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THE 2008/2009 EXECUTIVE

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TREASURER (09)

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Brock Elliott (08)

Wayne Avery (09)

Maggi Trebble (09)

Settimio Sicoli (09)

Alison Woods (09)

Lizz Lindsay
PAST PRESIDENT

Déjà vu — VCC Budget Problems
Made in BC ~ Made in VCC pages 4-6

Extreme Executive Prerogative at
VCC page 7

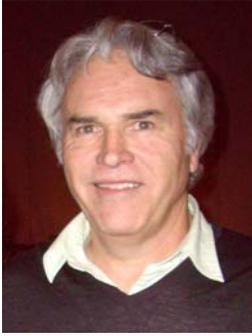
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Recent Important Meetings pages 14—16

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VCCFA GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2008
2:30 PM
ROOM 237
DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



FRANK COSCO
VCCFA PRESIDENT

Frustration

Once again VCC is going through a budget crisis which is going to lead to cuts to learning opportunities.

Once again a board and administration who put financial flexibility ahead of educational services are making "VCC smaller."

It's all so dismal and disappointing. Remember the Golden Decade or whatever it was; it's certainly pretty tinny and hollow now eight years into it.

There's a comment/summary of the budget problems on pages 4—6. One of the frustrations in trying to address the issue is that there is no clear political forum for dissent and democratic action. Issues in health care are so front of mind for the public that they go straight to the legislature. Issues in schools have school boards as a forum. Transit problems have city councils. What do colleges have?

College Presidents are functionaries; College Boards are committees with power over us but not for us. The Ministry of Advanced Education strangles college and university budgets with one hand while glad-handing at new university openings with the other.

As we gradually lose the legacy of BC's college system through hundreds of small cuts and closed off opportunities, there needs to be a re-think on how colleges are governed. Leaving their legacy of social change aside for a second, just from a taxpayers' point of view most colleges administer more public money than most school boards.

VCC's budget is larger than that of 45 of 60 school boards in B.C. Shouldn't there be more transparency and more publicly-accountable oversight?

Education First?

Here's a couple of quotes on VCC budgeting,

From 1997

"VCC's budgeting philosophy is to address any shortfall by in sequence:
a searching for additional revenue
b reducing non-salary expenses
c reducing non-core activities and salaries*
d applying (listed) criteria for ... program reduction
e and reducing non-core activities proportionally
**core is defined as programs and services essential for student learning."*

From 2004

"Principles: All financial management processes and actions will be built upon sound financial and business principles, and carried out in accordance with College Policies, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and applicable legislation."

The first is from VCC's Budgeting Policy adopted in 1997. The second is the entirety of the "Principles" section of VCC's Financial Responsibility and Accountability Policy from 2004.

The clear sequence of priorities in the first reflects the appropriate philosophy of an educational institution whose overriding purpose is to provide programs and services for student learning. The second reflects no philosophy except money management and as a "principle" could

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

guide any business. It is the legacy of the Gordon Barefoot directed board, which our current Board chair Mark Stock was part of and which the current board has done nothing to change.

VCC is being operated as if it was a business in control of its own finances. It is not.

Financial and operational stability should be sought after. However, in a publicly funded college in BC stability is inherently not, nor should it be, achievable solely through VCC's own actions. To attempt to do so, harms the purpose of the enterprise itself.

VCC's Board thinks it is their job to continue making financial flexibility their "job one." So we're left with \$49,000 incentives that will neatly remove at least two dozen faculty positions from the payroll. Smooth business move, "going forward" as they would say, they have achieved \$1.2 million a year in flexibility.

However, it will also silently close the door on how many? About a thousand students a year. The door will close silently because those future students will not even be here to offer any protest. In ten years, when the number is up to 10,000 students, it'll all be forgotten. Learning opportunities for students were not a high enough priority in 2008 to keep those spots open.

Financial Planning as Strategic Planning?

It's ironic what a brief period of optimism seemed to flower at VCC last fall. Remember the brightly coloured flyers we all got in the mail at home? The planning process was something positive for the future of VCC that we could finally get our teeth into.

That little bit of sunshine is certainly shining somewhere else, isn't it. Once again, financial decisions are determining that VCC will become smaller no matter what; even strong programs mandated by the current strategic plan are not safe.

Welcome to the VCCFA Executive

We have filled out our Executive with the election by acclamation of Alison Woods of the Learning Centre. Welcome Alison and thanks for stepping forward.

Education Council By-election

Hilary Pearson of Counselling will have left the College by the time this newsletter comes out. She's taken one of the VDIs. At the Special EdCo Forum, in her role as the Student Services rep and on her second last day at VCC, she spoke eloquently against the planned cut of 1.5 positions from Counselling. Counselling has become a shadow of its former self and it's another bit of harm the current executive is doing to this college. Other EdCo reps spoke up regarding the tremendous value our counselors add to the VCC experience of both students and faculty. Her lamented departure necessitates a by-election from student services faculty to fill the spot till the general election in October. Details to follow.

Tax Deduction and Students

We understand Canada Revenue has changed its interpretation of a regulation and determined that developmental and ESL students are not "post-secondary" for tax purposes and therefore cannot deduct tuition nor claim the education deduction. We are gathering more information on this and will be approaching federal MPs.

~ Frank.



BUDGET PROBLEMS: *The BC Problem & the VCC Problem*

The BC government's failure

Prior to their recent "university week," the current governments only post-secondary policy was the goal of the most literate society in North America and the 25,000 new seats. They, however, forgot that access and affordability has to be part of such a policy. Except for the ITA grant of about \$9m which has gone up and down, here's the history of government block grant (in millions) to VCC under the Liberals:

2002/03	\$43.1
2003/04	\$44.4
2004/05	\$44.8
2005/06	\$45.6
2006/07	\$44.8
2007/08	\$46.7 (should have been \$47.5 m to have kept up with inflation)
+++++	
2008/09	\$45.5 (projected reduction of 2.6%)

According to StatsCan, inflation from 2002 to 2007 in BC drove costs up 10.1%. Using that number what was \$43.1m in '02 should have been \$47.5m in 2007. To be fair the government did supply one time grants to answer the charge that said they were not keeping up with inflation, to cover salary increases in '06 and '07, and to backfill ABE tuition. But they unilaterally declared that those grants will not happen in 2008/09.

This is a cynical record designed for splashy headlines at the beginning and then leaving institutions to neglect. The government has kept its inflation-adjusted contribution to VCC lower than that of the last year of the NDP. If they had kept up with inflation they should have been almost a million higher in the last fiscal and adding together the gap caused by the new reduction and again not keeping up with estimated inflation of say 2% in 2008/09, it can be said that the projected 2008/09 funding is about \$3m behind where it should be.

Aside: A low point of cynicism was their trumpeted decision to allow ABE to return to tuition-free status; they backfilled the lost tuition (\$600k a year

at VCC) for one year and then promptly drop it from 2008/09 budgets. What incentive is that for colleges to help ABE students learn and prosper?

The government's policy has created a no-win situation for colleges like VCC. They are being told there's less money for them because they haven't met the government's goals regarding the 25,000 new seats. They cannot meet those goals because:

- ~ The government favoured universities by allowing them to lower their entrance requirements to go after traditional college cohorts of students
- ~ The high tuition fees kept away many.
- ~ Certain demographics of students in certain areas of BC stopped growing in size.
- ~ Certain demographics of students decided to get jobs rather than more education.
- ~ Successful programming at VCC and other colleges was let go to the private sector.

All in all, this government's post-secondary policy is a failure on its own terms



But what about the surpluses at VCC?

VCC had large surpluses for the past five years because the government had let the college go after students for huge fee increases which increased income by about \$2 million a year. In 2002 and 2003, the VCC Board and the current

executive cut the size of VCC's training plan by about one-sixth. VCC's grant was not reduced. Surpluses of \$4 or \$5 million a year resulted.

Where did that surplus money go?

To the new building (about \$7 million), to capital items, to operating expenses, to an increased number of senior administrators (about \$2 million a year).

Why can't we keep doing that?

Because inflation and new expenses have caught up to the total of limited government funding and now inflation-capped tuition. The fiscal year just ended will likely break even but the College executive state there will be a deficit in 2008/09.

BUDGET PROBLEMS: *The BC Problem & the VCC Problem*

Why Voluntary Departure Incentives?

The College was worried there would be an actual deficit in 08/09. That was their immediate cause for offering VDIs. In April of 2007 they had about \$2.7 million in surplus left over from the year before. That provides enough to use about \$2 million in immediate cash for VDIs and still start April 2008 with a significant surplus. Actually the VDIs will quickly start to create their own “profit centre” (love those business terms).

By the end of a twelve month period, for every 12 full-time, top step faculty taking a VDI, their departure will have already paid for the VDI and brought in over \$600,000 in surplus/profit. That doubles to over a million in the upcoming full fiscal years like 2009/10, which is the College’s real target year for fiscal flexibility.

To be clear, the VCCFA is not opposed in principle to these incentives, they are in fact similar in concept to our dormant Early Retirement Incentives.

Those that can take them deserve them and we wish them all the best in their retirement. We are opposed however to the College’s stated intent to not fill the emptied positions unless in their judgment, it is necessary.



What’s the Structural Deficit and is it a Problem?

The structural deficit is the observation that had VCC gotten close to filling every student spot in recent training plans that it actually wouldn’t have been able to do so without massive cuts in non-instructional related areas or by going into debt.

This is interesting in that it shows clearly that the “emperor” in Victoria has no clothes on as the child observed. However, this is nothing new for VCC nor indeed for other BC post-secondary institutions.

As noted earlier, they haven’t actually had an increase in funding for about seven years and they can’t pick the pocket of students any further.

Is it a problem? It would be if students were banging down the door to get in more numbers than they have been. But in reality, because of factors mentioned on the previous page, it has not been an unmanageable financial problem. VCC could afford to deliver about 85% of its training plan in 2007-08, which is what it did and it did so without cuts.

Other colleges seem to be approaching the problem in the same year-over-year way they (and VCC) have in recent years, proposing plans which will not fill and whispering “whew” as they use the money saved in other ways.

In our view it’s not fair for the colleges to have to solve this issue, it’s clearly one that is caused by inadequate funding and access policies in Victoria.

Why does VCC Executive focus so much on the Structural Deficit?

It is perversely interesting to note that it is VCC’s executive that seems to be the most aggressive in using the strategy of claiming the structural deficit is driving them to make their college smaller. We do not hear this from other institutional leaders.

It is a very similar approach to that used by then Board Chair Gordon Barefoot and President Dorn in 2002/03 when they cut about 16% out of VCC’s training potential.

Only they can answer for their motives but it seems logical to us to deduce that in 2002 they wanted to rid themselves of fiscal restraint; and in 2008 Dorn and the current Board Chair do not want to return to days of fiscal restraint in non-instructional and new project related spending.

cont’d on page 6

BUDGET PROBLEMS: *The BC Problem & the VCC Problem*

Since the government's funding model is reaching its capacity, they have decided to cut learning opportunities out of the mix by cutting the training plan (in 2008/09 it's a 5% cut) which neatly removes faculty salaries out of their costs.

They gamble that they will continue to receive the same block grant in 2009/10. Ergo, fiscal flexibility returns.

How does this help the Structural Deficit?

The effect this cut to the training plan has on structural deficit is so ironic.

If the structural deficit is the gap between what's planned and what's affordable; then what VCC executive is doing, while simultaneously claiming to be addressing the gap, is making the gap bigger.

If the 07/08 plan was 8000 student fte and we could only do and afford 85% of it, 6800 fte, that's a gap/structural deficit of 1200. By taking capacity for a real 400 FTEs out of the system and diverting the funding elsewhere, the gap grows to 1600 in 2008/09.

Spending in 2008/09

In the year just ended VCC broke even despite enhanced spending on security, cleaning and computers. It would seem logical that the same or similar spending amounts should be affordable in 08/09.

VCC though is increasing these lines, quite significantly in terms of security where, wait for it, they are hiring another new director with all the attendant costs of an administrative office etc.

In tight fiscal environments, it is learning opportunities that should be protected first.

Income in 2008/09

There's been a lot of publicity about the government's last minute renegeing on its funding commitments for the new fiscal. It did create another \$1.3 million problem for VCC. A projected deficit of a like amount was forced into VCC's budget because of the government's cut. Problem shelved for the time being.

VCC executive though had already created a problem three times bigger with their cutting of the training plan. That is what has driven the cuts we are dealing with.

What about 2009/10?

We surmise, given the same block grant, the smaller cost of faculty, savings from layoffs and the departed VDI positions, that VCC executive will have created significant new fiscal flexibility in 09/10. No doubt there will be new initiatives and perhaps a few new administrative positions. They have to find ways to spend the money; a large surplus would be embarrassing.

For awhile, the structural deficit, even though it will still be there in the shadows, and will be a little bigger, will be forgotten as it will have served its purpose, till the next time.

There is the worry that the government will note that on paper VCC has made its fte 5% more expensive than those at other colleges; perhaps they'll ignore it, perhaps they'll cut VCC's grant to bring it back in line. The college executive may be gambling that they wouldn't do that in an election year. We'll see.

What's next in 2008?

In open meetings on May 13th, Education Council will vote on its advice re the Education Plan and Operations Council will vote on the Budget. The Board is scheduled to make its final decisions at an open meeting on May 29th. The VCCFA will vote against the budget at OpsCo and will continue to try to influence the Board – check the website for new letters and submissions.



fc

The Extreme Privilege and Prerogative of VCC Executive

A common feature of most of the post-secondary system in Canada and BC is an oft-cited fuzzy divide between the powers of executive members, especially Presidents and Vice-Presidents, and those of the largest labour group, faculty.

We mean by this the shaping of the direction, mission, and profile of an institution. These broader, deeper initiatives are usually subject to inclusive processes of consultation and planning with faculty and other constituency groups. Since faculty generally have a longer term commitment to the institution than management, generally know most about the work of their part of the college and since faculty are most-directly involved with student learning--the prime reason for the institution's existence--it only makes sense that faculty should have a prominent share of the shaping of the direction of the institution.

Judge, Jury and Defense Witness

At VCC however, we seem to be the exception that may prove the rule.

In 2002/03 and in 2008, senior VCC executive has taken upon themselves all roles that would normally be part of strategic planning, program renewal and review, and decisions leading to program termination.

To use the analogy of the justice system they have been police, prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner. By not having an open process, they have also been the defense witness as they've reached decisions without departments' knowing the process was even happening.

VP Davis, for example, could not have been more honest or more clear at the last EdCo forum. He outlined how he and the current executive had decided to trim over a million in instructional costs (itself an example of extreme executive prerogative) by targeting what according to them were the worst performing departments. He outlined how he had measured them against a set of criteria and found them wanting. He asserted that current executive had decided that VCC was offering too much and should stop doing so.

We seen it before

The VP mentioned that he did not want to explore history.

As usual, it's convenient to avoid history when it is inconvenient. Most of the programs on the "hit list" were the "niche" programs six years ago. The college has done little during the interim to assist or help improve these programs.

It's appropriate for the VP-Education to raise concerns about program performance but surely the departments and programs concerned deserve a chance to respond to the charges and findings held against them; and surely they deserve a chance to turn things around.

Program renewal and review to comprehensively address program performance would be the normal ways to address difficulties.

Strategic Planning at VCC -- Not

It's so ironic that this current exercise of executive prerogative landed smack in the middle of the suspended strategic planning process for 2015, which had started as it should with a lot of resources for broad input and a lot of inclusion of different voices.

Again, history is instructive, if inconvenient. In the 1990s former president John Cruikshank's attempt at steering a strategic planning process, the first in memory, landed on shoals as it was cut short due primarily due to his inability to manage the complexities of inclusion.

The 2002/03 strategic plan was trotted out by the Board and the executive as if it was authentic. It was not. It was another example of executive prerogative as it came out of the fifth floor tied up with a bow and wrapping that attempted to cover up a pre-determined 16% slashing of VCC programming.

Now in 2008 the current third attempt at authentic strategic planning is suspended. Resumption does not look promising. The damage will have been done, the key decisions made—again behind closed doors.

fc

VCC to Cancel Classes during the Olympics, 2010

President Dorn notified the college community in mid-March that all classes at VCC will be cancelled during the period of the Olympic Games (February 12 -28, 2010). The Downtown Campus will be closed during this time, however, the Broadway Campus will remain open for employees.

It is important to note that faculty will be accountable for their time during these few weeks. We've been given a few choices: we can work at the Broadway Campus in either self or departmentally determined projects, take PD or vacation. Faculty will remain on duty during the Olympics unless vacation or PD is scheduled.

According to the President's message, "Management is currently in the process of working with departments and areas to determine the impacts of this closure and determine plans to mitigate those impacts."

The VCCFA will provide additional information as it becomes available.



Power Play: The Theft of BC's Rivers, vol. 1

Private power projects are being promoted by the Liberal provincial government.

They decreed that new production of wind energy, biofuel or hydroelectricity couldn't be developed by BC Hydro, but would rather, have to be funded and controlled by the private sector. These privately funded projects would be "... almost fully automated, leaving rivers with projects vulnerable to malfunctions." A malfunction at Miller Creek in 2007, for example, resulted in a critical low-water incident threatening the marine population of the creek.

The VCCFA has obtained several copies of a DVD produced by the Wilderness Association, called "Power Play: the Theft of BC's Rivers, Vol. 1".

If you would like to borrow a copy, stop by the office or give us a call (604) 688.6210.



RECENT VCC BOARD MEETINGS

The College Board has held a special forum on April 17th regarding the Education Plan and the Budget. It also permitted speakers* at its regular April 24th meeting. They were again forceful and articulate. The VCCFA used its opportunity to speak to make the following points (the full version of our letter to the Board is on our website):

Input to Budget/Education Plan process

- ◆ All our current programming is mandated and justifiable. There has been no process such as a strategic plan that can justify making vertical cuts.
- ◆ This budget does too much, cuts too deeply in instructional and instructional support areas. It even increases some operational lines. It is not itself strategic as we approach an election year.
- ◆ Budget reductions should follow an ethos of conservation of learning opportunities, any cuts should be as far away from learning as possible.
- ◆ The Board has options, it should be having its financial people produce them
- ◆ As this process continues, it becomes more and more clear that the executive prerogative that this budget assumes is too extreme. This is not a private college.

Working together ~ Go public

We have heard some Board members say they wish to work together with us, so we took them up on that by requesting that they go on public record as at least having “concerns” about the provincial budget. The student reps on the board also had their own version of a similar initiative.

This effort has produced a public statement which we will broadcast as widely as possible.

On May 7th we were copied on a letter from the Board to Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell, saying in part, “... without additional funding, VCC has no choice except to reduce its service to the community”.

What’s Next? May 29th Decision

There is nothing else scheduled for the Board until its May 29th meeting. We do not know if anything we are saying is having an effect or not; but, we have to be realistic given past inclinations of the board to support the administration. We will continue to try to influence them through letters and submissions. Check our website for the latest.

**faculty speakers at both events included*

Karen Brooke VCCFA Non-Regular Committee

Heather Chan Counselling

Vincent Chauvet ASL & Deaf Studies

Arsineh Garabedian Business Management

Tracy Johnson ESL-IntEd

Hassan Khayambashi CF-Math

Gordon McIntyre CF Science

Terry Mills Business Management

Nora Ready ESL-ELS

Todd Rowlett VCCFA Non-Regular Committee

Maggi Trebble ESL-ELS



BARGAINING 2001-2004

This series provides background and context for decisions that we will have to make as the next round of bargaining in 2010 gets closer. This fourth installment reviews the 2001- 2004 round. Our local committee was chaired by Lorna Downie and included Maggi Trebble, Ingrid Kolsteren, Settimo Sicoli, Ray Chung, Lizz Lindsay and Staff Rep Linda Sperling.

Previous articles:

#1 What was wrong with the 2007 bonus [Sep/Oct 07]

#2 VCCFA (VIA) bargaining up to 95-98 [Nov/Dec 07]

#3 1998-2001 Starting Together and Finishing Locally [Jan/Feb 08]

Failed Attempt to Address the Local/Provincial Dilemma

The previous 98 round had demonstrated that it would be difficult for locals to bargain their own issues after the provincial round had finished. In 2000, faculty bargaining locals affiliated through CIEA and those in the GEU got all their issues together on a single provincial tier for the start of bargaining in January of 2001. We had had effective bargaining conferences and came up with a consolidated package that addressed a wide range of issues and which provided that the few local issues that remained could also be captured by the provincial tier if necessary.

Trouble was our employers working through the Post-Secondary Employers' Association weren't interested. They simply said they were not going to bargain all those items. Normally, management bargainers cannot veto unions bringing forward issues. In this case though, unions and employers came together voluntarily (with a little arm twisting from government) to a common table. They, therefore, had the right to bargain the bargaining agenda—to say which union items they would bargain and which they would not. For all of January and most of February 2001 we on the union side bargained with ourselves on how to cut our list, with the items cut returning to local jurisdiction. Once again bargaining became a two-tier affair.

This “bargaining of the bargaining list” has remained a problem in the two rounds since 01/04.

Provincial Election drove Bargaining Timeline

The looming provincial election in April or May 2001, which everyone agreed would see the Campbell Liberals take over from the Dosanjh NDP, put a lot of pressure on the bargaining timelines. Most on the union side felt it would be better to settle while the NDP was in power and, as April approached, wanted to settle as soon as possible. We did settle on March 30, 2001, a day before the expiry of the contract. The focus of the gains were monetary. After the 0/0/2 of the 98 round, we made substantial monetary gains. The 13 step scale was reduced to ten. Basic 2% increases were applied in each of the three years and substantial money was applied to increase the size of increments over the three years. How much one gained over the 01/04 agreement depended upon one's step.

Assuming an annual increment accrual over three years, those who started on step one gained 12.4%. Those at the bottom step gained 12.7%. Some in the former middle steps got only about 7.5 or 8.5%. It should be noted that the gap between bottom and top has never been narrower as it was in 01-04.

Amongst the other achievements, getting Maternity Leave top up was and remains a significant victory. Many locals, VCCFA and Langara being significant exceptions, gained fully employer-paid short and long-term disability plans. We opted out because we would have had to give up our sick leave plans and move to a straight 30 days of sick leave. A \$2 million fund for local bargaining was achieved, the VCCFA share of it was \$157 thousand.

Our local team had some significant successes. Settling in May 2001, we were able to extend the right of first refusal to term instructors in all departments as long as they had had six cumulative months of appointments. We were also able to increase the pool of release days for IRAs by 800. There was a small increase to the education leave quota and the new adjudicated PD fund of \$50,000 was established. Seven months of appointments in a fiscal would drive 15 days of PD for the first time.

Different Approaches at the Provincial Level

While our local phase went as well as could be expected without a strike vote, the provincial phase did not. In the final days of March 2001 as salary tables were being passed back and forth, the CIEA locals coalesced around a proposal that would have seen increment adjustment money spread more evenly throughout the steps. The GEU locals preferred to see steps one and two get more so the top end rates would be higher. After some significant difficulties, the two union groups were able to cobble together a common position.

The difficulty in finalizing agreements would echo again in 2004 and 2007.

fc

THE NON-REGULAR COMMITTEE HEATS UP

At the April meeting of our new Non-Regular Committee, co-chairs were elected. We would like to congratulate Todd Rowlatt (Library) and Karen Brooke (School of Language Studies) as our new Co-Chairs.

Todd and Karen have already taken strong action on behalf of all term and auxiliary instructors in the VCCFA. They have presented concerns about the impact of the proposed Education Plan on non-regulars at both the Board and President's forums. The FA estimates that at least 50 non-regular instructors will have their employment terminated or severely reduced. The College, however, doesn't seem to consider that this is a problem.

On behalf of all non-regulars, Todd and Karen sent the following letter to the College Board. The VCCFA thanks Karen and Todd for their proactive stand on the rights of our non-regulars.

17 April 2008

Dear Mr. Stock and VCC Board Directors,

We are the co-chairs of the Vancouver Community College Faculty Association's Non-Regular Committee. We are writing to express our concern over the impact of the proposed reductions and possible future cancellations in programs on term and on-call instructors.

The administration of VCC is currently reporting that only 16 employees – instructors and staff -- will be laid off in the reductions. We do not believe this accurately reflects the loss of work for instructors at this college, as it does not include term instructors who will no longer have employment. Most instructors at VCC are hired first as term and on-call instructors, and a large number of the classes we offer are taught by term instructors.

The VCCFA estimates (so far) that 30 term instructors will be impacted by the potential reductions in programs this fall. It is unclear what the impact will be in the ESL programs, though given the number of term instructors who teach those classes, the impact will likely be high.

We are also concerned about VCC's future as an employer of choice. This is the second budget crisis and college-wide reduction in programming in the last seven years. Term instructors are the most vulnerable due to the lack of stability and job security at VCC. It has seriously diminished the ability for newer instructors to build their careers at VCC, or to envision and plan for any long-term future at the college. Given the increased shortage of skilled teachers as the retirement of the baby boomer generation accelerates, the failure to develop our future core of instructors is a serious problem. This shortage of teachers will be further exacerbated if VCC is deemed a risky place to work. We believe the proposed reductions reflect a short-sighted approach to both the educational needs of our students and the long-term development of the necessary human capital VCC will need to thrive in the future.

Given these realities, we believe that the reported number of 16 employee layoffs does not reflect the human cost of the proposed reductions. We ask that the Board demand more accurate information on the number of term instructors who will be impacted before making their decisions, and consider what the long-term impact of these reductions will be on VCC's reputation as a stable and secure workplace for new instructors attempting to create a long-term future as educators.

Thank you.

Karen Brooke
Todd Rowlatt
Co-Chairs of the Non-Regular Committee
VCC Faculty Association



Congratulations retirees!

Your pension has been adjusted up 2.5% to meet inflation. Last year your pension went up by 0.7%. This is a great advantage for the retired members. For example, consider the increase due to indexing a member retiring with an \$18,000/yr pension would enjoy in these three scenarios:

Retired twenty years ago now receives about \$30,400, a 69% increase

Retired fifteen years ago, now receives about \$24,500, a 36% increase

Retired ten years ago, now receives about \$21,600, a 20% increase.

I have a private sector non-indexed pension of about \$21,000 year, and after I am retired for 20 years it will be worth \$21,000 per year. Indexing is a HUGE benefit

The price of drugs

The annual cost of funding retiree drug costs (prescriptions) is inflating at a rate of 9% per year. This combines with an increase of retirees of 8% equating to an over all increase of 17%. Currently 80% of the extended health expenditures go to funding drugs.

I can be reached at 604 871 7393 or bhaugen@vcc.ca

Brian Haugen
VCCFA rep to the
FPSE Pension Advisory Committee



The VCCFA presents



Workshop

Friday, June 6, 2008

Room 419

Downtown Campus

9 am—12 noon

Presenter: John Wilson
Pension Plan Trustee and Executive
Member at Capilano College
Faculty Association

The College has quickly arranged for a retirement seminar to be offered by a College Pension Plan representative on Friday, May 9th.

Warren Ross from the College Pension Plan will conduct a 2 hour retirement seminar starting at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, May 9th at the Broadway Campus in the Auditorium on Level 2. This seminar was organized on short notice to accommodate those employees who have received, or may be considering, a Voluntary Departure Incentive.

There will be room for anyone else who may be interested in attending.

If you are interested, please contact Caetllohn Seadjwyc at cseadjwyc@vcc.ca in Human Resources to register for the seminar. It is important that you register.

Thank you.

VCCFA at New York Conferences on Non Regular Rights

On behalf of the VCCFA I accepted invitations to speak at two conferences in New York in early April. One was TESOL, the largest international organization of ESL instructors, and the other the National Conference on Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions. The latter is sponsored by Baruch College of the State University of New York.



At both conferences I was asked to present on panels regarding the working conditions of what we call non-regular instructors. The organizers of both panels wanted to hear how the VCCFA has achieved the high degree of equity for non-regulars that it has.

In the next newsletter there will be more detail about the presentations.

Organizing Efforts in the Private Sector

Local 21 of FPSE, the Education and Training Employees' Association, is the largest union in the private school sector in BC. It represents instructors at International Language Schools in downtown Vancouver. Through the tremendous work of its activists and the support of FPSE, it has launched an organizing campaign amongst private ESL schools. It achieved its first success when a successful certification vote was held in March at the Language Schools Canada. FPSE staff is now assisting with the bargaining of a first collective agreement.

In our VCCFA budget we have a modest line intended to support organizing efforts and the Executive decided to apply some of it to support ETEA's efforts, which include recent presentations and presence at the BC TEAL conference at Kwantlen. Their presence was well-received and we hope indicative of continued future success.

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators

Cindy Oliver, our FPSE President was at our March general meeting and has been most supportive of our recent efforts to publicize and protest the government and college executive efforts to weaken colleges further.

In the middle of May VCCFA executive and observers will be attending the FPSE AGM. In addition to discussions of the federation's work plan and financial plans over the upcoming year and no doubt seeking to hold the government to account for its mismanagement of the post-secondary system, there will be numerous initiatives large and small to shape the work of the federation.

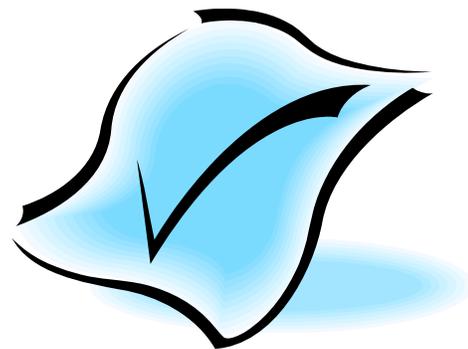
VCCFA Motions

VCCFA will be bringing five important motions of its own to the floor as a contribution.

They were recently ratified at our General Meeting and their text in full is on our website.

Their topics:

- ◆ *A comprehensive policy statement on goals for apprenticeship and trades programming*
- ◆ *A funded conference/review/preview of FPSE bargaining, past and future*
- ◆ *A funded conference of faculty governance participants*
- ◆ *A review of excessive administrative growth in the post-secondary system*
- ◆ *A study of options for democratizing college boards*



~ fc

RECENT IMPORTANT MEETINGS—IMPORTANT DATES

VCCFA representatives have been with you at each and every important college meeting and forum speaking up on your behalf. We will be there for the final votes on the education plan and budget that will take place later in the month.

Education Council

April 8 -The Educational Plan was formally presented by Alan Davis, VP Education. The plan sets into play a number of program reductions and possible program cancellations. EdCo felt it necessary to hold open forums, so that affected programs would have an opportunity to provide information about their views on the Education Plan before the Council votes in May.

May 13 – Education Council must vote on the advice they will give the College Board regarding the Education Plan.

Education Council Forums

April 22 and April 29 – Education Council and its chair Karen Shortt are to be congratulated for the conduct of recent meetings and forums where departments and areas affected by the new Education Plan have been given respectful opportunity to air their concerns. The FA was invited to speak and our presentation is posted on our website www.vccfa.ca. The main points of it were:

- The Plan has been twisted and cut to fulfill the financial goals of the current executive.
- The Council's top concern should be the integrity of the educational enterprise, not budget.
- Since all current programming has been validated by the existing strategic plan, to significantly change programming should require a comprehensive process with adequate time for input and consideration.
- The Plan has short-circuited such procedures; it speaks to the current administration's extreme view of executive privilege and prerogative.

The FA suggested that the lens the Council should use is one of conservation – if it is demonstrated that the Plan harms or removes the capacity of

programming to be successful, then it does not deserve recommendation. Representatives from many programs spoke passionately about their concerns and confusion regarding potential reductions and vertical cuts. We also heard heartfelt endorsements of programs from several students during the forums. Everyone who presented at these forums deserves our thanks.

On April 22, EdCo heard from:

Frank Cosco (VCCFA)
Bill Dobie (Drafting)
Marlena Vanderwal (Computer Technology)
Terry Mills (Business Mgt.)
Arsineh Garabedian (Business Mgt.)
Dianna Morgan, Business Mgt.)
Vincent Chauvet (ASL & Deaf Studies)
Sara MacFayden (ASL & Deaf Studies)
Karen Jane Hills (ELS)
Marilyn Heaps (Practical Nursing)

On the 29th, the following spoke:

Rob Mealey (SUVCC),
Kathy O'Donnell (CACE)
Dianne Schwartz (EEAW)
Barbara Forster-Rickard (CPE)
Gordon McIntyre (CF Science)
Fiona Chin (IE)
Peter Herd (CCA)
Eva Murray (SIE)
Hassan Khayambashi (CF Math)
Wayne Avery (CF Humanities)

All provided information about their programs that was not spelled out in the Education Plan. Those in attendance learned a great deal. For instance we learned that 60% of the IE students in applied programs come from the Lower Mainland (so why has the marketing arm of IE not also been reduced?). EEAW was on the chopping block because registration was not open for a two week period. They didn't have difficulty filling those spots, as soon as the acting coordinator was in place. The former coordinator had taken a VDI, and during a two week hiatus between the two instructors, registration was off. We thought the Dean should have quickly realized that almost all registration in that program is a result of the marketing done by the Coordinator, and it simply wouldn't happen in her absence. ASL & Deaf Studies is facing elimination because of low enrollment, but based on

RECENT IMPORTANT MEETINGS—IMPORTANT DATES

data more than two years old. More recent improved enrollment figures and the recent phenomenon of a major shortage of interpreters does not seem to have been considered. And the list goes on....

The last forum finished with a presentation by Alan Davis, providing rationale for decisions about the reductions and cuts. He made it quite clear that the decisions were not his alone, but were discussed and approved by the college executive. It was also clear to us that some of the rationale he has used was caused by administrative neglect.

President's Forums

April 16th, both campuses - Annually, Dale holds forums to present the budget to the College community. He is open to questions at these events. Usually, there are a full array of administrators in attendance, and very few others. This year was a bit different; with good attendance by faculty and staff. Dale took questions from the floor, but provided little substance to the conversation on budget.

College Board Forum

April 17th - The College Board holds this forum every year. Usually we see only a few board members, and not many people from the college community in attendance. This year, like the President's Forums, things were a bit different. All board members were in attendance. Many faculty in programs seeing reductions and potential cuts presented information about their programs to the board, information the board may never have heard before. For more information about the Board Forum, see page 9.

College Board Meetings

March 24th – Prior to this meeting, the VCCFA held a press conference to publicize the potential cuts outlined in the draft Education Plan. Jim Sinclair, President, BC Federation of Labour joined Frank to face the press. This press conference was the first public hint that VCC has major budgetary problems. At the Board meeting, a few reporters stayed for the meeting. As well,

Rob Fleming, NDP Advanced Education Critic was in attendance.

April 24th - Many faculty took the opportunity to address the College Board at the open session of this meeting. Reporters from local TV stations (CBC, BCTV, Global, M-TV) and radio (CBC, CKNW) were also in attendance, resulting from a press conference held by the VCCFA just prior to the meeting. At the Board meeting, reporters took the opportunity to interview some of our members, and find out first hand, what the impact of the cuts will be. The press coverage that evening was excellent. Stories ran on all the TV networks late night and early morning broadcasts and there was excellent radio coverage as well. In addition, Frank and Cindy Oliver were interviewed on the "World Today" program on CKNW.

Again, our members spoke passionately about their programs, and the impacts of the proposed cuts. The Board only heard from departments facing imminent reductions or suspensions. All others will be heard at the May meeting.

Our faculty members were eloquent. For instance, Heather Chan spoke on behalf of the Counseling Department (which faces 1.5 FTE cut in counselors), and how that will impact the work of that department, including the elimination or down scaling of the important student advocate program. Gordon McIntyre and Hassan Khayambashi both talked about the cuts in CF ABE and UT programming. Both are mystified because the demand has grown considerably in the past few years in UT, and with the no tuition policy of the government for ABE, those courses are filling also.

May 29th – Several more presentations are expected. This time they will be from departments facing the C.3.3 policy for cancellation. The Board will vote on the Education Plan and Budget at this meeting.



cont'd on page 16

RECENT IMPORTANT MEETINGS—IMPORTANT DATES

VCCFA Emergency Meeting

April 17 – The VCCFA held an emergency meeting to discuss actions we can take to “fight the cuts”. The meeting was very well attended; over 140 faculty were there. We provided letters to MLAs and Murray Coell that could be signed there or taken away for signature. The VCCFA will mail them to Victoria and provide copies to the College Board. Petitions were signed, and many taken by instructors to get further signatures. A fact sheet outlining information about the Education Plan and draft budget was distributed. Many members signed up on a volunteer sheet to be called upon for further action. Four committees have been struck so far: petitions, letter writing, technology and research. FPSE’s Phil Legg also attended the meeting, updating us all on what our provincial organization has been doing on our behalf and for all our fellow unions. *Call the office if you wish to join in.*



Frank speaking at the April 17th Special General Meeting

Operations Council

April 8 - Operations Council was presented with the draft budget, which will be voted upon at the May meeting. There is little information provided in this budget document, although it is clear that the college is proposing a deficit of approximate 1.3 million dollars (the 2.6% decrease in the provincial grant). We can expect to pay more in food costs and parking in 08/09. The College also expects to pay more in benefit costs, and costs to support improvements in cleaning and computer networks. The proposed additional cost for security would cover an additional administrative position, a Director of Security and Safety.

Operations Council Forum

April 30 - At the request of Education Council, and through the urging of the VCCFA, Pete Legg, VP Finance (and Operations Council Chair) held a forum to answer detailed questions about the budget.

Questions were mostly submitted in writing prior to the open forum, which was attended by several administrators, education council members, and interested instructors and staff. Questions about Pete’s responses were taken, and after the submitted queries were dealt with, Pete took questions from the floor.

There was a wide range of questions submitted in writing, from queries about details of International Education funding to the breakdown of increased benefits costs to how much the college is paying out in VDIs (\$1.8million to date). From the floor came a request for information about payments to consultants, travel costs of senior administrators, costs associated for operating the new building from January – March (the college has no additional funding to bring the new building on stream in January), etc. To Pete’s credit, he tried to provide explanations for each question, and promised to provide answers for the questions he couldn’t answer.

However, after all the information was presented and all the questions answered, there was no clear answer about why and how the college finds itself in this mess. The college has had large surpluses over the last several years which mostly went to the new building.

More to come

As meetings, events, actions are planned; we will inform you of dates and important information.

Continue to check our website.

~BA

EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

Coell doesn't get it

Advanced Education Minister, Murray Coell, continues to insist that reports of planned layoffs and program cuts and reductions at BC colleges are “misinformation” and “misleading”. While at Malaspina University College for the big announcement that they were to be renamed as a university, he was confronted with computer science instructors who are receiving their pink slips. While Coell is insisting that there are no cuts, Malaspina’s computer science department head noted, “The department has reviewed the impact of the cuts and determined that it is not possible to continue offering the degree program with cuts this deep.” Cuts have been announced at College of New Caledonia, Douglas College, VCC, SFU, UBC, Malaspina during the same week that Premier Campbell and Coell have been playing fairy godfathers by waving their magic wand turning colleges into universities (in name only, it seems).

The Georgia Straight
May 1 – 8

Van Sun doesn't buy it

Hard to imagine, but even the Vancouver Sun is not pleased with the recent announcements about turning colleges into universities. Their recent editorial title, “Diluting the designation university is not the way to educational excellence” says it all. In the same issue, columnist Vaughn Palmer wrote a scathing article about this topic. He lambasted the government on the budget cuts announced recently (2.6% for all post secondary), the timing of these announcements, and the fact that no additional funding is attached to any of these new “universities.” He jokes in the article that the Campbell government has anointed five universities in the space of a week, while it took the province 150 years to establish our older universities. He closes his article with an old saying, “...there’s the old joke about what the boss offers when he can’t provide a raise: a new title”.

Vancouver Sun
April 30, 2008



Good Work

The Variety Club donated \$38,100 to the Basic Education for At Risk Youth program. The funds will provide enriched learning environments and as well as cover some basic needs.

Vancouver Sun
April 28, 2008

A College President on the Record

Douglas College president, Susan Witter, questions the wisdom of the recent announcements transforming five colleges into universities. She reminds us that most of the skills shortages in this province are in occupations that colleges train, not in university graduates. “We are told the skills shortage will worsen and a recent survey by Manpower Inc. found that 42 per cent of the shortages of skilled labour are in occupations that require a college education, compared to seven per cent in jobs requiring a university education.” Nice to see a college president speaking out!

Vancouver Sun
April 26

Georgia Straight doesn't buy it

In the annual education issue, The Georgia Straight takes direct aim at the provincial government’s recent announcements about five post secondary institutions becoming new universities. They ask, “...are the communities served by these learning centres getting an institution that is a university in name only?”

The Georgia Straight,
April 24 – May 1, 2008

Students default on loans

Students have been complaining about the level of debt they are faced with as tuition rates increase. Nova Scotia universities and colleges have the highest tuition costs in Canada. A recent Globe and Mail article noted that Nova Scotia has written off \$2.18 million in bad student debt. Mike Tipping, president of the Dalhousie University Student Union, was quoted as saying that “...the figures show graduates aren’t coping with large debts being run up to pay for tuition.” We are hearing the same complaints from VCC Student Union representatives.

The Globe and Mail
April 28, 2008

EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

Coell doesn't get it still

The coverage of the 2.6% budget cuts to BC's colleges and universities received very different coverage in the Globe and Mail than in the Vancouver Sun. The Globe reported that Murray Coell, Minister of Advanced Education said that he was confident that colleges and universities can manage the cut and that there would be changes "...to only small programs or those not in demand." Coell's comments differ from what the colleges and universities are saying. There have been announcements of cuts at UBC, SFU, and many colleges. VCC, of course, plans for the most significant cuts in the B.C. post secondary system.

*The Globe and Mail
April 9, 2008*

Government Funding Cuts Nasty Surprise for Universities

The sub-headline for this story declares: "Move leaves six institutions short, but colleges and trade schools will benefit." The Vancouver Sun has gotten it wrong! So very wrong!!! On March 13th, all college presidents were called to a meeting with the Ministry to be told that college operating grants will also be reduced by 2.6 per cent. Like the universities, this is money that was promised to the colleges to cover things like salary increases (negotiated provincially) and pension cost increases. For VCC this means \$1.3 million that we were initially told would be part of our budget..... and which will now not be there.

How did the Vancouver Sun get it so wrong? We suspect the government leaked the story to the Sun.....along with the government spin!

*Vancouver Sun
March 20, 2008*

~BA

Immigrants Face Language Challenges

Ninety two per cent of all immigrants must speak English in their workplace. Only eight per cent of immigrants say they do not need English as a language at work. Immigrants who do not learn English are vulnerable to exploitation from employers. It is hard to imagine with statistics like this why VCC is again restricting our ESL programming. We know that 22 of the VDIs offered by the College are to instructors in the School of Language Studies and that several ESL departments face reduced offerings in the 08/09 Education Plan.

*Vancouver Sun
March 5, 2008*

Canada Tops G7 in Jobs Growth Rate, According to the Census

What are Canada's fastest growing employment sectors? According to the latest Canadian census data, health care and social assistance jobs top the list. Other industry sectors with great promise are

- ◆ Administrative support
- ◆ Accommodation and food service
- ◆ **Transportation logistics** (VCC has suspended enrollment in our program)
- ◆ Arts, entertainment
- ◆ Estheticians and related jobs

*Vancouver Sun
March 5, 2008*



STEWARD UPDATE

Where to start? While all the activities around the proposed education plan, programs undergoing the alleged C.3.3 cancellation process, sections being cut, meetings, presentations, etc, the ongoing work of stewards continues.

Here is a brief summary of some of the main issues.

Layoffs

Once again we are facing layoffs and all that entails. We had hoped and had been led to believe that the first round of VDI offers would mitigate if not all, many potential layoffs, but there are now 3 people laid off in Electronics, one on advanced notice and one on notice. In Dental Tech & Denturist, the program that is scheduled to be cut by 50%, one of the faculty has received advanced notice. We've been told that there will be a layoff in Counselling. And already many term instructors are not working or are finishing their current appointments, with no real hope of future work. The College has told us that in areas where there are or will be layoffs, they will offer VDIs to mitigate the layoffs.

We have indicated to the College that during this time of layoffs, that there should be a moratorium on any changes to hiring criteria; this is similar to the position we took during previous layoffs. In the situation where a member does receive a layoff notice, each person is assigned a steward whose role it is to make sure that the member is aware of her or his rights and of the process. We continue to work hard to find ways the layoffs can be minimized. If you have any questions about the layoff process, please call the union office.

Voluntary Departure Incentive

The bittersweet home grown version of voluntary severance pay. Over 30 instructors took VDIs in the across the college offering in March. Of course we are happy to see coworkers who are ready to leave to be able to do so, but they have for the most part not been replaced, so we are losing those jobs. We pointed out that some instructors who left with a VDI, would probably have been laid off in the future and would receive a higher amount of severance pay than the VDI. The

College has agreed that for anyone in that situation, the College will pay the difference at the time the layoff would have happened.

Discipline

The College has called for a number of discipline meetings. Most serious is the dismissal of one of our members. The union has grieved this. Another member has received a suspension without pay and has been removed from a DH position; which we also grieved.

There are a number of other issues in process ranging from instructional concerns, workload issues, concerns about interactions with others in the department, leaves, class size, step placements to name a few. In all of these our members are represented and a steward, or two, is at all the meetings. We try to work with our members and College to resolve these issues. We have a good track record of problem solving and we are optimistic that we will be able to continue to so.

Elections & Selections

The June group of IRA postings is about to start, including the posting of two Instructional Associate positions. We are also completing a number of elections that are out of sequence. If you have any questions about the election/selection process, give us a call.

Scheduling

We've had lots of questions and informal issues about scheduling. Scheduling is covered in our Collective Agreement Article 6.4.2. Fortunately most of the scheduling issues have been resolved informally.

Accommodations

We've worked on a number of accommodation and return to work issues. In these situations, the accommodations do require medical support. We work with the College. If you do need an accommodation, please give the union a call.

Meetings

There have been many! We've met with the College around the Letter of Understanding in our Collective Agreement about Assistance for Instructors Teaching Students with Disabilities, Appendix XVIII. We've asked the College to provide clearly written

cont'd on page 20

information about the resources and help that is available to instructors. We are hearing more and more from instructors who are dealing with students with undisclosed disabilities and we want to make sure our members are aware of support and how to get it. In the fall, as per the Collective Agreement, the College will start to do a survey on how to meet the needs of instructors.

Distributed Learning—Workload Issues

Brenda Appleton and I have started discussions with the College on the workload implications for instructors teaching online, or doing mixed mode classes. We are currently getting some information, but will resume these discussions. The College agrees with the union that it is time to have workload articulated clearly and that for example, there is no expectation that an instructor be available every day of the week.

We continue to meet regularly with the College during our 3.11 meetings which enable us to raise a wide range of issues. Also, we have other regular meetings with Labour Relations people and will request meetings as needed.

Resolved

Our grievance concerned with term work not being offered in seniority sequence was resolved at Stage 1 to the satisfaction of the member, union and College.

Arbitration

We went to arbitration at end of March on our grievance about faculty rights to reschedule PD time that was interrupted by bereavement leave. Many thanks to Chris Clark for being the union witness. We are waiting to hear the decision of the arbitrator.

If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call. Our stewards are ready to help. If you are interested in being a steward, also, give us a call; we'd be happy to sit down and talk about what is involved.

Thank You to Rose Marie & Malcolm

This spring marks the end of careers for a number of our members and this includes Rose Marie Watson and Malcolm Cant, both long time stewards and members of the union bargaining committee. Actually Rose Marie is already enjoying her retirement. We want to thank them for their dedicated work to our members and union. We will miss them.

~ Ing for the stewards

DID YOU KNOW?

Vacation—It is a new year in terms of vacation and PD accrual. We usually take our vacation time before we earn it. In other words, if you take July and August off, it is assumed you will be working to the end of the fiscal year, the following March. With the impending layoffs, we caution instructors to make sure they do not overtake their vacation time, but we also remind you to schedule the vacation time now, so there will be no carry over.

Seniority List - The new list will be out very soon. The seniority list is updated each year effective April 1. Term instructors' seniority holds for 24 months after their last appointment. The seniority order does not change throughout the year, but one's status can. For example, instructors regularize, or increase their time status, retire, or resign.

If you have any questions, call the union office.

PARTICIPATE

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

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Fax: 604.688.6219

Mail: 401-402 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1T6

REMINDE RS



Workshop
Friday, June 6, 2008
Room 419
Downtown Campus
9 am—12 noon

Presenter: John Wilson
Pension Plan Trustee and Executive Member at
Capilano College Faculty Association

NEXT VCCFA GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2008

2:30 PM

ROOM 237
DOWNTOWN CAMPUS



VCCFA General Meeting—February 13th
In the Mixology room . Can you find the FPSE President?



Moved? Moving?
Remember to notify the
VCCFA office of your
New address
Telephone number
Email address

Call Audrey at 604-688-6210 or email info@vccfa.ca



We're on the
web
www.vccfa.ca

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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: _____
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Status: _____
Email Address: _____