

The

Issue 2
February 2015

Update



The FPSE Non-Regular Faculty Survey Results

By Steve Weber, your Non-Continuing Faculty Rep

About one year ago, the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE) decided to run a survey of term faculty in BC to get a better understanding of these faculty members and of their working conditions (term faculty are also known as non-regular, contingent, sessional, adjunct, & contract faculty). The results of this survey may be surprising for some people, but they will not surprise many of us who work as term faculty. Of the 554 respondents for this survey, their average teaching income was \$27,000 (their total income was higher due to second jobs, employment insurance, etc.). 122 had PhDs, and 100 had teaching certificates or institutional diplomas. On average, they have worked for 6 years as term faculty, and for 4 years at their current institution. 61% are female. 30% teach at more than one institution. 75% are evaluated at least once a year. 75% want a regular/continuing position and 60% want full-time work. 60% do not have a career outside of education. 88% want job security. 89% want to be paid on the same basis as their colleagues. 89% want access to benefits. 88% want PD time and access to PD funds. 70% feel respected by their colleagues and 56% feel respected by their administration. 39% feel supported by their Faculty Association, and 50% feel neutral about their FA. 30% attend their FA meetings, and 20% were aware of Fair Employment Week. 57% don't get health benefits, but 78% are on the pension plan.

What conclusions can be safely drawn from this survey of term faculty in BC? Term faculty see themselves as educators and as academics, and they are very well qualified. However, many term faculty members cannot live on their teaching income. Generally, they have access to the pension plan, but they have remarkably less access to health benefits. They want job security and equal pay for equal work. They want access to PD time and PD funds. And finally, Faculty Associations in BC could be doing much more to make term faculty feel included and represented.

Bargaining Update

By Melissa Munn, your OCFA 2st Vice-President and Bargaining Chair

In addition to college policies and government legislation, the work of Okanagan College Faculty Association members is guided by two documents: our own local Collective Agreement and a Common Agreement which we share with faculty at seven other institutions (College of the Rockies, College of New Caledonia, Northwest Community College, Douglas College, North Island College, Camosun College & Selkirk College). These two documents define, among other things, our salary, benefits and work conditions and are arrived at through a bargaining process.

Over the past two weeks, I have been in Vancouver as part of the negotiating team for the Common Agreement. These negotiations were arduous but we have reached a Tentative Settlement on the Common Agreement. A main highlight of the tentative agreement will look familiar to those following bargaining in other public sectors in BC --- we will receive a phased in 5.5% wage increase over 5 years (including an economic stability dividend); there will be a retroactive wage adjustment applied if we ratify the tentative settlement on or before September 1, 2015. Your bargaining Committee had hoped that this would be the year when we would be able to eradicate the

mechanisms by which contingent faculty are paid less than those of us with continuing work; unfortunately the low wage redress that we saw in other public sectors in BC was not available at our table. We did agree to participate on a Working Committee on Secondary Scales to discuss types of work and employees which may require salary adjustment, transition issues, costs, and to develop recommendations to go to the principles; obviously we had hoped to achieve more than this at the provincial level for our term members and our disappointment over this inability is profound.

We did negotiate some benefit improvements such as an increase for hearing aid reimbursement and an improvement in paramedical coverage. We also negotiated coverage for addictions treatment and I believe this to be an important addition to our plan. These improvements were negotiated on the condition of deleting the EI disentitlement Supplemental Employment Benefits (SEB) top up and the Joint Committee on Benefits Administration (JCBA) savings clause.

A NOTE FROM OCFA PRESIDENT

Hi folks. I'll be circulating a full report of my various OCFA doings ahead of the WGM shortly, but just wanted to touch on a few things that we are working on that are particularly timely.

The first is Infosilem. Because of the huge problems caused by the implementation of this system last year—for faculty, students, and Deans—we have been urging the college to substantively address it to prevent the same problems from happening again. Apparently, we have failed in this regard. I previously reported to you that when we met with Jim Hamilton and VP Students Charlotte Kushner in November we were told that the college was undertaking a 'root and branch' analysis of the entire file with a view to minimizing some of the mayhem it caused last year. We were told that this would involve the committee that had worked to implement the program, as well as many others who were on the frontline of dealing with the issues it caused, including Chairs and Schedulers at each campus. At a meeting last week, we were told that this collaborative process did not actually happen.

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More details on this agreement will be provided when we (all OCFA members) meet at the conclusion of local bargaining.

We will resume bargaining of the local collective agreement this month and have dates scheduled through March 2015. When the Bargaining Committee (Mike Minions, Michelle Nicholson, Rod Watkins, Tim Walters and myself) and the OCFA Executive have a deal that they feel best reflects the wishes of our members, we will present it and the common agreement together for ratification.

Before I sign off, I want to acknowledge and thank Steve Weber, the non-regular representative on OCFA Council. Not only did Steve manage to free up four days (at the last minute) to be the non-regular rep during provincial negotiations but he provided sage council to me in my role as OCFA Bargaining Chair even when he was not at the table.

Stay tuned for more updates as we progress in the negotiations process.

IMPORTANT DATES

Winter General Meeting Friday, Feb 27, 2015: 5:30pm (drinks), 6-7pm (dinner), 7pm (meeting) at Infusions

Vernon Campus Social Friday March 6 5:30pm-8:00pm: Alexander's Pub

Thinking About Retiring Seminar Tuesday March 10, 2015: 5:00-7:00pm at the Ramada Hotel in Kelowna

Council meets once monthly and **Executive** meet once every two weeks. If you would like to bring forward a particular item for consideration please contact one of your OCFA Council or Exec members (see last page for the list).

A Note from OCFA President Cont...

Rather, a small group of administrators in the Registrar's office recommended some minor alterations which were then presented to various groups and which have since been approved by Dean's forum. These changes will do very little to address the majority of the numerous serious concerns from faculty that we presented to the college last year.

Obviously, this is very disappointing, as we are now facing another year in which our work schedules, the schedules of our students, and our Deans' ability to sensibly schedule programming are all subordinated to the college's attempts to master a program it has spent almost a decade trying to properly implement without success. (We've also spent and continue to spend several hundred thousand dollars trying to do so, which in the context of a budget crunch seems maddening to me, but that's another issue entirely.) While we will continue to press the college to rethink its use of Infosilem, I do have some positive news that might help alleviate some of the concerns raised by the document OC recently circulated about scheduling. Although the document circulated about the scheduling process appears intended to obfuscate this fact, the college has a contractual obligation to consider workload requests other than those related to HR approved accommodations and OC meetings, and they will do so. 19.2.4 of our collective agreement guarantees that "[t]he time and place for each course are determined by the appropriate OC authority. Reasonable requests by college professors for scheduling shall be accommodated where possible." This has been our practice for many years, also. What this means practically is twofold. To be approved, your request must be reasonable, which is a determination that will be made by your supervisor, but which absolutely includes your preferences for teaching at certain times and days of the week. It must also be

possible. If it is both of these things, then it cannot be denied. If it is, please contact your Chief Steward Rod Watkins immediately [rpwatkins@okanagan.bc.ca; 1 (250) 718 4161].

As the college has decided not to provide a mechanism with which to make these scheduling requests, please direct them to your Dean as soon as possible, as they will have to get them all entered into the system which will take time. Please do not contact the registrar's office directly, as they are not empowered to make decisions about your requests: this is your supervisor's job, and bothering a clerk in the scheduling office isn't going to help you, and it also isn't very nice.

Secondly, I'd like to encourage you all to take a few minutes to evaluate the state of our institution using FPSE's new online **Climate Survey** when it comes available in a week. As I have previously reported, there is an appetite across the sector that conditions at each college and university be gauged each year by the people who work there. The hope is that we can see how we at OC are doing compared to other institutions each year, and over time, in a variety of areas. This kind of analysis and self-reflection is particularly fitting of an educational institution, and has been proven in other jurisdictions (Alberta has been doing this for years) to provide a useful and impactful tool with which to measure the success of post-secondary institutions and those that manage them. I'll be circulating the link that will enable you to participate later this week. The survey will be open for two weeks, after which point the data will be extracted and made available to us and to the general public. . And finally, of course, I want to remind you to think about coming to the **Winter General Meeting**. This feels like an unusually important year for our institution.

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REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

OCFA annual elections will take place at our Annual General Meeting (date TBA). Contact Erin Radomske (eradomske@okanagan.bc.ca), the chair of the Nominations Committee, for more information about the seats on Council, Executive, and CARC. You can also check out the OCFA Constitution and Bylaws for duties of each position, which is found on the [OCFA Webpage](#).

The college is facing a budget shortfall of \$1.9 million due to chronic underfunding of our sector by the BC Liberals, and they are currently deciding how to prepare a budget that addresses this. They must also contend with the forthcoming removal of ESL and ABE funding, which places many of our colleagues and future students in a potentially disastrous predicament. Alongside these financial pressures, they are creating a strategic plan (under the guidance of our own Kerry Rempel, which bodes well) to guide OC through the next five years. And there is also the small matter of our current involvement in bargaining a new contract locally that will define our working conditions for potentially the next five years. At the provincial

bargaining table, PSEA were not interested in doing anything at all to address the unequal compensation of term faculty, which remains the shame of our sector and the existential threat to our profession. So we have some stuff to talk about. A key part of the role of the OCFA is to speak to these issues on your behalf, and the more of you that show up, the better equipped we are to do that. Plus, we make it easy: your friends are there, we have great food and an open bar, and easy-to-complete expense claim forms to cover travel and/or childcare. Plan to attend.

Cheers,
tim

FPSE International Solidarity Fund 2015 Call for Proposals Deadline February 20, 2015

“The International Solidarity Fund (ISF) is designed to support long-term, ongoing projects that build partnerships between our Federation and people in the disadvantaged world. The ISF Committee is seeking project proposals from local Faculty Associations for the eighth year of FPSE-funded projects.”
[International Solidarity Fund](#)



FPSE

**FEDERATION OF
POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATORS OF BC**

The Hard Work of CARC and Your Chief Steward

By Rod Watkins, your OCFA 1st Vice-President
and Chief Steward

Hello fellow OCFA members. CARC (your grievance committee) and I have been busy the past several weeks. I will try to be brief, but complete. Let me begin with our active grievances. We have at the moment eight grievances at Step 3 (proceeding to arbitration).

Four of those grievances (FAC13/12, FAC13/13, FAC14/01 and FAC14/02) are the result of disciplinary action against two of our members. I have reported on this in earlier editions of the Update, so I won't repeat the details again. But I can report that arbitration for FAC13/12 is scheduled for May 26-29, 2015.

The next two grievances (FAC13/04 Moodle and FAC13/11 IT policy) are in a state of limbo at the moment. Shortly before the holiday break, Tim and I met with the Denise Fallis, Andrew Hay, Ross Tyner, Heather Banham and Donna Olson (legal counsel for the College) to discuss a final settlement on these two grievances. We informed the College that we were satisfied with the terms we have reached regarding privacy of Moodle sites. But we also informed the

College that the most recent draft of the IT policy was still not acceptable. Though having removed the claim that all materials that are hosted on or pass through College IT equipment is OC property (a black letter violation of our copyright language in the CA), they maintained that those same materials are still under their “custody and control”. CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers, of which we are a member) has clearly advised its members that our



ISSUES BEING MONITORED BY CARC

1. After agreeing at the request of the Dean and members of a department in STH, the OCFA agreed to deem a search for a continuing member an emergency allowing the College to hire term members to assume that work as allowed in the Collective Agreement. Both the OCFA and the department were promised a full and meaningful search for a new continuing member this spring. The College has however decided not to post for the continuing position. I have expressed clearly to the College that doing so signals the College's intention to be in violation of the CA in July 2015 if they do not hire a new continuing member. I have also expressed our deep concern that breaking this promise makes it nigh impossible for the OCFA as well as departments to cooperate with the College when we cannot trust the College's word.
2. CARC and I are actively engaged in several harassment and bullying complaints. Due to the need to maintain confidentiality, I cannot say more than this at the moment.
3. CARC is also monitoring the College's response to the letter the membership instructed me to write to Jim Hamilton last spring regarding the College's poor handling of harassment cases. Tim and I met with Jim Hamilton and Charlotte Kushner to discuss the weaknesses in the College's policy and procedures and offered some suggestions to improve it (thanks to our Council subcommittee on harassment). Charlotte has remained in contact with Tim and me. We will continue to monitor this as the College attempts to improve this.
4. Infosilem. Dean's forum approved a new policy regarding scheduling. In addition to constraints due to Collective Agreement language, mandated College committees (e.g., Education Council) and approved medical accommodations, the College will also consider "learner-centered" requests. Such requests will be submitted to the program Dean for approval. We believe this is a violation of article 19.2.4 which reads in part: "Reasonable requests by college professors for scheduling shall be accommodated where possible."
5. Melissa Munn, our Bargaining Chair and 2nd VP, and I met with Dean Moritz, Monique Powell of Nursing and Denise Fallis from HR to prepare an updated Letter of Understanding (to be attached to the CA) for the newly redesigned Nursing program. I am happy to report that our discussions went well and we should have the letter ready shortly.

teaching and research materials, even if hosted or transmitted through school servers, remains under our custody and control. See the advisory published by CAUT on this here: [CAUT Custody and Control Advisory](#) Since agreement to the policy would amount to a restriction of our rights and open our members to possible discipline should one refuse to comply with the overreaching elements of the policy, we could not agree to the policy in its current form. When we asked the College to remove or amend the offending language in the policy, they refused. As a result, I wrote a letter to Jim Hamilton before the holiday break offering to settle FAC13/04 but only on the condition that it not prejudice our position on FAC13/11 since the College had defended its Moodle access by referring to the IT policy. I am awaiting a reply, but I am hopeful for a resolution of FAC13/04.

The two remaining grievances at Step 3 are FAC13/07 Post-65 Benefits and FAC14/04 Wrongful Dismissal.

FAC13/07 is a long-standing grievance (now approaching two years old) over the loss of Life Insurance and Long Term Disability benefits for those who choose to work past age 65. Arbitration for this grievance was scheduled for the end of January 2015. It has now been postponed while negotiations took place at the template table late last month. Now that there is a tentative common agreement, we will revisit the grievance to determine our next actions.

FAC14/04 involves our grieving the dismissal of a member prior to the end of his probationary period. It is best practice to grieve all dismissals immediately to allow us time to make sure the dismissal was warranted and properly conducted. In this case, we argued that the criteria used to summatively evaluate this member were (1) applied arbitrarily and (2) a

violation of academic freedom. We are currently seeking approval to proceed to arbitration from the GARC committee at FPSE.

I am happy to report that at the moment we have no Step 2 grievances. But we do have one new step 1 grievance: FAC15/01: Workload Reduction Compensation. Part-time term members who have their appointment reduced six day or more prior to the commencement of classes are to receive one week's pay in compensation. Two members that we are aware of have had their workload reduced but did not receive the week's pay. We are grieving this failure to pay. I would also ask all term members who have had a workload reduction to contact me or your local steward so we can review your case.

I should also report on my trip to Vancouver to attend the FPSE CARC committee meeting where Chief Stewards from Colleges and Universities across the province meet to discuss our ongoing issues and concerns. The main issues are not that different from our College: discipline, harassment and bullying, and workload and compensation issues. But there is one impression in particular that I came away with: namely, that we are a thoroughly unexceptional local with respect to volume of grievances. We currently have nine active grievances. By comparison, TRU (the current front-runner), for example, has forty-nine.

One last matter. I just recently met with Andrew Hay, Academic VP, and had a very constructive conversation about the status of several of our grievances/issues as well as relations between the OCFA and OC more generally. Out of this discussion, we have agreed to arrange a semi-regular meeting between the two of us to discuss ongoing matters. My hope is that regular discussions of this sort will foster more and better communication between the OCFA and OC. I am excited about the opportunity and wish to thank VP Hay for his willingness to participate.

Respectfully submitted,
Rod Watkins

"Thinking About Retiring" Seminar Coming To Kelowna

The BC Pension Corporation is offering the following seminar in Kelowna for Spring 2015:

DATE	SEMINAR	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday, March 10, 2015	"Thinking About Retiring"	5:00pm – 7:00pm	Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre 2170 Harvey Ave

This seminar is geared towards members within about 5 years of retirement age. Members interested in this seminar can visit our website by following this link:

[Seminar Registration](#)

The website provides a detailed description of the topics covered in the seminar, and instructions on how to register for the seminar.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Randy Brown, your new Pensions Advisory Rep, at rbrown@okanagan.bc.ca or (250) 762-5445 ext.4373.

News from Your Human Rights and International Solidarity Rep

By Norah Bowman

1. HRIS Speaker, sponsored by FPSE, Jacinda Mack, Xat'sull (Mt Polley) Mining Response Co-ordinator, spoke in Kelowna and Vernon the third week of November.

Mack spoke with about 100 students and faculty. Mack's presentation showcased the ongoing need for scrutiny and public attention on the levels of toxicity and turbidity in the Quesnel River Watershed. Imperial Metals is cleaning up the August 4th spill in which 25

million litres of tailings waste flowed into Hazeltine Creek and Quesnel Lake. The waste includes mercury, selenium, arsenic and copper and is now present in Quesnel River, a river which flows in the Fraser River Watershed. With Jacinda Mack's invitation, I travelled to Williams Lake February 11th to attend a community meeting about the spill. *Continued on pg. 7.*

2. BC Provincial government's declaration that Adult Basic Ed will no longer be funded for students who

have a high school degree will negatively affect Adult Ed, and possible OCFA taught classes as well. We don't know what this will look like, exactly, but OC is working on this. Please communicate with ABED members our solidarity and our support, as a trade union, for their employment, and for the training their students would receive.

This policy will unfairly disadvantage students who are often already struggling with economic and social marginalization. As a result, a reduction in access to post-secondary – trades, university studies, applied studies – across BC will directly affect our enrolment numbers. At many colleges in BC Adult Ed faculty are in the same bargaining unit as faculty.

DOUG BIRTWISTLE IS THE NEWLY APPOINTED COLLEGE PENSION PLAN TRUSTEE

Doug Birtwistle was recently appointed to the College Pension Plan Board of Trustees by FPSE after being nominated by OCFA. Doug described the role of the board as “charged with overseeing the operations of the College Pension Plan, always with the best financial interests of all members, active and retired, and their beneficiaries in mind.”

Congratulations to Doug Birtwistle! Well-deserved recognition of Doug's passion for pensions!

As a trustee, Doug could no longer serve as the OCFA Pensions Advisory Rep on Council so Randy Brown has taken over for Doug, leaving the Technology Rep position vacant. Doug is now the Salmon Arm Community Rep.

LETTERS 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 Erin Radomske at eradomske@okanagan.bc.ca. The preferred format is MS-Word.

DELIVERY OF THE *UPDATE*

The *Update* is distributed electronically as a PDF file by e-mail as well as being available on the OCFA webpage using this link: [The Update](#)

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