

The

TRUFA Monthly

Keeping you updated on the goings-on of your faculty association



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY
FACULTY ASSOCIATION



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Next Issue TRUFA Bargaining Platform:

We're on the web
www.trufa.ca

Management by Grievance Flourishing at TRU

2014 Sets Record

Arbitration Cases:.... 11

Grievances:.....47

Investigations:.....70

It has been a record-breaking year for Thompson Rivers University. Unfortunately, this record has nothing to do with student satisfaction, teaching innovation or ground-breaking research – instead, we've set a record for what some are calling "management by grievance."

Bernard Igwe, Deputy Chief Steward describes the situation as unprecedented and unacceptable from the point of view of both parties: "on average we don't file more than twelve a year, but something has come off the rails."



1st Vice President's Report

Lanzinger Elected President @ BC Federation of Labour Convention Theme of Convention: Fight the Attack on Public Services

BY JASON BROWN
FPSE 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

The BC Federation of Labour's 56th annual convention was held last week in Vancouver, and in a progressive move, delegates elected Irene Lanzinger as the next President who will lead the organization in its ongoing struggle to ensure fair wages, decent working conditions and robust public services for citizens throughout BC. Lanzinger, the former BC Teachers Federation President, becomes the first woman to lead the organization, replacing Jim Sinclair, who had held the top spot for 15 years. The convention provides both public and private sector unions from across the province with an opportunity to meet and discuss ways to collectively fight back against the attack on public services. Major issues for the **Federation of Post Secondary Educators** includes restoring funding for domestic ESL programming at public institutions, as well as restoring general funding for post secondary to sustainable levels. The BC Fed document titled "Fight the Attack on Public Services" declared that Bc spent \$1.17 Billion less on education in 2014 than in 2001. This staggering disinvestment is

expected to pull a total of \$2.29 billion out of education funding by 2016. Tax cuts to corporations that have taken place since 2001 are blamed for the massive disinvestment from public services like education and healthcare.

BC Companies have taken home an extra \$12 billion in after-tax profit in the last 10 years at the expense of average British Columbians and the public services they count on.

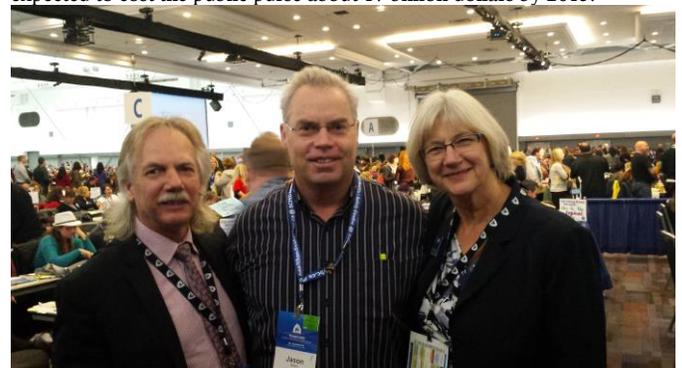
In the post-secondary sector, continued underfunding has driven institutions to cut programs and lay off more faculty and staff. Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) won a major victory in arbitration over Northwest Community College's layoffs two years ago, and last year, Capilano University had draconian cuts to long-time arts and developmental programs. Last year too, the federal government gave notice that it would no longer fund English as Second Language (ESL) programs, a decision that sparked major layoff notices at Vancouver Community College (VCC), Douglas College, Camosun College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the University of the Fraser Valley. The province came under pressure to restore the cuts, but only provided transitional funding. At VCC, this means 27 long-time faculty took voluntary retirement, 72 regular faculty and 60 sessional faculty will have no work by Christmas, and more than 2,200 students every term will have no place to study. This is an example of privatization at its worst, as no private school has the ability to provide such specialized programming. Support staff at colleges and universities have been without a contract since April 1, 2014,

and in the last year, three university faculty associations have certified as unions: the University of Victoria Faculty Association; Simon Fraser University Faculty Association; and the University of Northern BC Faculty Association. They have fallen well behind settlements in other parts of the country. While workers have fallen behind, the same can't be said for administrators at BC's post-secondary institutions. From 2002 to 2012, the number of administrators has increased by 54 per cent, and their pay has increased 203 per cent. Contrast these numbers with support staff (11.55 and 33.9 per cent) and faculty (20.5 per cent and 42 per cent), and one sees inequity growing. Unions representing workers involved in the delivery of education and public services continue to do more with less, working hard to ensure quality, accessible, public education despite actions to underfund and further privatize these services. But why are we so poor that we can't invest in Education and other public services?

Because the federal government slashed the general corporate income tax rate from 29.1 per cent in 2000 to 15 per cent in 2011, which has led to corporations having over \$500 billion in cash surpluses (CCPA 2014: 29). Successive tax cuts, largely for the benefit of corporations and the affluent,

have reduced the Harper government's tax revenues to the lowest share of the economy in 70 years (CCPA 2014: 27). As a result, Canada has an increasingly regressive tax system and shrinking revenues that are being used to justify spending cuts, wage suppression, and inadequate support for public services.

The Federation of Labour estimates that between 2001 and 2010, "the cumulative cost of ... cuts just to corporate income taxes cost between \$7.7 and \$8.5 billion dollars. These corporate tax cuts result in lost revenues to the public treasury that could be used to fund public education and invest in future generations. Corporate tax cuts are expected to cost the public purse about 17 billion dollars by 2015."



BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger meets with BC Teacher's Federation President Jim Iker and FPSE's Jason Brown during last week's convention.

TRUFA's Traditional Method of Attempting to Informally Resolve Contract Disputes Not Working: No Choice but to Pursue Formal Grievance Route



Chief Steward Bernie Kirkey

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“Our preference would be for the Parties to resolve matters through an informal process before they rise to the level a grievance,” stated Igwe.

When Members alert TRUFA about concerns over possible contract violations, TRUFA has always taken these issues to the Joint Contract Administration Committee (including senior administrators and TRUFA stewards) in an attempt to informally seek resolution. This approach has proven fruitful in past years, but these days, it is rare for any dispute to be resolved informally. Instead, TRUFA is being forced to file grievances and follow them through right to the point of arbitration on many issues.

Workload

The majority of current grievances can be classified as **workload** related. For instance, collegial processes and approved workload plans are being disregarded in some Faculties/Schools; many Limited Term Contracts are not being renewed under new conversion language (5.2.4.4); approved course caps are being ignored; Chair release has inappropriately been clawed back; and a whole variety of jurisdictional disputes have arisen.

Policy Grievances

Several grievances affect large numbers of faculty. In a notable case involving every full-time employee, TRUFA is currently disputing the employer's decision in 2012 to change the divisor for calculating your bi-weekly pay, leading to take home pay losses nearing \$1000 for the average member.

Furthermore, some Continuing Sessional members have not been receiving cost-shared benefits (Article 13.10), or the percentage of benefits they have been receiving does not match their actual percentage of workload. For example, we have one member who

was teaching a 100% load in the Fall term when she became ill and went on Short-Term Disability. The employer claims she was only eligible for 35% of her normal full-time pay while on disability. Needless to say, TRUFAS disputes their calculations. Finally, TRUFA alleges the employer has violated the performance review (Article 7) and course evaluations (LOU #31) by moving to across the board electronic evaluations in some areas.

Faculty Complement

TRU has not been replacing tenured faculty members as per the ratios spelled out in Faculty Complement language (Article 5.4) across the University and especially in the School of Business, the Schools of Social Work and Nursing. For example, in the SoBE, 58% of all course sections were taught by sessional faculty in 2013/14. Article 5.4 limits that number to 40% in any one School and 30% across the entire institution. In addition to violating the contract, the employer has saved approximately \$250,000 just in the SoBE by not employing sufficient tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Other Grievances

Other grievances include failure to support hiring recommendations made by appointments committees, and in some cases failure to abide by hiring processes outlined in the Collective Agreement; inappropriate denial of Member representation, inappropriate suspensions and discipline etc. Should you feel your rights under the Collective Agreement may have been violated, contact:

Bernie Kirkey, Chief Shop Steward
steward@trufa.ca

Stay informed!

Visit www.trufa.ca in order to stay up-to-date on all happenings of your faculty association.



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