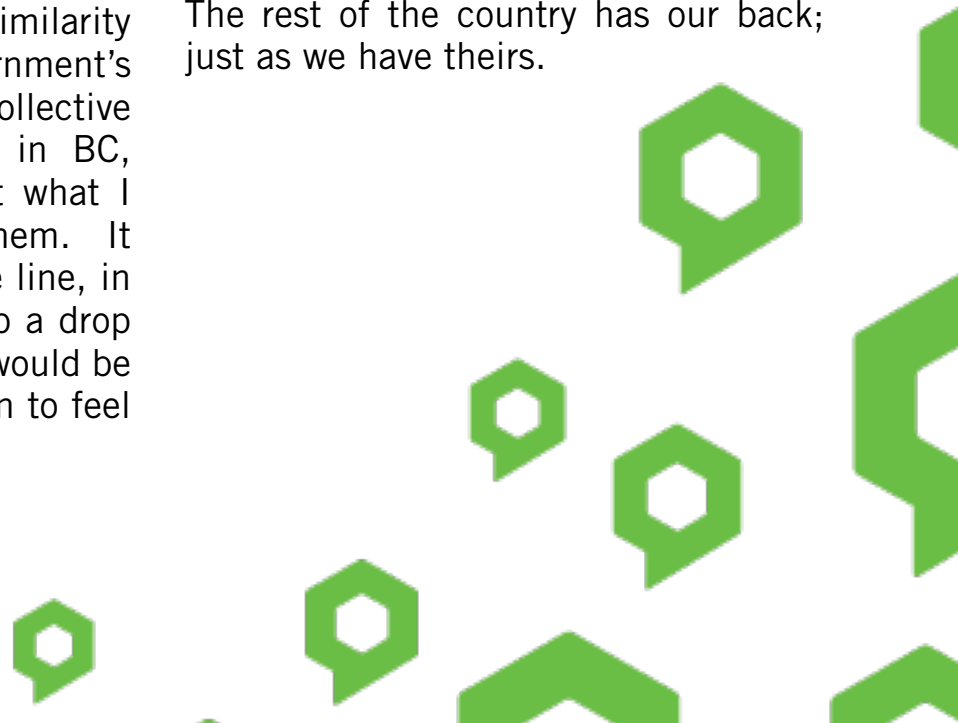
Thankfully, it's been a while since the FSA went on strike, but I've walked the picket lines along Willingdon Avenue twice in my 24-year stint at BCIT. One of the biggest challenges when you're on strike is fighting the feeling that you're in it alone. When we drive past a picket line, my kids used to ask why I was honking my horn. Invariably, the answer was, "it's not fun walking the picket line, but sometimes you just need to do it for the greater good." Now, my kids see a picket line and demand I honk the horn. That's solidarity – making sure people don't feel alone.

The best example of solidarity I've seen in a long time was just recently when I had the opportunity to join a small delegation from BC as a "flying picket" to support University of Manitoba Faculty Association's (UMFA) strike at the University of Manitoba. I'll resist my urge to focus on the eerie similarity between their provincial government's meddling in free and fair collective bargaining and what we see in BC, and instead share a bit about what I felt while walking alongside them. It felt great! After 26 days on the line, in Winnipeg, edging ever closer to a drop dead date where the semester would be canceled, they had every reason to feel down.

But, after visiting four different picket lines, I didn't sense that once. Instead, they felt the support of faculty and staff associations from across the country. Some unions had been able to provide financial support, still others sent flying pickets to help pump the tires of the folks on the picket line, and others, like us, were in the position to do both. We were received with excitement, warmth (despite the mercury dropping below zero!), and gratitude for our support.

The experience as a flying picket is a new one for the BCITFSA. Since affiliating with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the BC Federation of Labour, the FSA has been exposed to a new level of participation in the broader union movement. As an association that is as unique as the institution our members serve, I see the value of banding together. I see the value in our union community. I see the value in solidarity.

It feels good to support our colleagues across the country, ensuring they don't feel alone. And it feels good to know that when we're (inevitably?) walking the line on Willingdon, and Seymour, and Russ Baker Way at some point in the future, we won't feel alone either. The rest of the country has our back; just as we have theirs.



Board Member Profile



Trish Albino

Trish Albino is a BCIT faculty member in the Accounting, Finance, and Insurance Department and a Director-at-Large on the FSA Board. Over the past few years, Trish has brought her expertise as a CPA to the FSA's Internal Audit Committee as well as the FSA's Investment Committee. Now, as a new FSA director, Trish contributes her professional skills, her teaching experience, and her astute curiosity to the board!

How long have you worked at BCIT?
5 years

What motivates your work?

As a faculty member, I am motivated when a student has that "aha" moment, when something they previously struggled with suddenly "clicks". I also enjoy providing career advice to students who want to pursue their CPA Designation and I get to watch them succeed in that path after they graduate from BCIT.

One word to describe the FSA?
Fairness

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

I want to have a deep understanding of the rights of our members, what challenges our members are faced with, where improvements are needed and be able to advocate on their behalf.

What lesson has being on the FSA board taught you?

There are challenges facing FSA members that I didn't even know existed prior to joining the Board. I have so much more to learn.

Which living person do you most admire?

My parents. They are first-generation immigrants to Canada and have sacrificed a lot to be able to give my sister and I the life and values we have today.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Somewhere tropical. I love the sun and beach. However, my entire family lives in the Lower Mainland, so I could never actually leave.

What is the greatest issue facing BCIT?

How we conduct our business has changed in the last 1-2 years since the pandemic. As a result, workload has become an even bigger challenge.

What is the best book you have read recently?
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

What was your first paying job?

I worked at McDonald's as soon as I was old enough to get a job.

One way to make meetings better:

Only include what actually warrants a meeting (requires discussion and action) and exclude what could have been an email.

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

BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

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

I really enjoy going to the gym to lift weights. It makes me feel better overall.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Feeling supported by your peers and being adequately compensated and appreciated for the work you do.

What most inspires you?

Improving the student experience by improving myself and my approach.

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

I would love to be an actress but I wouldn't want to be famous.

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

In the classroom, interacting with my students.

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

Changing. The K-12 system in British Columbia is changing which will inevitably impact post-secondary education in some way. Also, we've already seen a change in how our programs are delivered from being primarily in-person to a hybrid model. Everyone adapted so quickly, and I think some of the changes are here to stay.

What is a course/class you would like to take?
I've always wanted to learn how to play the drums.

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

Teleportation. I'd get so much more done if I didn't have to commute!

Fall 2021 Landscape Building Upon Our Strengths



Michael Conlon, Executive Director

The past several months have tested the resolve of our members as we are on the cusp of entering the third year of this pandemic. The September 2021 return to campus was particularly trying for some members, with shifting health guidelines and a transition from largely remote operations to full in-person operations practically overnight. As the pandemic persists, some members will remain anxious about teaching and working in-person and we will continue to advocate for tailored safety measures that reassure our members and keep our community safe. The return to campus threw into relief the degree to which BCIT is beholden to the provincial government in just about every aspect of its operations. After some confusing and frustrating communication, the Institute conceded that virtually every aspect of the return to campus approach was dictated by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and the Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training. This lack of autonomy is not limited to the current health orders and extends into much of the pedagogical and labour relations functions of BCIT. As we prepare to enter the next round of collective bargaining, it is imperative that we not be paralyzed by this political reality. We have forged important links with other unions in the sector and will be incorporating that into a renewed government relations strategy over this year.

As we look ahead, there are a number of priorities that strike me as paramount for the FSA. First, it is critical that we work to consolidate the gains we made in the Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) settlement in the realm of Department rights. Our Collective Agreement is unique in the breadth of rights that our members have to shape their work. So many of the rights embedded in the agreement are dependent on a functional model of collegial governance. Though the workload at BCIT is amongst the most onerous in the country, the rights that FSA members have to shape that work are amongst the most expansive and robust of any agreement in the sector. We have been working to develop materials to assist members in exercising those rights in ways that will augment a sense of engagement and connection to their work.

As we prepare for a new round of collective bargaining, it will also be essential that we push BCIT for local solutions to the recruitment and retention, workload, and compensation challenges faced by our members. Our leverage at the bargaining table is directly related to member involvement and support for the FSA's bargaining team. This year will also bring a new BCIT President and we will continue point out that BCIT works because our members work! A new leader will likely change some of the priorities and orientation of the Institute, but this pandemic has confirmed the underlying reality that BCIT cannot function and thrive without the innovation, commitment, and passion of our members and their BCGEU colleagues.

I continue to be inspired by our members. While this pandemic and the unprecedented climate emergencies faced by the province have made this a very difficult year for many in our community, it has also reminded us both of the need for community and the strength of the community we have right here at BCIT. Let's work together to build upon that strength, that sense of community to sustain us and compel us to serve and lookout for each other.





Best Practices

PTS: Right to be Rehired

Under Article 5.2.5.2.8, if you've developed a Part-Time Studies (PTS) course and not been paid for developing the course, you have the right to instruct the first offering of the course.

Regardless of whether you teach the first offering of a course or are hired to teach a subsequent offering at a different time, as long as you have satisfactorily met the requirements of a Part-Time Studies performance appraisal, you have the right to be rehired to teach the course. Under a Memorandum of Agreement, these requirements include observation using a Peer Review of Teaching and student evaluations.

If BCIT indicates that they'd like to own the course materials, they're required to negotiate a mutually agreeable price. If BCIT purchases ownership of the course, you give up your right to teach the first offering of the course.

If you feel that your rights in this area are being violated, please contact the FSA.

Member Profile



Yvette Jones

Dr. Yvette Jones is an FSA member on BCIT's MAKE+ Team in the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation (CARI). Yvette is a MAKE+ Project Leader specializing in Biomedical Engineering, and is a member of the FSA's Caucus on Applied Research and Advanced Studies (CARAS), and a member of the FSA's Equity Caucus. A former FSA Tech Rep, Yvette is an active participant in ensuring strong working conditions for the FSA membership. She sits on the Institute Placement Committee as well as the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee for CARI.

How long have you worked at BCIT?
About 23 years

What motivates your work?
Knowing that we are breaking new ground for most of our projects is very rewarding, be it applying new technology, creating new devices, or creating new processes. As a bonus, we get to work with highly specialized equipment, which is always fun.

What lesson has working at BCIT taught you?
Work and life can be consuming and you have to remember to take time for yourself.

What is the greatest issue facing BCIT?
Adapting to our continually changing work environment and keeping current for our students.

One word to describe the FSA?
Advocate

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?
In addition to acting as a voice for myself and my coworkers, being involved in the FSA is a great way to connect with fellow BCIT colleagues.

Which living person do you most admire?
Since I was a teenager, I've admired Buffy Sainte-Marie. She has been an advocate for Indigenous, social and environmental issues since the early '60s and is well-known for her educational and philanthropic efforts.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?
The world is full of amazing places; it's hard to choose, but probably Lake Louise or somewhere in the Rockies with a view of the mountains, space for a garden, greenhouse and horses, with nearby hiking, snowshoeing, fishing and wildlife.

What is the best thing you have read or watched or listened to recently?
I've been enjoying rereading the Far Side comics. I also just rewatched the YouTube video "One of the Greatest Speeches Ever" by Steve Jobs on Motivation Ark.

What was your first paying job?
At the age of 12, I wanted to get a new bike. I found a job through a family friend, washing dishes and working as a grill cook at their restaurant a couple of days a week after school.

One way to make meetings better:
With online meetings, the social networking and personal connections in face-to-face meetings are often missing, and it's easy to lose touch with our colleagues. If the group isn't too big, a quick 10-second show and/or tell from each attendee helps keep us connected. It could be as simple as asking everyone to share something, such as: what are you looking forward to doing after work today (or this week); what's your favourite holiday, recipe or pastime; what was your favourite thing from your last vacation, etc.

If you had \$1 million to give to a cause, what would you select?
I'd give half to Water First, and the other half to Indspire

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

What makes a workplace healthy?
Laughter and respect

What most inspires you?
I know it's cliché, but my two boys, now teenagers, really are my inspiration.

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

What's your favourite place on the campus you work at?
Our community garden. It's a great place to relax for lunch or get your hands dirty whenever you feel the need.

The future of public post-secondary education is...
Going to become more digital.

If you could learn something new, what would it be?
My native language, Anishinaabemowin.

What could you use right now if someone would invent it for you?
I've ALWAYS wanted a teleporter. I could live anywhere, go to work and visit family and friends without concern about the commute.

The Workload Dispute:

One Trick to Reducing Workload That Departments Should Love

George Talbott, Kristie Starr,
Andrea Matthews

When you realize that you have too much to do, more than ever, and excess caffeine and skipping meals (we do not recommend skipping meals!) are not helping, what is to be done?

Invoke a workload dispute! Embedded in the [Collective Agreement](#), this right is available to teaching (Article 8.8) and non-teaching Department members (Article 8.9).

A dispute may be started by one member, or a group of Department members. A dispute follows a chain of ever-increasing formality:

- Write to your Department colleagues, invoking the Article.
- Your Department responds in writing.
- If unsatisfied, write to the Dean or Director, who must provide a written response with recommendations.
- If this does not satisfy you, a panel is formed, made up of union and management appointees who will respond and copy the Department, its related manager, and the relevant BCIT Vice President. The Department and related manager must explain how the findings will be implemented or problems remedied.

The entire process may be completed in less than a month.

This is a process driven by FSA members, the FSA staff cannot invoke these dispute mechanisms but we are available to provide advice. Each Department should be reviewing and, if necessary, using these dispute mechanisms during their regular cycle of planning (see [Article 1.4.2](#) for what is including in that planning process).

Preparing a Workload Dispute

1. Use [Article 1.4.6](#) for Guiding Principles

It is understood that the assignments ... are subject to the provisions of the Collective Agreement, and shall be made:

- *in a reasonable and equitable fashion and*
- *in a manner consistent with the position of Faculty, Assistant Instructor and Technical Staff as professional educators, as professionals in their respective fields, and as members of their Department; and*
- *based on the criteria of fairness, equitability and reasonableness.*

Refer to these principles directly in your dispute submission.

2. Do a Gap Analysis. What changed to make the workload increase to the point of unfairness or being inequitable?
3. Demonstrate how this change has affected workload. Have you got a record of the hours you have put in? If not, show a schedule that demonstrates obligations and duties. What does a typical week or month look like now and why is it excessive?

4. If you are teaching faculty, review this non-exhaustive list of factors in [Article 8.8.1](#), which the Department considers when apportioning workload:

- number of students per instructional grouping
- nature of courses
- number of different courses
- marking requirements
- need for, and availability of, instructional support
- concurrent instructional activities
- assigned administrative and other non-instructional responsibilities
- office hours
- whether the Employee is teaching the course for the first time
- variation or changes in curriculum
- specific instructional needs of students
- assigned Prior Learning Assessment activities

5. Talk to your colleagues. What have they seen regarding workload? What can each of you share? What strategies can you build together to demonstrate a workload issue? You may even reach out to other Departments that may have already dealt with similar issues.

Potential Outcomes of a Workload Dispute

Results of a workload dispute are not prescribed. The [Collective Agreement](#) though may not be violated and the strategic objectives set by managers (see Article 14.1) are not to be transgressed.

Rebalancing workload among team members is one potential result. Departments may give extra weight to certain tasks; for example, a member has never run a report off of a new computer system and needs extra time to accomplish it. Or a Department might agree to shift vacation or month-free-of-teaching calendars to help balance workload and breaks.

Disputing workload encourages managers to dialogue and consider ideas they may otherwise reject. Reallocating budget, for example, could result in posting a temporary job to alleviate a transitory increase in work. In the final analysis invoking the workload dispute mechanism will not guarantee change, but it will guarantee you a collegial forum through which to express your concerns.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the FSA: fsa@bcit.ca.

Departmental Administrative Positions (DAP) Checklist

Terms of Reference and Limits on Duration of Appointments

- The Department is entitled to develop terms of reference for these positions, including provisions for recall and the term of the appointment. However, in no case can the term exceed three years and it must be renewable (Article 5.2.4.2). In other words, incumbents are not supposed to be “hired” to fill DAPs “permanently”.

Departmental Right to Select Incumbents and Determine Release Time of DAPs

- The right to appoint the incumbents to these positions belongs not to management but to the “members of the Department”. This phrase means the non-managerial employees (FSA members) and one related manager. In exercising this important Departmental right of appointment, each Department member – including the manager – has a single voice and a single vote (Article 1.8.5). The Department also has the right to determine the release time for these positions (Article 5.2.4.3).

Compensation for DAPs: Administrative Allowances

- The incumbents of DAPs are entitled to a form of remuneration known as an “administrative allowance.” Article 15.6 sets out two levels of allowance and the higher, Level 1 allowance is the default and should be paid in all cases. If BCIT wishes to pay the lower Level 2 allowance, they need to first obtain the FSA's agreement (Appendix 5).

Departments recognized for Collective Agreement purposes are listed in Appendix 3 of the Collective Agreement.

Staff Profile



Marnie Rice

Marnie Rice joined the FSA in the fall of 2021 and in that short time has contributed her skills, knowledge, and warmth to the office. Marnie has an extensive background in both operations and social justice which is a great match for the FSA's core services and our values. In short order, Marnie has improved internal administrative systems, provided key support for engagement activities, and – as much as possible with reduced office operations – is building relationships with the members as our first point of contact.

How long have you worked at the FSA?
I joined the FSA in September 2021.

What motivates your work here?

The FSA's values: integrity, solidarity, empowerment, equity.

One word to describe the FSA?

Evolving.

What lesson has working at the FSA taught you?

How hard everyone works in service to the membership.

What motivates you to be involved with the FSA?

Years ago, I was a TA at UBC. We were untrained, underpaid, siloed, and unaware of our collective rights. I'm proud to be part of an organization that stands in opposition to that kind of workplace nonsense.

Which living person do you most admire?

Shelagh Rogers.

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Here is great. I aspire to be an informed and anti-racist guest on Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Waututh territories.

What is the greatest issue facing the labour movement?

The rise of the gig economy.

What is the best book you have read recently?

Tomboy Survival Guide by Ivan Coyote. Ivan is a BCIT grad and storyteller who bares their authentic, vulnerable, flirty, warm and funny soul in this memoir.

What was your first paying job?

Babysitting. I was 10. As it turns out, so was one of the neighbourhood boys I babysat. To punish me for this humiliation, he plotted against me to ensure my inevitable and swift removal from the family's babysitters list.

One way to make meetings better:

Co-create Community Agreements. These agreements, or guidelines for sharing physical or virtual space and time together, usually centre shared values and principles which can help to build trust, set a positive tone, and foster a respectful process for working through conflict.

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

I'd split it between the Greg Younging Publishing Award Endowment and hæñqəminə́m' (Musqueam), and Hunq'eme'nem (Tseil-Waututh) and Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim (Squamish), language and culture revitalization programs like Kwi Awt Stelmexw.

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

I really like my Buy Nothing Group. Most recent gift given: a stationary bike; received: a large jar of mayonnaise.

What makes a workplace healthy?

Collegial relationships built on mutual trust and respect.

What most inspires you?

The audacity, vision, mentorship, truth-telling and revolutionary powers of Indigenous matriarchs like Lillian Howard and Lee Maracle—both of whom have recently left us.

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

I would be Shelagh Rogers' understudy and eventual successor.

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

The service, food, drink and company at the Habitat Pub has been very good.

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

Let me get back to you on that after I pass my probation.

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

Anything in BCIT's Radio Arts & Entertainment that will prove to Shelagh Rogers that I am ready and able to guest host The Next Chapter.

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

A soundproofed garçonnère for my son.

✓
Best
Practices

OT & Workload for Technical Staff, Assistant Instructor, or Specialized Faculty

Kenzie Woodbridge, FSA Tech Rep, ITS

As an [FSA Tech Rep](#) I am occasionally asked to share my knowledge and experience with our [Collective Agreement](#). This includes taking the opportunity to remind my colleagues in ITS about our rights related to overtime (Article 8.5) and workload (Article 8), and the consequences of working unpaid overtime. If you are a Technical Staff, Assistant Instructor, or Specialized Faculty, this might help you as well.

I want to say, first of all, that if you are currently putting in unpaid overtime, I get it and I've been there (and am sometimes still there), so none of this is coming from a place of judgment. I understand how it happens. I know the kinds of pressures that we're all under to get stuff done, I understand how the boundaries can get a bit squishy, especially while working from home, and I really know how folks in more precarious/temporary positions can feel those pressures especially.

Realistically, we're faced with a pretty common problem: too much work and not enough people to do it. This is a systemic problem, which is why individual solutions—like quietly volunteering your unpaid personal time to support BCIT—won't fix it, and in fact, only makes the problem harder to solve. This is because making the extra hours it's taking to complete all the work in your portfolio invisible (by working unpaid overtime):

- makes it impossible for management to see the full picture and actually see the need to increase staffing
- makes it difficult for your manager to support their requests to increase staffing with data (like stats on how much overtime they're having to approve/pay); and
- makes it harder or more intimidating for your colleagues to accurately communicate the impact of adding more items to their workload or request to be paid for any overtime necessary to complete it, because management could then turn around and ask why person A needs overtime to get through their workload when person B seems to be able to stay on top of it without overtime.

I know that part of the challenge is the requirement to get approval in advance for overtime you need to work, and that requesting this approval continually can be intimidating, is sometimes demoralizing, and, in itself, time-consuming. But not getting the actual hours of work you're doing on the books inevitably contributes to the problems above and continues to put pressure on your colleagues to also not ask. It's a kind of unintended collective action, if that makes sense.

It can be intimidating to stick up for your rights and the rights of your colleagues to your manager. Making management fully aware of how many hours of work are required to complete the necessary and assigned work, and ensuring that you are all being fairly compensated for that work, together, is also a very necessary step towards actually making things better and I urge you to do it. Because of the disproportionate experiences of vulnerability for those in temporary or more junior positions, I particularly urge those of us in permanent and senior roles to step up and take some of the heat on this to make space for our temporary or more junior colleagues to exercise their rights and be fairly compensated for their hours of work.

To remind you, in the [Collective Agreement](#) a normal week of work is defined as 35 hours for Technical Staff, Assistant Instructors, and Specialized Faculty (Article 8.5.4). We are not salaried workers, but hourly workers for whom overtime must be paid. We can work 10 hours of paid overtime per week (averaged over each term) in non-emergency situations, but if workload consistently requires more than that, it's a violation of the [Collective Agreement](#). Overtime cannot be required of you outside of emergency situations, you can refuse to work overtime, and the Collective Agreement is explicit that refusal to work overtime cannot be considered a factor in any application for any other position or performance appraisal.

If you do refuse overtime, and are subsequently ordered by a manager to do it in spite of your refusal, do not argue but instead contact the FSA as soon as possible. If you feel you're being pressured to do overtime, you can certainly ask if it is in fact an order and if so, ask for it be given you in writing.

In addition to requesting approval to work any overtime you need to work in order to get through your workload (and hence, be fairly compensated for doing it), another avenue is to attempt to make more effective use of the Article 14.2 departmental decision-making parts of the [Collective Agreement](#). The FSA regularly reminds BCIT management that they need be open to Article 14.2-type discussions.

For more information about Article 14.2, see the article on page six of the [January 2020 FSA Voice newsletter](#), "That Manager's Bad Decision Might be Mine? Departmental Planning Powers in an Environment of Collegial Governance." The Department has rights and responsibilities under Article 14.2 to set workload, schedule, and other relevant aspects of delivering the mandate of the department. If your Department has not had discussions about Article 14.2, consider talking to other FSA members in your Department about to approach management to open the discussion.

Thank you for your time. None of this is easy, and adding anything to your tottering pile can feel like just too much, and I get that. But it's important. You can always [reach out to the FSA](#) if you are concerned about your rights.

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.

Vision

A dynamic and supportive educational community.

Mission

Excellent working conditions for all members through representation, negotiation, and advocacy.

Values

- Integrity: We are transparent and accountable in our decisions and actions.
- Solidarity: We stand together to protect our rights and achieve collective change.
- Empowerment: We equip our members to understand and advocate for their rights.
- Equity: We recognize diversity and pursue inclusion and justice for all members.


Contact Us

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Affiliation Spotlight: CAUT Affinity Program



Because of the strength of CAUT's membership and their national scope, CAUT has been able to negotiate special rates and services with selected businesses that will give our members substantial savings when they need to travel or get insurance products. For the day when travel is a reality again, check out the benefits of the program at caut.ca/membership/affinity-programs.

The FSA TEAM

At the time of publication

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Marnie Rice

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Currently on leave:

Christine Nagy

Labour Relations Representative

Tess Rebbitt

Labour Relations Representative

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