

## O • C • F • A

## Okanagan College Faculty Association

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**Delivery of the Update**

The *Update* is now distributed electronically as a PDF file by e-mail as well as being available on the OCFA webpage at

<http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/administration/ocfa/update.html>

**Meeting Dates**

The Winter General Meeting (WGM) is scheduled for 5:00-9:00 pm, Friday, February 17 (*Infusions*, Dinner & drinks at 5 pm, meeting at 6:30 pm).

OCFA Executive meetings are generally held once every two weeks. Meetings scheduled for the remainder of this semester include: 2:30-4:30 p.m., Friday, February 17; 2:30-4:30 p.m., Friday, March

2; and 2:30-4:30 p.m., Friday, March 23. If you would like to bring forward a particular item for consideration please contact one of your OCFA Exec members (see page 2 for the list).

OCFA Council meetings are generally held once per month. Meetings scheduled for the remainder of this semester include: 4:30-6:30 p.m., Friday, February 10; 2:30-4:30 p.m., Friday, March 2; and 4:30-6:30 p.m., Friday March 30. If you would like to bring forward a particular item for consideration please contact one of your OCFA Council or Exec members (see page 2 for the list).

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for 5:00-9:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 9 (*Infusions*, Dinner & drinks at 5 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m.).

**Letter(s) to the Editor**

The *Update* welcomes letters to the editor. I encourage you to write either in response to what you read in the newsletter or about other Faculty Association matters. Letters to the *Update* do not represent the opinions of the editor nor the OCFA Executive or Council. Please send letters as e-mail to the *Update* editor Richard Christie at [rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca). The preferred format is Word.

I wish to thank everyone for their submissions - Richard Christie, *Editor*.

## Members of OCFA Council and CARC 2011-2012

<b>Executive</b>		<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
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Second VP, Bargaining Chair	Nolan Fretz	250-718-6385	<a href="mailto:nfretz@okanagan.bc.ca">nfretz@okanagan.bc.ca</a>
Secretary-Treasurer	Michelle Nicholson	250-718-6380	<a href="mailto:mnicolson@okanagan.bc.ca">mnicolson@okanagan.bc.ca</a>
Executive Member-at-Large	Richard Christie	Ext 4484	<a href="mailto:rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca">rchristie@okanagan.bc.ca</a>

### **Council:**

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Faculty Liaison – Business	Drew McGillvray	Ext 4793	<a href="mailto:DMcGillvray@okanagan.bc.ca">DMcGillvray@okanagan.bc.ca</a>
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### **CARC:**

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Salmon Arm Campus Steward	Rod Watkins	Ext 8215	<a href="mailto:rpwatkins@okanagan.bc.ca">rpwatkins@okanagan.bc.ca</a>
Vernon Campus Steward	Arthur 'Gill' Green	Ext 4801	<a href="mailto:AGreen@okanagan.bc.ca">AGreen@okanagan.bc.ca</a>

## **President's Report**

*by Tim Walters*

### **"On Solidarity"**

Last week, I had the opportunity to travel to the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School to take a five day course with three other council members: Chief Steward Sharon Josephson, Negotiations Chair Nolan Fretz, and Kelowna Steward/Status of Women representative Norah Bowman Broz. The highlight of the week for me was getting to spend some time getting to know many other unionized workers from all across the province — teachers, health care workers, longshoremen, electricians, transit, forestry, steel, and postal workers, etc — many of whom are in exactly the same position provincially as we are, and some of whom have it much worse. This has already been a difficult year for the union movement in BC. The terrible disaster at the Burns Lake mill left workers dead, injured, and poses a genuine threat to the continuing existence of that community: the OCFA has made a donation to a USW fund to support those impacted by the tragedy on your behalf, as has FPSE. The President of NorthWest Community College began the New Year by sending *all* faculty a notification of lay-off, which means that any and all of our colleagues at NWCC could be made unemployed in the coming months. These troubles put our own into perspective, and make me think about the idea of solidarity.

Now that the dust of bargaining has begun to clear (albeit briefly) and there are once again patches of clear blue sky in the OCFA Executive's day planners, we will redouble our efforts to continue to integrate our union into the post-secondary sector specifically and the Labour movement in general. I believe that this move towards greater solidarity is first and foremost simply the right thing to do, but also that it is a political necessity given the difficult and particular realities we face. The fact of the matter is that in BC *no one* in the public sector is actually bargaining with their local employer anymore — we are all dealing with an unfriendly provincial government, and we are all in this together whether we like it or not. Put simply, the OCFA can do next to nothing to materially change this predicament by ourselves.

Fortunately, we are not by ourselves. Above and beyond the immediate benefits we attained by rejoining FPSE, our membership has served as an invaluable conduit between our association and faculty and other workers throughout the province. This month, at our President's Council meeting in Vancouver, I was able to participate in preliminary discussions about our strategy for the upcoming round of bargaining with Presidents from all of the other FPSE locals as well as representatives from CUFA BC (Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC). This discussion was framed by a presentation from the BC Federation of Labour explaining the latest polling numbers gauging public attitudes toward the government's treatment of the public sector. The polling makes clear that the public recognizes the value of

the work we do and is becoming increasingly intolerant of Premier Clark's apparent inability or refusal to do likewise. This discrepancy is *the* primary obstacle we face as a union.

FPSE President Cindy Oliver recently wrote a fantastic article <http://www.fpse.ca/news/presidents-comment/post-secondary-education-its-worth-investment> in which she discusses the results of a study which demonstrates the practical value of the work we do. A four year degree in BC costs the public treasury an average of \$50,630. However, the average female recipient of that degree contributes \$106,000 more in taxes to the public treasury over the course of her working life than she would otherwise, and the average male contributes \$159,000 more. Setting aside the terrible gender disparity between these numbers, the good news here is that the post-secondary education we provide is a demonstrably sensible investment of provincial tax dollars. Our task, then, is to persuade government of what the majority of the public already understands: we are money well spent. We can begin our discussion of how best to proceed in the next round to make this happen at our WGM next week.

Finally, I'd like to commend all of those students and faculty who supported the Canadian Federation of Students/ OCSU nationwide day of action on February 1<sup>st</sup>. No one has felt the sting of diminishing government funding to post-secondary education more directly than have our students, and they deserve our support and appreciation for their ongoing efforts to improve the sector in which we work. It's tremendously important that we remember who we are in the trenches with.

In solidarity, Tim.

**Reminder:** don't forget to apply for FPSE's International Solidarity Fund. Applications are due this year by February 17th, 2012 at 4:00 p.m., so if you are involved in doing any of the kinds of important work that this fund is intended to encourage, please think about applying. As you can see from the link below, one of our own won significant support last year, and it'd be great to see our members continue to benefit from our FPSE membership in this way. All the necessary information can all be accessed here: <http://fpse.ca/committees/hrisc/isf>

**Calendar of upcoming events** – one OCFA event each month that you should definitely attend.

February 17<sup>th</sup>: **Winter General Meeting** (*Infusions*, Dinner & drinks at 5 p.m., Meeting at 6:30 p.m.).

The main orders of business will be a discussion of when and how the new collective agreement provisions take effect, approving (or not) the budget, and we'll also be raising the possibility of instituting major changes to the way OCFA voting happens to maximize member inclusivity.

March 9th: **International Women's Day: Women In/And Politics** (*Laurel Packinghouse*, 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.).

Celebrate International Women’s Day, organized by OC’s Women’s Resource Centre, with financial support from the OCFA. Join us Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 - 9:00 p.m., at the Laurel Packing House in downtown Kelowna. Moderated by the CBC’s Alya Ramadan, the evening will include speakers from such groups as the North Okanagan Labour Council, the BC NDP, and the Kelowna South Neighbourhood Association. Also on hand, performers such as Miriam Kunha, union activist and musician, Regina Brennan, and former OC student Johanna Olsen. Plus food, wine, and children’s crafts!

April 4<sup>th</sup>: **Pension/ Retirement Planning Presentations** (*Infusions*, times to be announced)

This event has been generously sponsored by FPSE, and organized by our Pension Advisory Officer Doug Birtwistle with the help of HR. The visiting speaker, John Wilson, is Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the College Pension Plan, and an expert on retirement issues that pertain to our sector. The first of his talks is intended to address pension-related concerns for early and mid-career faculty. Later in the day, he will be discussing retirement planning for those contemplating leaving the college in the next few years – spouses will also be able to attend this event. Watch this space for more information.

May 9<sup>th</sup>: **Annual General Meeting** (*Infusions*, Dinner and drinks at 5 p.m., Meeting at 6:30 p.m.)

Typically our biggest event of the year, the AGM is where we elect a new Executive, Council, and CARC for the following year, as well as debate and vote on significant motions (such as changes to our constitution) made at previous meetings.



## **1st Vice-President's Report**

*by Sharon Josephson*

### **OCFA Update February 2012**

### **Collective Agreement Review Committee (CARC) Report**

Submitted by Sharon Josephson, Chief Steward  
Contact: Kelowna E320; ext. 4294; cell 250-718-6387

### **Your campus stewards:**

Penticton: Sharon Mansiere, Biology, ext. 3234  
Kelowna: Norah Bowman-Broz, English & Women's Studies, ext. 4215  
Vernon: Gill Green, Geography, ext. 4801  
Salmon Arm: Rod Watkins, Philosophy, ext. 8215

### **Report on Union Training**

On November 25, 2011, our staff representative from FPSE, Jeff McKeil, spent a day with us providing education on current issues in the post-secondary sector. While all sessions were well-attended, the sessions on Governance and Collegial Authority were the most popular, with close to 20 faculty in attendance at the latter.

Our plan is to take what we learned at these sessions and to develop workshops for this year's *Connections* event. Watch for news on this as things develop.

Thanks to all of you who made this day so interesting.

### **Duty to Accommodate**

Do you have a documented medical condition that makes doing your job difficult? If yes, you may be eligible for an accommodation—an arrangement of some kind that alleviates some of the difficulty caused by your condition. Accommodations are quite common and vary depending on the condition. For example, if a faculty member has a knee condition that makes walking difficult, arrangements can be made to ensure his/her classes are assigned to rooms near his/her office. The employer has a legal obligation to accommodate so long as the accommodation does not cause them undue hardship. Please get in touch with Sharon if you'd like more information.

## **OCFA Negotiating Committee**

*by Nolan Fretz*

### **Negotiations Committee Report - Bargaining Update, February, 2012:**

Submitted by Nolan Fretz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Negotiations Committee Chair  
Contact: Kelowna C330; ext. 4497; cell 250-718-6385

The rest of the bargaining committee consists of: Peter Murray, Negotiations Committee Speaker, Tim Walters, OCFA President, Sharon Josephson, OCFA 1<sup>st</sup> VP, and Michelle Nicholson, OCFA Treasurer.

First off, a thank you to all of you who took the time to attend the Collective Agreement ratification meeting in January. The OC Board of Governors also ratified this agreement and passed it on to PSEA to do the same. As of this writing, we are still waiting for that to happen as there was an accounting question about how one of the dates would align with Ministry reporting dates. We have been assured that the agreement is otherwise supported and once the date issue is resolved will be signed into existence. It is our hope that this will happen very soon, but the wheels of government turn slowly. The biggest fallout from this delay right now is that we are not yet under the new benefits plans. The old ones remain in effect. We will send out separate notice once everything is changed over with the benefits carrier. As well, we recognize that the original window for submitting retirement notices for the coming year is rapidly closing and a number of you want to ensure that this agreement is in place before you make your final retirement decisions. We have made the employer aware of this and are working on negotiating an extension to the submission window.

Several other implementation items are in active discussion with the College, including ESL rate changeover, assignment of seniority for term members, in-servicing chairs and departments about the updated accrual and hiring expectations, and the distribution mechanism for the new PD funding. We expect to be able to update all of these at the Winter General Meeting this Friday.

While it would be terrific to be able to sit back and rest on what we have accomplished, the next round of bargaining looms on the horizon. Over the next few months, we will once again form a negotiating committee and gather information from the membership to provide bargaining direction. Watch for opportunities to share your thoughts with the committee. Your input is what guides this process. As well, if you are keen to raise your bargaining awareness and involvement, please drop me a note. We are looking for people interested in working either at the table as part of the negotiating team or as support in gathering and analyzing a variety of data.

A Message from our Treasurer

*by Michelle Nicholson*



Don't miss the Annual Budget at the WGM Feb 17<sup>th</sup>



# The World Community Film Festival

*by Marlo Edwards*

## **The World Community Film Festival**

It's coming soon! Over 30 inspiring documentaries will be screened at OC and UBCO, March 8, 2011.

Please join us, and also advertise to your students, friends, and colleagues.

Admission is free.

And here's a sampling of what you might watch:

*Rainforest*(on logging and the Pacific Coast): <http://rainforestmovie.ca/w1/>

*Louder than a Bomb* (about a Chicago highschool poetry slam—amazing!):  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81hXGdFF6TQ>

*The Economics of Happiness*(the title says it all):  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkdnFYDbiBE>

*Play Again* (video games vs nature): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ3J0szCGqk>

*Raw Opium* (history & politics of the drug trade):  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvjxZdVurJQ>

On March 10, in the KLO campus pit, the Festival will be joined by Seedy Saturday. You can get a hot lunch, shop for seeds and other garden-related goods, and catch a film or two.

On Saturday, parents with kids can rest and play in the Aboriginal Student Centre, and on Sunday, screen some short films from our special family-friendly line up.

There's more information about all our venues and the films on our website (the schedule is still being fine-tuned): <http://www.worldfilmfestkelowna.net/index.html>