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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.

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





Colin Jones
PRESIDENT & CHIEF NEGOTIATOR
BCITFSA

“
The Union expects to make more progress in the journey toward truth, reconciliation, and Indigenization of not only our Collective Agreement, but of BCIT.”

INDIGENIZING OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed. Reconciliation is not an Indigenous problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

In our last round of bargaining, the BCITFSA's 19th, the Bargaining Team tabled by far our largest set of proposals centred on Indigenizing our Collective Agreement. These were included as part of a larger suite of Equity and Reconciliation proposals that our Collective Agreement Committee (CAC) hoped would make tangible steps toward truth, reconciliation, and Indigenization through acknowledgment, accountability, sharing, collaboration, and action.

A common concern of the CAC was getting it wrong. As we prepared, there were few exemplars to draw from in terms of language. Where there were examples, the lack of uniform language caused us pause. Not only was the committee concerned with the possibility of creating collective agreement language that was unclear, unenforceable, or unworkable, we were also nervous that the outcome might not be appropriate in all situations. Subsequently, we created a sub-committee charged with researching and developing proposals, under the guidance of Board member Zaa Joseph (Dakelh), which included inviting conversation with CAUT Aboriginal Committee members and EDs from other post-secondaries in BC to respectfully ask for advice, guidance, pitfalls and wins. Decades of work have gone into building Indigenous pathways in post-secondary, and this context provided the Bargaining Team with invaluable insight.

The diligent work of the sub-committee led to the tabling of six proposals designed to further the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Despite the effort of the FSA Bargaining Team, we were only able to secure agreement on three of the proposals. While disappointed by the lack of traction we were able to attain in the remaining proposals, we made it clear to BCIT that they would return next round, where we expect to make more progress in the journey toward truth, reconciliation, and Indigenization of not only our Collective Agreement, but of BCIT. As Larry Savage and Spy Dénoimé-Welch recently said, “Indigenization is an issue that academic staff associations must fight for consciously and intentionally.” We look forward to furthering this fight in our 20th round of bargaining.



WHAT ARE YOUR BARGAINING PRIORITIES?



Power is what wins in union negotiations.



Bargaining is on the horizon, and the FSA's preparations have already begun. Throughout spring and summer 2024, FSA President and Chief Negotiator Colin Jones and Member Engagement Officer Matt Greaves travelled to Departments across the Institute gathering details on what you would like to see in your next Collective Agreement. In June, the FSA's Collective Agreement Committee (CAC) was appointed to research and identify bargaining priorities, with the committee ultimately recommending a mandate to the Bargaining Team. Before that mandate is established, however, we once again need your input.

We want to know what you, as a collective, want in your next contract. Later in the fall semester, we'll be releasing a new bargaining survey based on the data gathered by the CAC, and we're hoping to receive as many replies as possible. "Power is what wins in union negotiations," wrote the late labour educator Jane McAlevey, "and in a democracy, participation equates to power." In other words, the more participation we're able to marshal, the stronger the mandate our Bargaining Team will be able to represent. Leading up to the last round, in 2021, we were able to get 663 members to respond, a number that we're hoping to annihilate in this round. So, on behalf of the CAC and Bargaining Team, we're encouraging you to not only complete the survey but to contact other FSA members in your network and tell them to do so. Additionally, if there are items you think are missing from the survey, please write your Member Engagement Officer to tell us what we should add.

We look forward to your input.

In solidarity,

Matt Greaves
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT OFFICER



TRAINING FOR THE UNION ADVANTAGE: EDUCATION AND THE FSA TEAM PROGRAM

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Collective bargaining yields conditions for unionized workers that outstrip what can be individually bargained with the boss.

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Labour researchers often talk about the Union Advantage. What they mean by this is that unionized workers tend to have better benefits and earn more income than non-unionized workers in similar roles. Collective bargaining, in other words, yields conditions for unionized workers that outstrip what can be individually bargained with the boss. To give a well-known example, Statistics Canada lists the median hourly wage in Canada as \$7 higher for unionized workers than non-union workers. Of course, unions do not magically achieve better wages and working conditions by their very existence. These come to be through the collective will and intelligence of union members. Union education and training are, in this way, part of a collective project—something individually achieved for the betterment of the whole organization.

To better construct this pillar of unionism in our own union, the FSA announced in June 2023 that the Board of Directors would expand our members' labour and union training options by providing additional support to participate in courses and seminars organized by affiliates like the Canadian Association of University Teachers and Canadian Labour Congress.

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Union training is a collective project—something individually achieved for the betterment of the whole organization.

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The Training, Educating, and Activating Members (TEAM) program facilitates the distribution of these newly available resources. We have produced an application form that is now available on our website and encourage all members interested in external education to review it for more information. “The TEAM program provides an opportunity for the FSA to gather knowledge throughout the union movement, so we're prepared for anything that comes our way,” said President Colin Jones, adding that “I'm excited by the Board's decision to further our commitment to educating and training our members.”

To date, the FSA has funded member attendance at a variety of labour education and training events. This includes training at the Canadian Labour Congress's Winter School on (1) the Employer's Duty to Accommodate and (2) Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace, as well as (3) the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC's fall 2023 Governance Conference. Our attendees have been generous with their time and submitted reports back to the FSA on their experiences, with two recipients leveraging their knowledge to hold an open workshop to better inform members.

The FSA will be continuing the TEAM program in the coming year, and we look forward to your application. A well educated union is a strong union.





Board Interview: **MICHELLE BEAUCHAMP**



Being in a union means you have a lot of power and control over your destiny at work.



Matt Greaves: Michelle Beauchamp, hello! Welcome, and thank you for agreeing to be interviewed by the FSA for our 2024 fall issue of the Voice newsletter.

Michelle Beauchamp: It's my pleasure!

MG: So, how long have you been at BCIT? And in what capacity?

MB: I started at BCIT August 27, 2001, so this will be my 23rd year. I began as an AI (Assistant Instructor), where I worked a little bit out in clinical with students and a little bit in our labs. Then, in 2009, I got to full Instructor status.

MG: And how long have you been involved with the FSA?

MB: I started volunteering with the FSA as a Tech Rep in 2011. I decided to become more involved because a few things had happened where I needed the FSA's assistance. I thought: well, this is a great way for me to give back and also to make sure that other people in our Department know what's going

on because for a long time we didn't have a Tech Rep.

MG: So, it was kind of a sense of duty or desire to help that led you to volunteer.

MB: Yes, I felt like the FSA helped me. I think a lot of times people only think about their union when it's time for contract negotiations and raises, but there's so much more that the union does for us and the protections we have because of that. And people are often unaware of that stuff. So, it's partly about helping to uphold those protections, but it's also about spreading the information. It's twofold.

This is my third year on the Board, and I'm in the middle of my second term. Prior to running, a couple of people asked me if I wanted to be on the Board and I had a conversation with Colin Jones about, you know, time commitments and involvement because the hardest thing for me is that I love my job, I love my students, and anything that takes away too much from them, I worry

about. I was easily able to find a level that works for me, and I'm gladly serving on the Board.

MG: Were you involved at all in unions prior to coming to BCIT or is this your first experience?

MB: I think I asked one of my union reps a question once but that was about the extent of it. How do I put this? Working at BCIT as an FSA member is nice. We have time allocated for our Union activities, where in the hospitals you don't. So, it's more difficult to take that time for Union activity.

MG: You mean The Wednesday break period (every week 2:30 – 5:30pm, see Article 2.1.8 of the Collective Agreement).

MB: Absolutely, yes. If I need to do something on behalf of the FSA, I get to do that then because of our contract right. It's quite an exceptional thing, that Article; not a lot of other contracts have such language. We're quite lucky here.

MG: You tend to come to meetings early and then stay afterwards. Thank you for that.

MB: You're welcome.

MG: Where do you think that commitment comes from?

MB: Again, it's my gratitude to the FSA, but I also live the philosophy "many hands make light work," or: we can get things done more quickly if a bunch of us pitch in, so that some people aren't here until, you know, a later hour. I think I'm one who feels best when I'm in service to others. So that's part of it too.

MG: It's maybe a bit of a tenuous segue, but you mentioned "many hands make light work," and prior to starting the official interview we were discussing gardening...

MB: I love my garden. It's a little Oasis of mine. I'm very big on water features, so I've got two in my backyard and one in my front. I live in a townhouse, and I'm fortunate that my home has one of the bigger backyards. It's just one of those nice places to sit out and relax whenever I get a chance to do that. It's a happy place. You know, I even have solar lights in the bushes and trees glowing in the evenings. It's a really pleasant place to be.

MG: That sounds nice.

MB: I'm in search of a patio fireplace now, but I'm also frugal so I always look for second hand stuff or something I could buy with my PC points or something like that.

MG: We were just talking about using Facebook Marketplace in the office before our chat.

MB: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm all over that too. A lot of my life is furnished by Facebook Marketplace.

MG: Same. Do you have any pets?

MB: Yes. I've got two dogs! They're new to me. They're rescues. I got them at the end of December. I'm a rescue dog person. These are my 8th and 9th.

MG: What are their names?

MB: Their names are Goldie and Honey. They're Golden Lab, American Bulldog crosses, and they're two years old. They came to me via the SPCA. They had been found on a property rather emaciated, and both had just given birth to litters of nine puppies each. All puppies and the moms were seized and the SPCA decided that the moms had to go together. That's my specialty: bonded pairs. It serves a purpose for both of us. I have to work all day, so it's good for a pet to have a companion. For me, two dogs at once isn't much more responsibility. It's only double the love and a lot of fur right now.

MG: In a previous conversation, you and I had discussed that you enjoy going camping in the summer.

MB: That's another beauty of our contract: how we can schedule our vacation. I take most of my vacation in the summer because I only work the spring and fall terms and it allows me to go camping for four or five weeks at a time. I like to travel; I've got a

trailer I tow, usually around the southern portion of BC, up near Kamloops, down through Salmon Arm. Areas like that. This year, my brother has got a spot on Skaha Lake, so I'll be with them for two weeks and I just like going to get away, have a little bit of peace. Relax.

MG: Is there anything you'd like the membership to know?

MB: We are here to try to do the best that we can for everyone. What we do is for the good of the whole. We're lucky that we have a union. Being in a union means you have a lot of power and control over your destiny at work. And I think sometimes people forget that. So, you know, please understand that we are here looking out for you and trying to do the best for all members.

MG: It's a great point to leave on. Thank you so much, Michelle.

MB: No problem.

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I think I'm one who feels best when I'm in service to others.

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Member Interview:

TERRY YAU



We fought for these rights,
they mean something.



Matt Greaves: Hi Terry, thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me today.

Terry Yau: You're welcome, Matt.

MG: Could you introduce yourself and give a little background on your time at BCIT?

TY: I started working here in 1988. So, it's been a long time. My first year I was on a contract, not unlike a lot of people, to kind of test things out. I formally became a BCIT employee in the fall of 1989. I've worked in three different sectors of this institute. In '89, when I started, I was a BGECU Support Staff member. I worked in a coordinator role for many years and then from there I became an Operations Manager for the now defunct School of Engineering Technology—there's only so many people left on this campus from that School. Then in 2003 I came into an FSA position with Technology Management (TMGT), in the School of Transportation, as an Instructor, and I worked in that capacity for a time with my former colleagues Jim Hendry and Jim Duncan and took on the Program Head role around 2010. There is a great team within

the TMGT Department which consists of a small admin team, our Program Administrator, Megan Alford, myself, and our Flexible Learning instructors.

MG: That's incredible—36 years.

TY: Thank you, it goes by fast. There's the old cliché you hear all the time on this campus: I never intended to stay this long. In other words, you thought: oh, just a couple of years, then I'll move on, right?

It's been good, though, I keep in touch with so many good people I met here over the years, and many are long retired now. They want to know what's happening at BCIT.

How long have you been with the FSA?

MG: I'm a toddler—only 2 1/2 years.

TY: Oh, goodness gracious. Were you ever a student here?

MG: No, I was at SFU for a few years but never here.

TY: So, you don't know what this was like in the 80s? This campus... this campus has evolved into such a lovely space for people to work at and for the

students to be in; there are lots more gathering places, relaxing collaborative spaces—nice spaces. Before it was very... institutional and like, I remember the old pub. It was a dark cave. Not at all like how we have it now. So yeah, lots has changed and for the better.

MG: You are active in a number of FSA committees. I know I've been involved in appointing you to management selection committees and joint occupational health and safety committees. Why do you want to be involved?

TY: Partly because I want to ensure that the FSA's viewpoint is represented and, in particular, the position of Flexible Learning Instructors who don't get enough visibility or representation. We're seeing a little bit more of Flexible Learning, but wherever we can add value with a different perspective and group representation then I want to help. Many Flexible Learning instructors do not have the time or opportunity to be heard so it's important to be that voice. And I think, secondly, these are the FSA membership rights—they've

been negotiated, and I don't want them to be wasted. We fought for them, they mean something, and you have to respect the process. Having a right is a privilege, but the expectation is: you're going to step up, correct? Respect the reciprocity of the process and engage with the opportunity you've been granted. That's how I see that.

MG: It's a good point, that with rights come responsibilities... that reciprocal relationship.

TY: And respect for the process, absolutely.

MG: What makes a good committee? Do you have any thoughts on that or even what makes a bad one?

TY: I don't think I've ever sat on a bad one. I've sat on some tough ones. Not a lot, but a few. I think maybe the first thing is, in terms of the organization and management, the management of the committees, it is important for the objectives to be made clear from the beginning. And you create procedures and guidelines for how this particular committee has agreed to function. If it's not clear, then working on those committees becomes harder.

MG: Having that structure in place is key.

TY: Know how the Collective Agreement is carried out, but also about how you work together. Having those ground rules established at the beginning is very important because you know what to expect, right? And you feel you

can speak freely to some degree based on those parameters.

MG: What do you like to do when you're not at BCIT?

TY: Well, my husband and I have a dog. It's been a good 12 years since our last dog passed, and this one is new to us. She's a rescue, which is the first rescue for us. She's a Japanese Shiba Inu, somewhere between six and eight years old.

I also spend whatever free time roaming the thrift stores and the second-hand stores because I collect vintage Denby.

Denby, is a British ceramic company. You see the modern product lines in many shops but it's the older pieces that interest me and North America only had access to a limited line of their wares. The items I collect are usually from the 1900s to the '70s. So, a big range!

MG: Sorry, Denby makes, like, cookware?

TY: Ceramic dishware. So, your dishes, your teapots, cups, mugs. They did have some cookware and decorative ware, but mainly plates, bowls, tableware. I could outfit a restaurant.

MG: Do you have a prized piece?

TY: Oh! I do because there are some runs of patterns that the company only produced for one year, so they're very scarce. I got my hands on a teapot that never made it to North America, and it's very whimsical. Almost like an Alice in Wonderland type of shape. The pattern is called

"Falstaff." It's in a brilliant dark eggplant purple. Totally unique size and shape. Really so very, very hard to find. The pot is not very practical—I can imagine many pieces of it were broken because they were a little top heavy. I paid through the nose for it because I had to import it from the UK. It cost me more to ship than to buy! That's my prized piece.



MG: That sounds lovely. Have you ever thought of going to the UK?

TY: Oh yes. When I retire, it's on my bucket list and I'm going with an empty suitcase just in case I find them in the flea markets and in the second-hand stores over there. But where would I put them? Denby pieces are hard to display because they're heavy. They're pottery, they're not porcelain. They're heavy but they're beautiful. The colours are just so deep and rich and the shapes... I find the shapes are very appealing.

And a very smart company. If you step away from it and look at the business process, they will take one shape and apply a different coloration, a different glaze on it, and it would give the

impression of a totally different look and design. You wouldn't realize that the shape is from the same line as another one. So, business wise, you get one shape, one mold, and you do so many different variations. You can change it up to appeal to the changing consumer tastes and trends.

MG: Is there anything else you'd like FSA members to know about you, the School of Transportation, or just in general?

TY: In education, we are in a very interesting time. And there's lots of change that's happening, and I think it feels uncharted. Automation is happening in the workplace, not just in

manufacturing, but in the work you and I do here. And how is that to be managed by somebody, right? Work's going to change and how we manage that work is going to change too.

MG: Terry, thank you so much for your time.

TY: You're welcome. You have a great day!



Executive Director:

DOUG THORPE-DORWARD



After the first interview, I knew that this was a job that I would be very happy in.



Matthew Greaves: You've been at the FSA for a little over four months. How have you found it?

Doug Thorpe-Dorward: My introduction to the FSA has been warm and welcoming. Everyone has been generous with their time and patient with me as I gain my footing. The Board and staff have been so helpful, and I have felt

supported every day. In particular, Colin Jones and Maria Angerilli have been generous with their time—sharing their wisdom as people who have been with the FSA for a long time. I am so grateful.

MG: What brought you here—to the FSA?

DTD: I saw the job posting on LinkedIn and gave it a quick read, without much intention that it was something I would apply for. As I read it, I felt that the posting was describing me. It brought together so many of my interests in strategic planning, staff guidance and support, board governance, and labour relations.

After reading it I felt compelled to apply for the job. After the first interview, I knew that this was a job that I would be very happy in.

MG: In your view, what's the role of an ED in a trade union?

DTD: An ED must bring together many elements: knowledge of labour relations and the trade union movement, skills in Board governance and support, strategic planning skills, and workplace management abilities. An ED also must know how to ensure that none of these areas become overwhelming to the detriment of others. It can be a fine balancing act at times. People and interpersonal skills are also very important in this role—an ED must forge relationships on all sides of the table in order to be effective.

MG: What should the FSA be doing better? How do we do that?

DTD: Increasing member involvement in the union is always a challenge, but it is important for things like succession planning. We continue to look for ways to encourage members to get involved with the FSA. Everyone is busy with their “day jobs” so it is important for us to find ways to engage members that will fit their schedules and interests.

MG: Do you have a hero?

DTD: I have been fortunate to have had three incredible workplace mentors during my career. Each of them provided



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me with guidance and skills that I use in my worklife every day. I hope to be a mentor like that for others as well because I know what a difference they made in my life. Thanks Howard, Judith, and Maureen—you have impacted my life and career more than you will ever know.

MG: What do you like to do when you're not at the office? Any hobbies?

DTD: As many people know I am beholden to a French Bulldog named Winston. He makes the occasional appearance here in the office as well. He provides much companionship and fun. I am a movie and live theatre lover. I enjoy beach vacations when I am able to get away, and my go-to destination is Puerto Vallarta.

MG: What's the best thing you've read or watched recently?

DTD: I'm obsessed with the Showtime series *Couples Therapy*. The ability to watch actual therapy sessions with real couples and real problems is fascinating to me. I highly recommend it if you are interested in that sort of documentary type of show. Season 4 just dropped recently.



Question Them on Everything:

FIGHTING THE CLOSURE OF ISEP

In November 2023, FSA members working in the International Student Entry Program (ISEP) received notification that BCIT was looking to shutter it. Those workers came together quickly to oppose the cancellation, which resulted in the employer tabling their plans. Below is an interview with ISEP Program Head Stephen Lobo. Stephen shares how this situation evolved, including advocacy from workers in ISEP and solidarity from other FSA members.



We couldn't have done this without the greater support of the community.



Matt Greaves: So, welcome Stephen Lobo to the interview.

Stephen Lobo: Hi, Matt. Nice to be here.

MG: How long have you been at BCIT, Stephen? And in what capacities?

SL: I've been here since 2013. I started as an Instructor in ISEP, the International Student Entry Program, and up until 2019 that was what I did, working at the Downtown campus. In 2019, I became the Program Head, and I've been doing that until now.

MG: Can you tell us a little bit about ISEP?

SL: Sure, ISEP started in 2010, under BCIT International. It's really been, more or less, exclusively at the Downtown

Campus. Part of that is the fact that international students tend to gravitate to the downtown centre of Vancouver, and that's who ISEP is really for: international students.

MG: In the fall of the 2023-24 academic year, the employer served noticed that they would be recommending cancellation of the ISEP program. Can you talk a little bit more about how you found out that BCIT wanted to cancel the program?

SL: The notice came in November of 2023, announced by our Dean. First it went to the staff and then about a week later Instructors were notified.

MG: You folks mobilized quickly to oppose the cancellation, alongside a sister program also slated for cancellation (and saved), the Professional English Language Development Program. Can you talk about what measures FSA members in ISEP took to fight cancellation?

SL: The first thing that came to our minds was: ok, how to oppose what is happening to us here. The proposed policy itself was a suspension and cancellation policy.

The main reasons that we were given for cancelling ISEP were that the financials were no longer viable for our program and that the Institute itself was taking a new approach to language support issues. We began to ask more questions and say, well: we want to know what the financials are and so on. Out of that, we began to do a lot of fact finding—a lot of outreach—to find out from the employer the data and reasoning behind their decision: why they made it.

We also started to reach out to the BCIT community to find out how we could get support from staff, faculty, and students.

MG: ISEP members assembled an impressive 25-or-so-page document and submitted it to management.

SL: Right. So, the policy the employer was using allows 30 days for anyone to submit documents or any kind of other information that can help guide subsequent decision-making regarding program cancellation. The document you mention was a huge undertaking because we needed to counter management's logic and reasoning for program cancellation. We received support from community members in putting together things like the financials which required a lot of specialized knowledge. The support that we received was incredible. Members we've never met before would come to us and say: hey, I know a bit about this, I can help you or have you thought about this kind of financial analysis? We didn't have ISEP members with backgrounds in these types of things, but there's lots of resources out there and people who do.

And, so, we were able to really take advantage of that FSA member generosity and expertise. We are more confident with the topic of international-student education and used the positive feedback from our students too. The employer said that one of the reasons for cancelling us was that the international-student profile has changed and we're like: well, we know a lot about that, actually. This aspect of the document

wasn't too hard for us, but it did require a lot of research. In the end, we felt good about our submission. The people who read it all gave us accolades, and it seemed to have worked as far as, you know, the cancellation is at least postponed.

MG: It wasn't just a matter of ISEP members coming together to assemble the report, it was folks from outside the program as well.

SL: For sure. We couldn't have done this without the greater support of the community. That was really important. But also questioning managers and asking for information from management. What we realized is that some of the things that they explained to us... maybe they didn't have as much background as they thought. It became very important to ask those questions and not assume that management was making these decisions based on all the available information. Maybe there's information that they hadn't considered, and there was definitely information they hadn't considered in our view.

We had support in other ways too. People will find a way to help, even if it's just letters of support, and we got a lot of letters to say: there's not much we can contribute, but we support you. Some days we're really tough. You know when you're in the midst of it, it's hard. The letters really helped.

Looking back on it, there was maybe some hesitation at the

beginning regarding telling or not telling some groups. Everything was up in the air. Later we realized that even the students who found out about the proposal afterwards were willing to write letters, so we probably should have started at: hey, look, we need help, and everybody should know about it. Broadcast the message widely.

MG: Do you have anything else you want FSA members to know?

SL: Yes. I would say make sure that when this type of thing happens again (and I hope it doesn't, of course), but if it does, you cannot assume that management knows all the details and has complete reasons. You must question management on everything. We discovered that there were a lot of things that management didn't know and thought: hey, they should know this. A lot that they hadn't considered. Don't assume anything management is saying is complete. The other thing I would say is that BCIT puts a lot of emphasis on consultation and transparency, which isn't always the case in practice. Make sure you hold managers to the high standards of the Institute. Make sure you hold them accountable.

MG: Stephen, thanks so much for sitting down with me.

SL: You're welcome. My pleasure.



Executive Director:

DOUG THORPE-DORWARD

STATE OF THE UNION: TOGETHER IN TOUGH TIMES

I read an article recently about how journalist unions have reacted to the massive layoffs that have taken place in North American newsrooms. The article cited three main ways that these unions were reacting to layoffs:

1. Pushing Back and Seeking Information
2. Negotiating Severance Packages
3. Support and Communication

It struck me that the FSA has been following many of the same paths and that we might draw lessons now and for the future by looking at what others have done.

Let's look at what the FSA has been doing under each of these headings:

1. Pushing Back and Seeking

Information: Based on feedback from members, we have been asking many questions of BCIT administration:

- In addition to formal layoffs, what other methods are being used to reduce numbers of people—for example, positions that will remain vacant, retirements and resignations that will not be

replaced. What management reductions are being contemplated?

- Where will the work of the people laid off or not replaced go? We have made it clear that we will be tracking this and will not accept work simply distributed amongst those who are left in a Department.
- FSA staff have been attending all Department layoff notification meetings and have been providing valuable advice to members. We have found that our staff are often the most informed regarding the processes in the Collective Agreement.
- Article 18 gives FSA members extraordinary rights to participate in the layoff process. The examination of layoff avoidance strategies is a valuable first step required in the layoff process in our Collective Agreement. Through this process, many Departments have done a lot of hard work to gather information and make suggestions of plans

for equivalent savings that will avoid a layoff altogether. We thank members for their thoughtful and hard work in these processes.

2. Negotiating Severance

Packages: What we discovered when Departments started discussing layoff avoidance strategies was that there were several members who were prepared to look at negotiating some sort of exit package—early retirement or similar—in order to take a voluntary separation from BCIT. In many cases, these separations would result in savings sufficient to obviate a layoff.

We do feel that it might have been a better order of operations to discuss voluntary exits prior to putting everyone on edge regarding possible layoffs, and we will bring this up with BCIT when we debrief the entire process once it is completed.

A reminder that all potential exit packages must be negotiated with the FSA involved. BCIT cannot negotiate directly with union members.

3. Support and Communication:

The article I read quoted newspaper guild members as saying the "...mutual support during the day of the layoffs was immensely helpful...It seems pretty invaluable to have the union support and solidarity through this experience." This made me wonder if we are providing enough support for our members going through these processes. Summer is a difficult time to bring members together for support at a post-secondary institution. I know that our LR reps have been providing

great support for individuals involved in these processes, but perhaps there is more we can do. We will discuss this issue with Tech Reps at our first meeting in the fall, seeking input from members prior to any debrief with the employer on the layoff process generally.

In the meantime, I want to remind members that, should you need support or counselling, the Employee Assistance Plan is available to you 24-7. Just call Homewood Health at 1-800-663-1142. E-counselling is also available.

Let me close by saying I have been so impressed by how FSA members have pulled together to ensure they are exercising their rights under the Collective Agreement in this time of fiscal constraint and layoffs at BCIT. As your new Executive Director, it has been a great introduction to solidarity here within the ranks of the FSA.

Doug Thorpe-Dorward
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE USES OF ARTICLE 19: INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL THOMPSON

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Article 19 investigations could end up with no action being taken or, potentially, someone being discharged from the Institute.

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Matt Greaves: I'm here with my co-worker Michael Thompson, Labour Relations Representative at the FSA. Hello, Michael.

Michael Thompson: Hello, Matt.

MG: We're very formal today. So, let's discuss Article 19s in our Collective Agreement. For those who don't know, what are they?

MT: Well, Article 19 in our Collective Agreement language provides detail on how an

investigative meeting will be conducted for FSA members. These are meetings called when the employer feels that there's been a breach of employer policies or rules. Article 19 prescribes procedures by which the employer will contact the Union and the member in question notified and assured representation through the process.

MG: These meetings would be disciplinary in nature.

MT: Potentially. The Article's title references discipline, suspension, and discharge. It sets the table for considering whether there has been a breach of employer rules. Article 19 investigations could end up in nothing or, potentially, someone being discharged from the Institute.

MG: So the Article 19 disciplinary continuum literally goes from “return to business as usual or leave the Institute,” with other outcomes in between.

MT: You could be losing your job.

MG: This year (at time of interview), we’re on pace for the most Article 19 investigations we’ve had in at least a decade. The final number will almost certainly set a highwater mark in the FSA’s digital records. How has Article 19 historically been used by the employer and how is it currently being used? Are there any differences?

MT: Well, I can only speak to the five years that I’ve been here and not the full range of how these have been used throughout our history. In recent years, they’ve, generally speaking, been used when the employer believes that there’s been a serious breach of policy. How I perceive it being changed, however, is that the meetings have been invoked more and more recently. They’ve become more common.

MG: Do you have any advice if a member is called into an Article 19 meeting?

MT: Honesty and precision are important. If there’s been a breach of employer rules it’s one thing, but if there’s dishonesty after the breach that can amplify any discipline. The employer-employee relationship is a trust relationship in many aspects. There are a great number of things that come into play when we analyze discipline, but my advice to members to protect themselves during an interview is to listen to the questions you’re asked, and if you need to ask for clarification then do so. Never guess on an answer. That’s the last thing we want. Most people want to be helpful, to provide an answer when asked. But my advice is that if you need to check your records to say: I need to check records. This way there’s no mistake. So, in terms of protecting themselves: don’t guess. If you need clarification, then

you state that. There’s nothing wrong with that. A non-answer can have an adverse inference but that is better than a wrong answer which may be seen as deception.

MG: Stick to the facts where possible and don’t guess.

MT: Don’t guess. Listen to the questions. Certainly, if you’ve done something wrong, it’s time to fall on the sword and apologize. And you know, to mitigate the outcome, to offer restitution if restitution is necessary, to say how you’re going to change in the future, and potentially if there’s any training that can help guide the employee,

MG: Thank you so much, Michael, for telling us about Article 19s.

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Contact

BCIT FACULTY &
STAFF ASSOCIATION

SE16-116 3700 Willingdon Ave.
Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2

T: 604.432.8695

F: 604.432.8348

E: fsa@bcit.ca

W: bcitfsa.ca

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