

The Money Issue

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THE 2006/2007 EXECUTIVE

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



LIZZ LINDSAY
VCCFA PRESIDENT

Happy New Year and all the best in 2006!!

Hope you had a great holiday and have kept at least some of your resolutions.

Welcome to new Executive members Cheryl Deyalsingh and Maggi Trebble who joined our first meeting of the year on January 9. Thanks to those who have volunteered to fill several committee positions. Several members of the Executive attended the annual Robbie Burns fundraising dinner on January 20 which is put on by the Vancouver District Labour Council and directly benefits Queen Alexandra school at Clark and Broadway.

Bargaining Bonus??

December was extremely busy possibly due to protracted bargaining that has taken a focus for far too long. Speaking of bargaining, Carole Taylor's well-timed announcement of a "bonus" for bargaining quickly in 2006 came while we were attending the BC Fed convention in early December. As you can imagine, it caused quite a stir among the delegates.

Cindy Oliver, President of FPSE, has been enquiring whether the college faculty sector will be eligible for the same "bonus" if we are able to complete bargaining by March 31/07. If we are, this should give us time to see what the bonus really means and whether it is worth the rush. We will be interested in hearing about the meeting she is attending with PSEC and the

public sector unions in Victoria at the end of the month.

In the meantime, the Bargaining Coordination and Recommendation Committee, made up of the local bargaining representatives from each college union local had a meeting to prepare for a FPSE Bargaining Conference to be held early March. Frank, Ingrid and I will be attending for VCCFA, Local 15. You can expect to hear more about bargaining over the next few months.

New Deputy Minister talks to folks!

We were fortunate to have the new Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, Moura Quayle attend our President's Council in January. She is the first person from the ministry to meet with us in over four years. We feel fortunate to have her in the ministry and appreciated her visit. *The FPSE news release is included as part of this newsletter.*

The United Way

A group of faculty from various FPSE locals attended the United Way Labour Community Service Award Dinner in December. Our low-key VCC United Way campaign raised just under \$36,000. It may have been low-key but certainly took some work. Doreen Sharan from the VP's Executive office did an excellent job organizing the various components of the campaign and communicating with the planning committee. Thank you to the faculty who so generously support the community both inside and outside VCC through the United Way. We expect that next year we will be back to a more energetic campaign with even better results.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gregor Robertson

Frank and I have had two meetings with Gregor Robertson, NDP opposition critic for the Ministry of Advanced Education, since our lobby in Victoria. The latest meeting was a brief tour of the City Centre campus where Gregor had an opportunity to talk to some of our faculty as he walked through program areas. He is well versed on the challenges we face and knows the good work that we do at VCC.

Awards Event, nicely done

Late last year, we attended the reception prior to the College Awards and Service Recognition ceremony at KEC. It was a very classy affair; they even served champagne and wine with the appies. It would be great to alternate campuses each year so that the City Centre folks could have the experience of this event every second year. Well done College and congratulations to the award winners.

Federal Election

The winter Federal Election is now behind us, the third election campaign in less than year. Three FPSE members ran for the NDP in BC; Nancy Clegg ran in Newton-North Delta, Michael Crawford ran in Kamloops and Randall Garrison in Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca. All three candidates came second in their ridings.

It is heartening to see so many members working on campaigns and actively supporting candidates. This good work helps us to be a credible voice when we meet with politicians to discuss the issues facing us.

VCCFA Appreciation

Plans are underway for our Annual VCCFA Appreciation Dinner scheduled at our good neighbours, Cassis, on February 27th. In the next few weeks, invitations and menu choices will be in the mail to the many activists who have volunteered over the past year. Their support makes the union more effective and stronger.

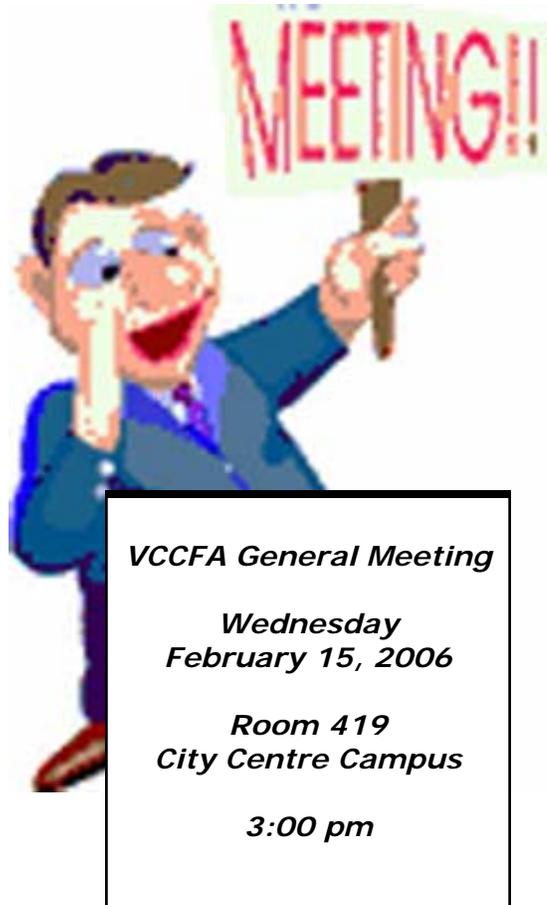
New PD Fund

Remember we have a new PD fund that may allow you up to \$5,000 for your approved PD activity. Thank you to Wayne McNiven and Brenda Appleton for serving on this new committee as well as on the continuing Adjudicated Funds committee and for being ready to help members access this money.

We are looking forward to seeing you at our next General Meeting, February 15, 3:00 pm in Room 419, City Centre Campus.

You may make appropriate assignments for your classes in order to facilitate your attendance.

In solidarity,
lizz



Money: April 1st and the Yoke

Money: Salary Scale Change

There will be a new top step added to our salary schedule effective April 1st. VCCFA members ratified this increase in March of last year as part of the Common Agreement bargaining deal. (*nb: As was discussed at ratification, our VCCFA rep voted against this application of compensation money only to the top step, but was outvoted*).

It only applies to those who have already been at the top step (Step one: \$73257) for a full year. So, about 45% of our members move on April 1st. The new Step one is \$75674, a 3.3% increase. That will mean a gross increase of a little over \$100 in each semi-monthly pay period. All other steps will remain of the same value but be renumbered. From one to ten will become from two (\$73257) to eleven (\$48666), the bottom step.



Money: What's the yoke I heard about?

It's nothing to do with eggs but much to do with the BCGEU and their sectoral bargaining. During our latest round, we were clearly told that the government would cap us at zero for 04, zero for 05 and, if we went to a third year, to 1.5% in overall compensation costs to employers in 2006.*

The college faculty sector of the GEU** has bargained with FPSE locals for all four rounds of Common Table bargaining. They clearly anticipated that the largest sector of the GEU, the "Master" agreement for government workers, would be starting to bargain in 2006, and that the "Master" would not necessarily be limited to 1.5% in 2006-07.

Since we were being restricted to 1.5%, it was proposed that if the "Master" agreement achieved a higher cost ceiling, then the difference would also be available to our Common Scale. However, any such application would only be to the top step.

(*nb: Again, as was explained at ratification, our VCCFA rep voted against this idea.*) . This proposal was accepted and eventually became part of our Common Agreement. ***

This "yoking" has also been deemed the "X factor" Will there actually be an X? It is hard to say. Recently, the government's musings about increasing compensation for public sector workers has fuelled some speculation that it may actually happen. This will be another item to watch out for in this "non-bargaining" year.

**Because the compensation increase is limited to top step, its impact is higher than 1.5%. Fewer than 50% of faculty are getting the increase, so it works out to 3.3% for them.*

***The GEU represents instructors in primarily trades and technical divisions at 4 colleges (Camosun, Okanagan, Selkirk and Northwest) and at Malaspina University-College and BCIT. These six institutions have two faculty unions. They also represent all the instructors at Northern Lights College in the Peace River area .*

****Through a complex series of events, GEU units and FPSE locals ended up splitting up at the end of the last round. They have a "common" agreement and we have a "common" agreement. Theirs is yoked to the "Master," ours is yoked to theirs.*

Money: Our Pensions: Safe From Inflation or Not?

by FPSE's Pension Advisory Committee

Will your pension be indexed to the cost of living?
The answer is: it depends.

Introduction

When you retire you will have a number of things to think about - and one of the most important will be income security. We are all members of a defined benefits pension plan and as such, we probably think that income security is not an issue.

Unfortunately, that perception is wrong for two reasons. Firstly, many people in our pension plan retire with less than 20 years of service and as such, their pension income will likely be less than 40 per cent of their pre-retirement income. Secondly, even if our initial pension is reasonably good, the purchasing power of that pension may decline because of inflation. This article will discuss the potential effects of inflation on our pensions. It will also discuss options and questions that you may want to raise with both Pension Trustees and your executive.

Impact of Inflation

Once you retire, if you have been contributing to the [College Pension Plan](#), you will be eligible for a pension. The value of that pension depends on the amount of pensionable service you have as well as your highest average salary and, if you are under 60, your age. The amount of that pension is guaranteed. Unfortunately, over time, the effects of inflation will reduce the purchasing power of the guaranteed pension. At the latest inflation rate reported by Statistics Canada, the purchasing power of your pension would be cut by almost half in 20 years. In other words, twenty years from now, your pension would buy half as much as it can buy today.

Even at a modest inflation rate of 2.5% per year, your pension would lose 40% of its purchasing power over twenty years. That's like taking a \$2500 a month pension and cutting it to \$1500 a month. Ouch!

The Inflation Adjustment Account

So, how do we deal with reduced purchasing power? Fortunately, many years ago the College Pension Plan established the Inflation Adjustment Account (the "IAA"). To date we have been able to fully index the pensions of existing retirees. In other words, we

have been able to maintain the purchasing power of our pensions by increasing pension payments at the same rate as inflation. So far, the IAA has had adequate resources to fully index retiree's pensions because of the very strong market performance during the 1990s and the fact that we did not have very many retirees.

Unfortunately, the very poor investment returns in the earlier part of this decade combined with the fact that the number of retirees is growing very quickly means that the IAA will not be able to continue full indexing of retiree pensions. The [College Pension Plan](#) is predicting that if we continue fully indexing retiree pensions then the IAA may run out of money in less than twenty years. As such, the only money available for indexing pensions would be current contributions to the IAA. Those contributions are inadequate to cover the cost of inflation.

Options

The current contributions to the IAA are inadequate to allow for full indexing. The College Pension Plan has identified three options to deal with this problem:

1. Continue to provide full indexing until the IAA runs out of money.
2. Reduce the amount of indexing so that the amount of indexing that is done can be done for a longer period of time.
3. Increase the contributions to the IAA.

Although options one and two are within the power of the College Pension Board, neither of these is a true solution to the problem of inflation. Only option three has the potential of solving the inflation problem. Unfortunately, option three must be agreed to by both our employers and our unions.

Even if we agree to increase the contributions to the IAA, we must still ask whether we want to make indexing a guarantee. A guarantee of inflation protection would require a significant increase in contributions. Consequently, if we want inflation protection to be guaranteed, it will have to be bargained.

cont'd on page 6

Money: Pensions & Inflation; The Liberal Gambit

Money: Pensions & Inflation, continued

What can you do?

Although there is a substantial amount of money in the IAA, it, combined with current contributions to the IAA, is not enough to guarantee that our pensions will be protected against inflation. Many of us will be retiring in the next ten years. If we want to address the inadequacy of current IAA contributions, now is the time while the costs of guaranteeing inflation protection are not as high.

You can make a difference by raising the issue of inflation adjustment with your local **Executive** (604-688-6210)

your **FPSE Pension Advisory Committee** Representative
(Brian Haugen, Diesel Department, 7393),

or with your **College Pension Plan Trustees**
Dominique Roelants, droelant@mala.bc.ca
John Wilson, jwilson@capcollege.bc.ca
Weldon Cowan, wcowan@fpse.ca

It's your pension. Make sure your voice is heard.

–Federation of Post Secondary Educators' Pension Advisory Committee

Money: The Liberal Gambit and Bargaining 2007

BC Finance Minister Taylor has announced that there could be one-time only financial incentives in the upcoming round of public sector bargaining. For probably 90% of the public sector, contracts expire in March or June of this year. Bargaining would normally start about now and continue for a number of months past expiry dates. Those unions are currently examining what it would mean to settle early. How much could we get? How would this help or hurt bargaining? How long would we have to sign on for? are some of the big, initial questions. The government has indicated that they want at least 4-year deals which would get them past the next provincial election in 2009 and the Olympics in early 2010.

We and most FPSE locals have an agreement until March, 2007. The question of a similar opportunity being open for us in 2007 is being explored with the government. There will be much more news about this and other bargaining developments. Stay tuned!



Gregor Robertson



Gregor Robertson

**MLA for Vancouver-Fairview
NDP Critic for the Ministry
of Advanced Education**

Mr. Robertson was visiting the College and the President so he also asked if he could get a bit of a tour from Lizz and Frank and have a chat while walking. In the hour we had, we only had time for parts of City Centre, but it was great to be able to have instructors casually meet a member of the legislature and be able to say a few words about what they do. Many thanks to those gracious instructors.

We were able to get in a few lobbying points about ELTT, funding, student fees, and Apprenticeships while we were walking. It was such a pleasant change from the last four years during which the opposition did not have the leisure for such visits. Government members have met with us but only in their basic role as Vancouver-area MLAs and not particularly with an interest in Adult Education.

We understand Mr. Robertson also met with CUPE and Student Association reps.

WHERE'S THE 2004-07 AGREEMENT?

Since local bargaining ended in November Vinit Khosla and Rose Marie Watson of our negotiating committee have continued to work with Gail Schmalz of Human Resources to edit the renewed collective agreement and prepare it for printing.

It should be out by mid to late February.

April 1, 2004—March 31, 2007

Collective Agreement

Vancouver Community College

And

**Vancouver Community College
Faculty Association**



Deputy Minister Meets with FPSE Presidents' Council

January 16, 2006

Vancouver — BC's new Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, Moura Quayle, met with members of FPSE's Presidents' Council to initiate an on-going dialogue with faculty members from around the province. "Council members were impressed with her openness and see this meeting as hopefully the first of many regular meetings with the Deputy to share our perspective and concerns about the public post-secondary system," said Cindy Oliver, President of FPSE.

"I have had a number of preliminary meetings with the Deputy prior to her meeting with our President's Council," said Oliver. "In the lead up to the provincial budget in February 2006, FPSE has been urging the government to make a substantial commitment to the public post-secondary education system. Certainly there is a strong economic case to be made for investing more in our public post-secondary education system; with a looming skills shortage, post-secondary education is going to become even more important," Oliver noted. "However, the more fundamental case is that post-secondary education contributes to every person's capacity to participate fully in a democratic society," Oliver added.

"Whether it is better funding and support for Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs or improved per student funding levels across the entire post-secondary system, we are making the case that those commitments need to be evident in the 2006 provincial budget," said Oliver. "We also hope that through regular dialogue between the Deputy and our Council that policy making within the Ministry will reflect the full range of input from instructors in all our public post-secondary institutions. There is a wealth of experience and expertise that faculty can bring to policy making and dialogue with the Deputy will help ensure our voice is being heard," Oliver concluded.

Moura Quayle



BC Deputy Minister of Advanced Education

FPSE's Developmental Education Proposal Outlined for Deputy

January 16, 2006 - "It's time to re-think provincial policies that have undermined access to our public post-secondary education system for our most vulnerable students," said Cindy Oliver, President of FPSE. Oliver was commenting after outlining a proposal to improve the access and affordability of the post-secondary education system.

The FPSE proposal, which was drafted by a working group of developmental education instructors, is called "[Opening Doors, Building Confidence: Proposals to Strengthen Adult Basic Education in British Columbia](#)".

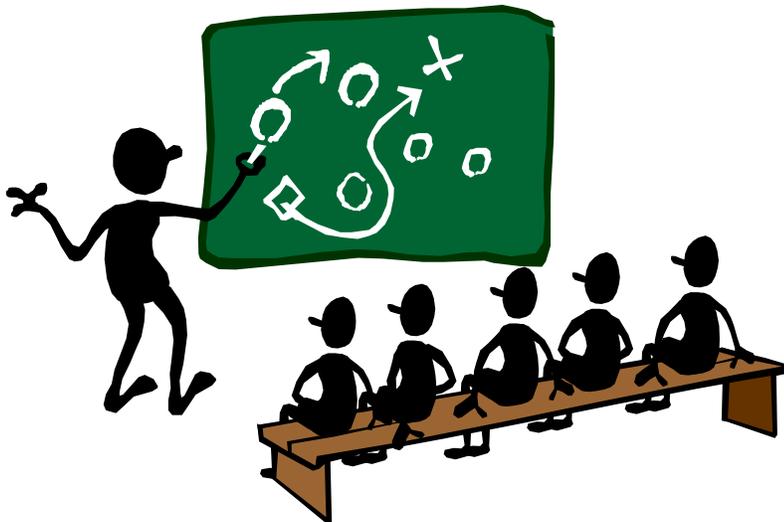
"Our proposal makes the case for improving funding and support for ABE programs in BC by examining a wide range of policy changes that have hurt the prospects and participation of ABE students," said Oliver. "It isn't just the increase in tuition fees that have undermined access and affordability. It is the loss of student support services, especially the wide range of support programs for low-income students, that have had a detrimental effect on access and enrolment," Oliver added.

"We outlined our proposal to the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education to ensure that she understands the need not only for funding improvements but also careful policy coordination to address these issues. Ms. Quayle [Deputy Minister of Advanced Education] has a good grasp of the problem and shares our concern that vulnerable students will require renewed emphasis by her ministry," said Oliver.

"The Deputy has committed to convening a briefing session with her counterpart at the Ministry of Human Resources so that we can further outline our concerns about policy changes in that Ministry and their impact on ABE students," said Oliver. "It's a good first step and hopefully we will see some of our proposed changes incorporated into the 2006 budget and various ministries' three-year service plans," Oliver concluded.

FPSE's brief *Opening Doors, Building Confidence* can be found at www.fpse.ca.

~ This is an FPSE News Release. Ingrid Kolsteren contributed to "Opening Doors".

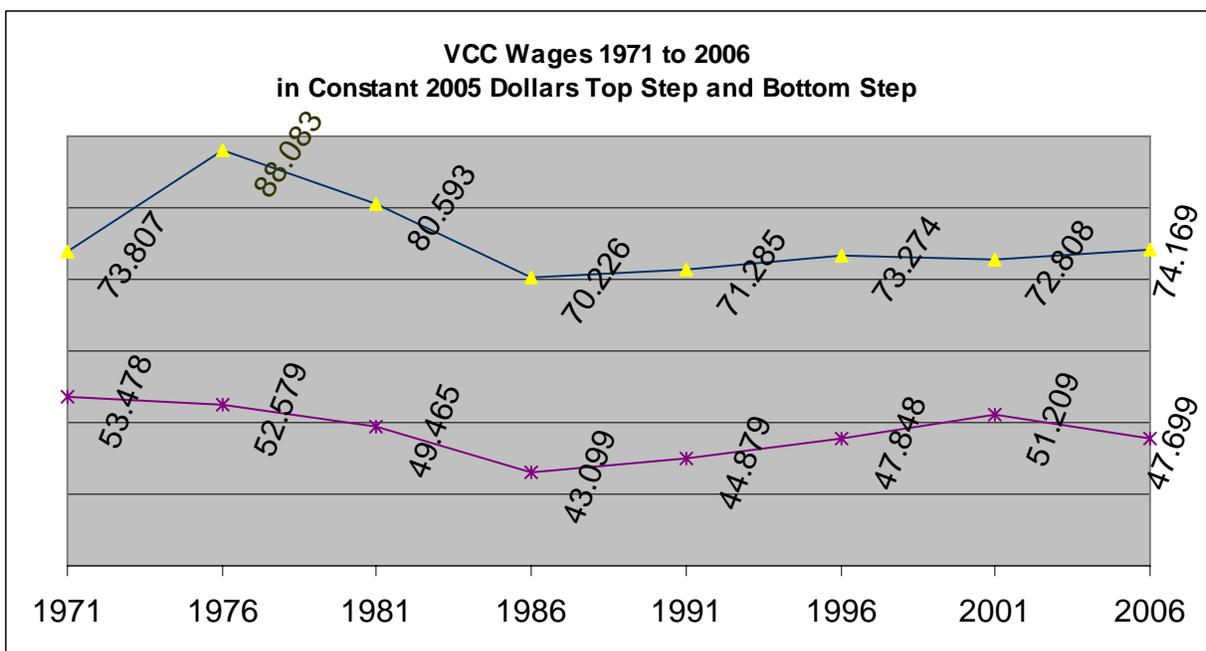


Money: Inflation and VCCFA Salaries

In 1971 our top step was \$14,508 and in 2006 it will be \$75,674. That might look like a 522% increase but it's not. In order to compare our top and bottom steps with those of past years it is necessary to take inflation into account. If we change the 71 and 06 figures to constant 2005 dollars, the increase is less than 0.5%, less than half a percent.

Now, in 35 years, if everything else like houses and cars had only gone up a half a percent in constant dollars, we'd be fine, but of course they haven't.

The chart below has done a rough representation of our top and bottom steps over 35 years. We have used an index available from the Bank of Canada website: www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html



The chart is done at 5 year intervals and shows how zeros and very small increases really have eroded our earnings. The "restraint" wage controls of the 1980s under the Socreds when there was higher inflation really knocked our wages to their lowest levels. The wage controls under the NDP in the nineties prevented us from gaining much at all, we were lucky it was a period of low inflation. Now, after a couple of zeros under the Liberals, and although top step is going to 75674 in April, it's actually 74170 in 2005 dollars (estimating inflation at 2%) which is essentially the same as 35 years ago.

The news at the bottom step is not as good as there's been no increase since 2003. Its value has slid to 11% less than what it was in 71. The gap between top and bottom is also increasing, the spread was about as small as it's ever been in 2001, but it has started to grow again.

Translink's Employer Pass Program

Effective February 2006, VCC employees are eligible to join in. Apparently an annual pass will save about 15% from the cost of the normal monthly passes.

Check the Translink website www.translink.bc.ca for info and for enrolment info contact Facilities local 8319 email jbrowne@vcc.ca



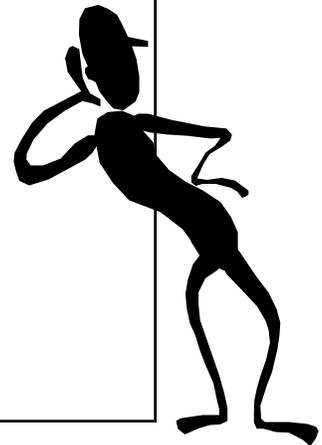
Money: The New Common PD Fund, about \$200,000

This new fund was one most significant non-salary gain from the common table bargaining in the 2004-07 round. While local implementation has not gone easily at many colleges, ours has not been too difficult but it has been slow getting off the ground. The College has agreed to include activities back to April 1, 2005.

The first meeting of the union-management committee was on January 9th. Nevertheless, it has started and applications are coming in. Forms have been distributed and are on the common drives at each campus.

Return them to Maria Lambert, Administration, City Centre Campus

Contact Wayne McNiven (8438) or Brenda Appleton (8641 or 7343) for more information.



Money: I Like Paying Taxes

From an article by Neil Brooks, in the Columbia Journal, December, 2005

I like paying taxes.

Taxes allow us to pursue our aspirations collectively and thus they greatly enrich the quality of life for the average Canadian family. Taxes have brought us schools, accessible universities and colleges, freedom from fear of crippling health bills, parks, libraries, safe water, safe streets and livable cities. None of these things come cheaply.

Taxes assist us in spreading our incomes over our lifetimes to maximize our well-being.

Taxes also allow us to discharge our moral obligations to one another. With them we establish democratically controlled public institutions that attempt to prevent exploitation in market exchanges and family relations; to ensure a more socially acceptable distribution of income and wealth than market forces alone would provide; to strive for racial and gender equality; and, to provide full entitlement and access to essential human development services.

Taxes buy us a relatively high level of social cohesion and equality and therefore the benefits of living within a community.

In spite of their providing our most valuable goods and services, most people don't like paying taxes. In elections, promises of tax cuts become potent political ploys. But before being seduced, Canadians should think seriously about the implications of a smaller public sector.

Business, economic and political interest groups foster basic misunderstandings about the role of taxes that serve to boost the private sector and hurt the public sector. Part of their deliberate and clever strategy makes it appear that citizens cannot afford more public goods and services through governments while simultaneously making it appear that they can afford them through the private sector. Examples abound.

Health and education are necessities. If their supply through government is reduced, it will not mean that people are not paying for them. They will have to buy them at prices set by the private sector instead of through taxes set by democratic governments.

When people say we cannot afford to pay taxes to provide childcare or elder care, we hope they are not saying we cannot afford to look after our children or the elderly. What they must mean is that we should leave the cost of these services to be borne largely by women, who will do it unpaid, in their own homes. That is instead of spreading their cost equitably across the entire population through taxes.

"Taxes are a Burden, The Burden of Taxes"

This pervasive coupling of words is also misleading. Taxes are the price we pay for goods and services produced in the public sector. Taxes are like the amounts we pay as prices for goods and services in the private sector. A particularly galling bit of misleading language is when they say a public good is being paid for by the "imposition of taxes," while a private good is paid for by the "dollar votes of consumers." Here, rationality is stood on its head. The vote, the symbol of democracy, is assigned to a commercial transaction, while taxes, which are democratically determined, are portrayed as amounts people are having "shoved down their throats."

Taxes increase Freedom

An objection to taxes is based on the idea that they reduce our economic freedom, that the public sector is a bottomless pit that simply consumes taxes and does not produce anything. People would be freer if they could do more of what they want with their own money. For the vast majority of us, the opposite is true. Taxes increase freedom. In our market economy to have money is to have freedom. The government transfers over 65% of taxes it receives to families in need through pensions, child allowances, social assistance, disability and unemployment plans. It increases their freedom. Goods and services provided directly by government greatly increase our own freedoms. Examples include the freedom to move through the complex infrastructure of urban, provincial and federal transportation, the freedom to learn, the freedom to enjoy our municipal facilities, and the freedom from crippling health bills.

Money: I Like Paying Taxes

"Prices are the price we pay for Civilization"

~Oliver Wendall Holmes, US Supreme Court Justice

To promise what too many politicians do, that they will cut taxes so that "Canadians can keep more of their hard-earned dollars" is simply a disingenuous way of saying "forget about recognizing our moral obligations to one another, to heck with pursuing your most noble aspirations collectively and do not worry about securing the blessings of real freedom." These politicians do not deserve our vote, they deserve a civics lesson.

Power

What is ultimately at stake in the debate over taxes and government is the question of who will exercise power in our society. Will the important sources of power be exercised through private markets, controlled by only a small number of people, or will important sources of power be exercised through democratically elected institutions elected by the majority of Canadians?

Legacy

Business interest and some politicians keep warning us about the terrible legacy we are leaving our children in the form of the national debt and the a bloated public sector. In fact, the much worse legacy we are in danger of leaving our children if we continue to reduce the role of government in our collective lives by reducing taxes is a fractured and divided society. A society without a sense of itself or its collective responsibility. A society in which the economic elite is ever more able to wall itself off. A society where the poor would be increasingly on their own.

This would be a truly unjust and truly irresponsible legacy to leave to our children.

~Neil Brooks is a professor at York University's Osgood Hall Law School and the most entertaining speaker one could ever hope to hear on taxes.



Highlights from the College Board Meeting, January 26th

New Chair

Gordon Barefoot is stepping down as Chair and will remain on the Board for the remainder of his current term. Vice-Chair Mark Stock will be assuming the chair until the election in April. Fiona Taylor was elected Vice-Chair.

ACCC

Dale Dorn invited Board members to consider attending the ACCC in Calgary in May. Last year Gordon did a presentation entitled, "Changing Governance Structure in the College Community or Are Board Meetings "Public meetings or Board Meetings held in Public" at the ACCC in Moncton.

Strat Plan

After reports from Education Council and Operations Council, Dale introduced the latest draft of the strategic plan for approval. He advised that the comments regarding process from Education Council referred to the previous draft of the strategic plan and that due to awkward timing and sequencing, it was too late for Education Council to formally respond to the latest draft. The College did not take the draft to Operation Council so constituents were given an opportunity for input to the chair of OpsCo.

There was some good discussion and some concerns raised prior to the vote to endorse the plan.

We think our issues about technology and student support were heard and that the next process will be far more inclusive. Norm Dooley, who is the faculty rep on the board and not accountable to the VCCFA, voted against the strategic plan after making several points to the Board.

Board and Students

Gordon reported that the Board had met with the student reps before the meeting. They talked about the ABE tuition policy, the U-pass and discovered that there is some commonality and places where they can work together. Gordon felt that it was a good discussion and should happen on a regular basis.

Thanks

Since the new VP, Alan Davis, has arrived, Pat Bawtinheimer was thanked by the Board Chair and the constituents for her work as interim VP. Kathy Fukuyama was thanked for her work as acting Dean. Peter Legg was wished all the best in his role as Acting VP, Finance.

Trip to Asia

At the end of the meeting, Gordon reported on the trip to Asia that he took with Dale. Dale talked about Gordon's ability to make a "cold call" and that as a volunteer speaking passionately about the College he was often more credible than someone working for VCC.

Dale said that it is important to bring the "head guy" to Asia and that taking the Board Chair allowed them to get into 5 institutions in Singapore. They also made contacts in Hong Kong and China. Gordon said that while he might have opened the doors, now Linda Martin and Donna Hooker have to take the next steps. Donna is going to Asia in March to follow-up. ~~ Lizz

VCCFA passed on this "opportunity" to speak through OpsCo. Here's what we said directly to the Board on the Strategic Plan:

"Some of our initial concerns with the updated strategic plan have been addressed. However, we continue to have concerns about the lack of clarity around infrastructure for technology, the lack of equipment to support students, and the lack of commitment around student support, so necessary to meet the needs of our diverse learners.

Some statements from the various schools (on the back page of the document) are aspirational and reflect the vision of our faculty who were involved in creating them. Others seem to have appeared with no faculty input and contain code words like "balance", that in the last plan indicated areas of planned reductions.

It also has very little about supporting faculty renewal. Nevertheless, while it raises concerns for some faculty, we acknowledge that the refreshed plan has the support of some faculty.

For these reasons we will abstain if asked to vote for it."



From the Pension Advisory Committee

I would like to start off by saying hello and Happy New Year.

I am the new VCCFA representative to the FPSE Pension Advisory Committee, replacing Vinit Khosla. Brother Khosla served our members well and was a respected member of the committee, which leaves big shoes for me to try and fill. On this, my first article, I am going to cover a few current events such as purchasing service, the Inflation Adjustment Account and post retirement health and dental coverage.

Purchase of Service

This means paying for periods of employment that have not been counted as service with the College Pension Plan. By purchasing service, you may be able to increase your future pension benefit. The calculation to purchase service uses your current salary scale. Therefore, if you are below the top scale you may want to do this before you get too many more increments. If you are currently at the top step, and will be going to the new step one rate April first, you might also want to consider it. For an estimate of the cost to you and the application form go to www.pensionsbc.ca and click on "College Pension Plan". You will find all you need to determine the cost and additional benefits, then decide if it is what you want to do.

-Brian Haugen, local 7393

Inflation Adjustments

Pension adjustments to keep up with inflation are not guaranteed. In-fact, the fund that pays for this is projected at some point not to be able to continue doing it. As members of the pension plan we need to decide how badly we want inflation protection in the future.. We may need an additional 6% contribution hike over the next few years to allow it to stabilize for the long term. Please check out the open letter from our committee on page 5. The Federation of Post Secondary Educators staff are currently busy developing a package outlining our options. Come out to union meetings if you want to discuss this issue further.

Medical & Dental Benefits for Retirees

Mounting financial pressures on Retiree Benefits again have the trustees concerned over the possibility of further reductions in the level of premium support and level of benefits.. In 2003, Medical Service Plan premiums were carved out of the plan and made a responsibility of retirees. Some estimates indicate that by 2009 current benefit levels will not be fundable. I will give you more information as I learn of it.

CAUT Retired Associate Memberships

Many FPSE members are joining the Canadian Association of University Teachers as retired associate members. The CAUT offer a new supplemental health and dental plan for retirees. For further information on this plan go to www.caut.ca

Reminder VCCFA General Meeting

**Wednesday
February 15, 2006**

3:00 pm

**Room 419
City Centre Campus**

STEWARD NOTES

Welcome to our New and Associate Stewards:

Chantal D'Argence, Brian Haugen, Karin Steichele, and Marilyn Morris. Congratulations to them and to our re-elected stewards! And, of course, we are very happy to have our other stewards continue on. There are now 17 of us! (12 stewards, 4 associate stewards and a Chief Steward.) We've already met a couple of times for training and orientation. We've also just completed a round of Member Drop Ins. As always, we've been busy serving members. Here is a brief look at some of the issues we're been dealing with.

Meeting with Departments

We've been at a number of department meetings and talked about hiring criteria, workload profiles, scheduling, and IRA issues, as well as just to answer questions. If you would like a steward to meet with you in your departments, just give us a call.

Members' Meetings with Administration

Stewards accompany members to meetings with the College about a variety of issues. Stewards are there as support and to make sure the College holds to process, especially in cases where there is a potential for discipline. In such cases, we make sure any discipline is appropriate, that "progressive discipline," which is the norm in Canadian labour-management, is adhered to. Most issues are resolved informally; however, recently, there were a couple situations that did result in letters on the instructors' files.

Non-Regulars

As the College hires new folks, more non-regular issues and questions are coming forward. Many have to do with regularization, scheduling, and the rights of term and auxiliary instructors. Under our collective agreement, once an instructor has 6 months of term work (the term work need not be consecutive in order to accrue six months' worth.), she or he has the right to reappointment by seniority.

Problem Solving with the College to Avoid Layoffs

By working with the College within the context of our Collective Agreement and the Common Agreement, two potential layoffs were avoided by the College offering to reassign an instructor to another area. We meet regularly with the College for our labour management meetings under Article 3.11 and also have other ongoing meetings. These have been working as we've been able to resolve some issues at the informal stage.

New and Ongoing Grievances

Although, we do seem to have improved labour relations, there are issues that we are not able to resolve informally and which we need to grieve. This is not a bad thing but a normal part of labour relations. So far this year, we've had to file a few new grievances: two involving holidays not taken, an issue of carryover holidays, and an issue about the 11 banked days that some of us have left over from 1982/83.

We've also filed a grievance about the interpretation of Article 12.3 of our Common Agreement. It involves maintaining step placement granted by another College when instructors are hired at VCC after working at another College. We have met the College for the stage 2 meeting and are waiting for their response.

We referred our jurisdictional issue to FPSE for arbitration support. It is about the College assigning our work out of the bargaining unit. We have a couple of grievances on hold or in abeyance and a couple that are going to arbitration. Our workload grievance is now scheduled for arbitration at the end of March. We have agreed to meet in an attempt to resolve our outstanding grievances before they go to arbitration.

STEWARD NOTES

IRA Orientation

We have started planning for the next IRA orientation. These are jointly planned by the Union and the College. The next one is on March 31 and is for all IRAs, instructors who will be, or might be, or are thinking of being IRAs. In other words, it is open to all.

Section 12- A Complaint to the Labour Board about our Work

We have responded to the complaint made by a former member. Our FPSE staff rep, Weldon Cowan, has submitted a comprehensive response on our behalf.

Work with and within FPSE

Developmental Education specialists and unionists have had the second provincial workshop within a year to develop an action plan for Developmental Education, ABE in particular. From that workshop, a briefing document was developed which has been used at various FPSE meetings with government. (see page 9). We will follow this with a workshop at the FPSE spring conference in February and hope to expand our work to ASE and ESL. The last weekend in January is when our semi-annual FPSE Contract Administration and Review Committee meeting is held for Chief Stewards from each local.

If you have any questions or concerns give us a call or email us. We like to hear from you.

~for the stewards
ing



DID YOU KNOW?

Step Placement

When you are first hired, the College determines your step placement. The sooner you submit your original documents, the sooner you will receive your step placement, which is usually higher than the bottom step, so it is really in the instructor's interest to get the information into Human Resources as promptly as possible.

Vacation

Vacation entitlement is earned during in the fiscal year. Members are strongly encouraged to schedule their vacation and use it in the fiscal year it is earned. The sooner vacation is planned, the smoother it is for scheduling and it provides more advanced notice for those doing vacation replacement. Carry-over into the next fiscal year (the College has just put a new form to use) can be requested.

Professional Development

PD entitlement is also earned during in the fiscal year and needs to be taken in the fiscal year it is earned. Within a fiscal year, term and regular instructors who have had 7 months of assigned duty at 50% or more are entitled to PD time. If you are entitled to PD time, you are also entitled to apply for PD funds.

Remember we now have 3 separate PD funds!

PARTICIPATE

VCCFA welcomes your input. Send your letter, comments and pictures to the editor.

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To all VCCFA members:
Please print any changes that may apply to you
and forward through intercampus mail to the VCCFA office
Attention: Audrey

Notice of Address Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Effective Date: _____

Division: _____

Department/Area: _____

Status: _____