



On Stream

Newsletter of the Selkirk College Faculty Association

February 2008

Ponderings from the President

I hope everyone had an enjoyable break and that your semester has gone smoothly. It has been a relatively quiet year for the SCFA; there aren't any major problems to update you on. I have been to Vancouver for a Presidents' Council meeting, where we approved many motions brought forward by FPSE subcommittees for our AGM, including support for a smoke-free workplace, a study on the growth of administration in comparison to faculty and student growth rates, and numerous recommendations from the Human Rights, Status of Women, and Health & Safety committees. Thanks go out to all those members who take part in these committees. The FPSE AGM, by the way, is in Whistler this year (mid-May) and we'll be choosing delegates at the spring SCFA AGM in April.

Also, I am happy to say that Lori Barkley is our new VP of Contract Negotiations. Even though the next round of bargaining won't get seriously under way until almost the time of the 2010 Olympics, some preliminary work has already been started. Tracy Punchard is also back as an active member of the executive this semester after taking last semester off to recover from surgery.

Finally, if you haven't had a chance to check out the new SCFA website (www.scfa.ca) please do so, as it was completely redesigned

over the summer/early fall by Charla Beaulieu. It has expanded information, current versions of the local and common collective agreements, an easy-to-find salary grid, answers to those FAQs, and more.

Doug Henderson, President

On Stream profiles Mike Dion, VP Finance and Administration

Let's start with a bit of history. Tell us about your life before Selkirk.

Life before Selkirk included moves between Alberta and B.C. on two separate occasions. We relocated from Grande Prairie where I held a similar position with Grande Prairie Regional College. I have been in the Post Secondary Sector for over 4 years and have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Previously, Forestry, Health Care and Utilities were a couple of sectors I worked.

In my previous role in the Forest industry I traveled to China quite extensively. China is a very fascinating country and I would recommend travel to China at least once. It's a surreal country in terms of people, progress and bustle.

What do you hope to accomplish in your role as VP Finance and Administration at Selkirk?

I hope to work together in a sense of collaboration with our employees and stakeholders in achieving the College's Mission, Vision and Goals in meeting the challenges within the Post Secondary sector.

What will we find you doing when you are not working?

When not working (I might be a workaholic ...lol) I enjoy old cars and fishing. Reading is also a pastime I enjoy whenever possible. Between all that I also take pleasure in simple home renovations.

What book is on your bedside table at the moment?

Due to the efforts required in moving, my bedside table has only a book on Moving 101. Otherwise I might be reading on the technical specifications of the latest BMW M3, my favourite car.

If I come to your office with a favour to ask, what kind of bribe or gift should I bring?

A simple smile and an honest request is all I require.

What words of wisdom do you live by?

Be Positive and treat people with respect.

And we profile Laura White, Chair, Kootenay School of the Arts

Let's start with a bit of history. Tell us about your life before Selkirk.

I was born and raised in North Vancouver on what I guess would be called a hobby farm, surrounded by animals (at one point, there were 150 chickens, 2 horses, 2 ponies, 6 dogs and 2 cats). In the late 1980's, I took a "Silver Jewellery Making" course at night school, and I was hooked (yeah, CE!). I received my BFA

(with a Jewellery major) from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1993. I've been a part-time instructor in the Jewellery and Small Object Design studio at KSA since 1995. For several of those years, I was also teaching part-time in a Jewellery program at Nunavut Arctic College, flying into remote, small communities where I was the visible minority - I have some great memories!

What do you hope to accomplish in your role as School Chair of the Kootenay School of the Arts?

Increased enrolment, more transfer opportunities for our students, and increased use of the campus over the summer months.

What will we find you doing when you are not working?

Relaxing with and tending to the animals that live with my husband and me on our 2 acres in Crescent Valley (currently, 2 dogs, a cat and 2 Morgan/ Arab horses), or on a road trip to somewhere like Spokane where I can enjoy my anonymity while out on the town.

What book is on your bedside table at the moment?

I usually have several on the go at any given time: I've just finished *Bright Lights Big Ass* by Jen Lancaster and *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, and have just started *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal* by Christopher Moore

If I come to your office with a favour to ask, what kind of bribe or gift should I bring?

A good sense of humour - failing that, coffee (single skim latte) or dark chocolate usually works.

What words of wisdom do you live by?

I'm partial to the fortunes found in Chinese fortune cookies. Here are a few examples: "Patience is your alley (sic) at the moment. Don't worry!" and "You have the ability to nurture and work creatively with others".

Flu Shots: Who Should Pay?

The Selkirk College Joint Occupational Health & Safety (JOH&S) Committee is reactivated. It was in a brief hiatus with the departure of Mickey Kinakin last spring. Peter Leach has assumed Mickey's responsibilities as part-time JOH&S Co-ordinator and Louise Krohn, as new Human Resources Director, is now overseeing OH&S initiatives college-wide.

Things like regular workplace inspections, JOH&S meetings, and discussion on how to improve workplace health and safety have resumed. This is my current OH&S concern - flu immunization for faculty. I receive an annual flu shot. For some instructors, a flu shot is free, while others have to pay \$20. I'm in the latter group. I suspect most faculty don't bother, but there is a clear savings to having faculty receive flu shots. **At \$20 a year over a 25 year teaching career, the cost of flu immunization is \$500 per instructor.** If I were to get the flu only once in 25 years and miss a week of classes, the cost of a replacement instructor would exceed the cost of flu immunization - and I wouldn't have to suffer through that week or two of misery.

Cutting to the chase, this year I submitted my receipt for my flu shot as a petty cash claim, but it was refused and I was told to send it to Manulife. I've done that, and I'm waiting to see if they will cover preventative health care - specifically flu immunization. If not, I'll raise the issue with the JOH&S Committee and see

what the next step might be. I'm a believer in preventative health care - an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and don't step on my blue suede shoes. I plan to encourage the college to support flu immunization as part of its wellness initiative.

Other BC colleges vary in their immunization policy. In the mean time, wash your hands frequently, keep your hands away from your face, and if you get sick, stay away from work.

On a different topic, over the past few years, there have been an increased number of successful Worker Compensation Board (WCB) claims for workplace accidents. Selkirk College now has a higher frequency of claims than the provincial average for post-secondary institutions. The primary types of accidents leading to claims are slips and falls that lead to knee and ankle injuries. I think you can guess where I'm going with this.

Please be careful on the icy walkways and wet corridors especially around entrances. Wear appropriate winter footwear and leave your heels at home. Who would have expected the JOH&S person to offer fashion advice?

Maintenance is trying to stay on top of shoveling and sanding. If you think there are places where a handrail may reduce the risk of slipping or you have other ideas of how to reduce the occurrence of slipping and falling, please contact me.

In the mean time, scrub your hands, tread carefully, stay rested, eat well, laugh often, wear sensible shoes - the sort mother would approve, and exercise regularly.

Rob Macrae, SCFA representative to the Occupational Health and Safety committee

Education Policy Across the Province

Here are high-lights from the November 16 and 17 meeting of the Education Policy Committee:

International Education: Concern was expressed by some members that post-secondary educators from BC who are doing volunteer teaching internationally may be displacing the employment opportunities of post-secondary educators in the host country. The following motion was passed: "that EPC recommend that FPSE advise locals of the potential that their faculty who may be doing voluntary work in other countries may in fact be displacing local faculty from paid employment opportunities."

BC Campus: The EPC discussed the problems that have arisen as a result of competition among institutions for FTEs of students taking online courses. There is a need for better collaboration between institutions in the allocation of FTEs and the sharing of information on student registrations.

Regional Universities: With university status comes the push for university research projects. At Thompson Rivers University administration is putting pressure on research faculty to apply for funding to support research yet only about 5% of provincial research funding goes to TRU, UNBC and Royal Roads; the other 95% goes to the big three universities (UBC, UVIC, and SFU).

Concern was also expressed about the increase in Administration positions. The push seems to be to follow a business model rather than a collegial one.

Malaspina is also under pressure to become a regional university. Faculty there are

concerned about the effect on faculty workloads and have noted the growth of administration versus faculty. EPC passed the following motion: "that EPC recommends to Presidents' Council that FPSE conduct a study on the growth rate of college administration relative to the growth rate of faculty and students since 2000."

It's no surprise then that Kwantlen is also trying to achieve regional university status and faculty are concerned about the prospect of receiving a fair share of the research funding.

Partnerships: Douglas College is offering business degrees to students enrolled in joint programs in Shanghai and Harbin, China.

There is concern that a number of these students are graduating with a Douglas College degree but have very poor English skills. The issue of language competency has not been resolved.

College of the Rockies recently ended its partnership with a private training entity since "significant problems had arisen with the private entity's business practices." Despite those problems, the college is still moving ahead with a private partnership with the Interior Health Authority.

Finally, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology has taken over operations of what was previously the Institute of Indigenous Government. They began offering NVIT courses at this Vancouver site in September, 2007.

Don Parks, SCFA representative to the FPSE Education Policy Committee

2007/2008 *Retirement Seminars*

Castlegar Campus:

When: THURSDAY APRIL 24, 2008

Time: 10:00 AM TO 12:30 PM

Where: SENTINEL 113

Who can attend?

ALL PLAN MEMBERS ARE WELCOME, INCLUDING THOSE RECEIVING LONG-TERM DISABILITY (LTD) BENEFITS. THERE IS NO CHARGE TO ATTEND AND WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO INVITE YOUR SPOUSE OR A GUEST.

What does the seminar cover?

WE EXPLAIN THE BASICS OF THE PENSION PLAN AND COVER THE RETIREMENT PROCESS FROM APPLICATION TO RECEIVING YOUR PAYMENTS. WE DISCUSS TOPICS SUCH AS HOW PURCHASING SERVICE INCREASES YOUR PENSION AND HOW TO GET CREDIT FOR CHILD-REARING TIME. THE SEMINAR IS ABOUT 2½ HOURS IN LENGTH.

Why should I attend?

ATTENDEES HAVE FOUND THE SEMINAR HELPFUL IN THEIR RETIREMENT AND ESTATE PLANNING BY FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH THE BENEFITS OF THE PENSION PLAN AND THE RETIREMENT PROCESS.

How do I register?

COMPLETE AND RETURN AN APPLICATION FORM, AVAILABLE FROM OUR WEBSITE college.pensionsbc.ca OR FROM MICHELLE LAURIN. THE SEMINAR SERVICES STAFF WILL CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE, INCLUDING THE TIME AND LOCATION, BY E-MAIL OR BY MAIL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REGISTER EARLY. THE SEMINAR PRESENTATION AND HANDBOOK ARE AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE college.pensionsbc.ca.

Remember to register with Pharmacare

If you are enrolled in Manulife's Group Extended Health Care Plan you must also register with Pharmacare and communicate your registration number to Manulife. For more information see the email circulated by Michele Laurin on January 25th. If you would like more information about how PharmaCare works with your group benefits plan, please contact Manulife Customer Service directly at 1.800.667.5165.

Your SCFA Executive

President: Doug Henderson

VP Contract Administration: Lui Marinelli

VP Liaison: Tracy Punchard

VP Negotiations: Lori Barkley

Secretary: Bev Onischak

Treasurer: John Stegman

College Board Observer: Paris Voykin

Retirement Issues Officer: Ross Bates

