



# On Stream

Newsletter of the Selkirk College Faculty Association

March 2017

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Duff Sutherland

Although members teach in the spring and beyond, we are approaching the end of another academic year. I want to update you on the work of the executive and its plans for the future.

This year we focused on our Open the Doors campaign to bring attention to the rising cost for students of post-secondary education in British Columbia. The SCFA gave away over \$40,000 worth of textbooks to highlight the unfair financial burden students face to gain a post-secondary education. I hope that you were able to view some of the pictures on our SCFA Facebook page of happy students receiving their books. Many of the books will be available to students next year and beyond. About 800 people at the college have taken the pledge to support publicly funded post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education has been the primary means for Canadians to improve their opportunities and standard of living since the Second World War. Fighting for accessible post-secondary education is fighting for what Canada claims it is all about. We will continue to work with the Selkirk College Student Union to raise the issue all the way through the provincial election on May 9. Please join us in our ongoing campaign!

Looking ahead, the executive had a one-day retreat and has done some reading on ways to build our association. Our focus for the coming year will be on building a “highly engaged” faculty association. This will involve organizing. Organizing means reaching out to you to see what you want from your association. It means putting on events to bring members together on issues that are important to them. It means bringing more and new

members into the running of the association. It means representing your interests in the best way that we can.

In the short-run, consider attending these upcoming SCFA events:

- ❖ **Academic Freedom:** On March 8, 11am-1pm, David Robinson, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), will speak at the Mir Centre on Academic Freedom.
- ❖ **International Women’s Day:** On March 8, the Status of Women’s Committee, will host an event.
- ❖ **Stewart’s Training:** On March 14 & 15, FPSE staff rep. Zoe Towle will give workshops to train stewards.
- ❖ **Indigenous Political Activism:** During the last week of March, the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee will host a speaker.

I hope that you will join us in building our association.

**2017 SCFA AGM – YOUR INVITED!**

Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, KOK 10  
Refreshments Included  
Both mileage and child-care cost can  
be claimed.

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## **DANGEROUS TIMES: A RESPONSE TO THE US FEDERAL ELECTION**

One of the pleasures of being President of the SCFA is getting to know other faculty association presidents and learning about what is going at their locals. The Emily Carr University Faculty Association published the following statement on their website after the American election. Our association is non-partisan but my experience is that our members share the values expressed in this message to students.

Dear Emily Carr students,

In the wake of the American presidential election, we as faculty have been witnessing higher levels of anxiety, fear, and stress in many of you, who understand the threat that Donald Trump poses to our efforts to build a peaceful society.

We are devastated and disappointed that a candidate who promulgates xenophobia, racism, and misogyny now leads the United States. We are hearing stories of violence, intimidation and silencing tactics on the rise, as those who espouse hate and inequality feel they have more social license to bully others.

We do live in dangerous times.

We also live in times where it is more urgent than ever to exercise our freedoms to speak and act, both individually and collectively, and cultivate wisdom in our communities. The hard won victories of the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the labour movement, the LGBT movement, and more, matter deeply; they should not and cannot be destroyed by one authoritarian appealing to people's fear and anger. Commitment to love and equality continues and persists. We see the leadership of Indigenous peoples at Standing Rock currently, courageously coming together to protect water for everyone's sake. We stand in solidarity with those who welcome diversity, love each other, the land, the water, and life itself, which depends on the health of the watersheds that we all depend on.

It is unusual for us, as a Faculty Association, to make such a statement. But these are unusual times. This election is

a wake up call for many, and as such, a teachable moment as well. Those of us in art schools and universities can exercise our academic and artistic freedoms, which are more important than ever. We can take care of ourselves and each other. Be gentle with one another, but also loving, honest, and rigorous as we enter into dialogues with one another and with those who may have supported Trump, or come from families or communities that do. Respect for difference is critical for a shared, peaceful future. Gathered as we are on unceded Coast Salish territories, we have responsibilities to come together for the sake of peace and reconciliation.

As we process this historical moment together, in bewilderment as well as in courage, please know that we are with you in building a just and loving world for everyone. Historical movements in the past have succeeded despite huge odds and obstacles, and our creative spirit, overcoming challenges, strengthens the power of the people.

In solidarity,

The Emily Carr Faculty Association

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## **VACATION**

**Lui Marinelli**

**VP Contract Administration**

At a recent labour/management meeting, we had a little discussion around vacation and what we are allowed, to what we have agreed in the collective, and how it should all work. Hence the reason for writing this article...to make sure you all understand.

When working at Selkirk College we get vacation credit...either paid out or given as time.

For those with short term contracts, vacation is given in three different ways. If the short term contract is fewer than six months, then it's paid out at 8% on every cheque. If the contract is greater than 6 months but fewer than 12, then you get 16% on every check. If the short term contract is for 12 months, then vacation is accrued.

One interesting variation to short term contracts. If you were originally give a short term contract of < 6 months,

vacation was paid out at 8%. If prior to the end of that contract you were offered an extension or a second contract that starts immediately after the first expires and in total the two contracts are now > 6 months then you immediately get bumped up to 16% and it is back dated to the start of the first contract...as if the employer knew from the beginning that they had > 6 months of work for you.

For those with regular contracts, regardless of proportion, vacation is accrued. These members get 4 days a month to a max of 40 days. So you work for 10 months and get 2 months of vacation. Within that 10 months you have 22 days of professional development days and 34ish days of assigned duties. As a regular member, you are covered by the employer for insurance purposes for the whole year so the employer needs to be able to assign a category for every day of the year except weekends and public holiday (i.e., "normal" work, PD, assigned duties, or vacation). Even if you are proportional, you still get 40 days. You get paid at a proportional rate for those 40 days. If you have a 75% regular contract, then you get 40 days paid at 75%.

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**"You're entitled to one-week paid vacation if you bring your laptop with you and never turn off your cell phone."**

Everyone should get at least 1 request from the Chair or department head for your vacation schedule...a plan for when you are hoping to take your 40 days that you accrued in that year. Our collective says that you have to take your days in the academic year in which it was earned. That doesn't always work. Vacation accrual and step increase work on a yearly schedule that starts July 1st and ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. So in theory we have to be done holidays for this year by June 30<sup>th</sup>. After that you have no vacation days until the end of July when you've earned 4

days. However, many instructors are taking vacation in July and August which reads as a rollover.

In our collective, rollovers happen because something has come up when you should be taking vacation and your Chair and Dean have agreed to allow you to rollover some vacation into the next year. For example, while you are on vacation, there is an emergency and they need someone to fill in. They can ask you if you would help and they will either pay you for your vacation time not taken (extra money) or give you that lost vacation time next year. In that case, the employer ASKS if you would be willing to roll over some time. In another instance, if you felt you needed to get some important work done and it will cut into your vacation, then you would ASK if you could roll over some time. In all cases, a rollover of vacation needs to be approved. You can't make the argument later. If you decide that you need to work through your vacation to get your work done, you need to have a conversation with your Chair or department head BEFORE you start, get the okay, and figure out what happens with the vacation not used. Don't assume that you will get them to agree to it after the fact...it doesn't work that way.

Back to the instructor example of taking vacation in July and August, past the June 30<sup>th</sup> date. In theory that is a rollover, but the past practice has been for instructors to propose a plan that may include vacation in July and August and the Chair/Dean recognizes that all the vacation will be taken by September and accepts the plan without a request of roll over.

Our collective is clear that if you don't take all your vacation time accrued in a particular year, you have to request in that same year for some vacation time to be rolled over. If you don't request it and don't use it, then you've LOST IT. If you request and are denied, then you have to decide whether you will take the vacation time or not.

In the past there have been situations where a member who was retiring and trying to get all their affairs in order mentioned that they didn't take all their vacation for the last couple of years and were owed. At that time, there was insufficient documentation and the employer was on the hook for extra costs. This has led them to try to stay on top of the vacation accrual.

So what should you do to make sure you don't lose out on vacation? Make sure you provide a vacation plan to your Chair when requested. The Dean has 30 days to approve

the plan or discuss alternative. If you hear nothing after 30 days, then it is assumed to be approved.

If you want to make changes to the plan, you ASK. If it works operationally, then you should get your changes approved. If you don't think you can take all your vacation, you need to ASK for a roll over but you need a good reason otherwise you are out of luck. Clear as mud?? Any questions, just ask.



**On Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, the SCFA showed up at the “Coldest Night of the Year” walk in Nelson, helping to raise money for the hungry and homeless. Join us next year!**

## BARGAINING UPDATE

**Victor Villa**  
VP Negotiations

I attended FPSE's Bargaining Coordination Committee (BCC) on Jan. 27 and the Secondary Scales Conference (SCC) on Jan. 28, 2017. At BCC I reported that academic freedom, secondary scales and the process for regularization are the most relevant work that continues because of our negotiated agreement. At the SCC we discussed and strategized how best to change the poor working conditions of a “precarious workforce.” That is, a growing number of academics are paid less for the same work as regular faculty and work without job security. This precarious workforce exists beyond academia.

The “precarious workforce” at Selkirk College is atypical in the province. Currently, 25% of our members have non-regular contracts. However, the reduction formulas that we have at Selkirk College affect both regular and non-regular faculty. For example, online teaching is paid at a reduced rate when there are fewer than 17 students enrolled in the class. More specifically, Educational Technology/ Online Course are calculated on two factors: 1) the number of students in the class and 2) whether or not the instructor is teaching the same course face-to-face during the same semester.

- For classes with 5 or fewer students: if the instructor teaches the same class face-to-face they will be paid an extra one hour per week (3.1%). If the instructor does not teach the same course face-to-face, they will be paid according to the formula “Rate E X 5” (see table below)
- For classes of more than 5 but fewer than 17 students: 2/3 of normal workload hours for the same course in a face-to-face format, regardless of whether or not the instructor teaches the same course face-to-face.
- For classes of 17 or more students: the equivalent to the same course offered face-to-face.

	Rate E
April-01-14	341.70
April-01-15	345.12
April-01-16	346.85
February-01-17	350.32
April-01-17	352.07
February-01-18	355.59
April-01-18	357.37
February-01-19	360.94

Also, both non-regular and regular faculty in the following job categories have salary structures that are a fraction of paid hour:

- Clinicals: .76
- Laboratories: .70
- Practicum, Preceptorship Field Placement: .46
- Seminars: .50
- Music-ensemble: .70
- Music-individual instruction: .59

The SCFA would like the discussion of secondary scales to include these types of reductions.



**Victor presenting at the FPSE Secondary Scales Conference**

The new language for regularization removed some barriers towards regularization. For example, several of our members had been doing replacement work for many years and with the new language they were immediately regularized. What was less clear is how new, non-regular members would be affected by it. So, we are closely monitoring whether non-regulars are gaining regularization more rapidly and fairly than in the past.

Eligibility for regularization is the following:

- a) A short-term employee must have worked two consecutive academic years immediately preceding

regularization with an annual workload of fifty percent or greater, and

- b) There is a reasonable expectation of ongoing employment for which the faculty member is deemed qualified, at a workload of fifty percent or greater, and
- c) The evaluations, if any, of the faculty member during the two consecutive academic years immediately preceding regularization have all been deemed satisfactory.

It remains to be seen whether or not the fifty-percent workload requirement will end up being a significant barrier towards regularization.

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## PENSIONS NEWS

**John Josafatow**  
Retirement Issues Chair

### **If you are retired or soon to be retired-**

One issue for retired members has been the cost effectiveness of the current extended health plan. A joint review was done by the board of trustees in the hope of finding the best value plan.

**Change from Pacific Blue Cross to Green Shield Canada –** Retired members of College Pension Plan, Public Services and Teacher’s pension plan will receive extended health and dental coverage through Green Shield Canada effective April 1, 2017.

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## NON-REGULAR FACULTY AND PRECARIOUS WORKING CONDITIONS

**Leesa Dean**  
Non-Regular Faculty Rep

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, I attended my first Non-Regular Faculty meeting in Vancouver. I have been teaching in the college system for four years now and have always been a non-regularized employee, so I joined this committee in order to share my previous experiences with precarious working conditions and gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by member organizations across British Columbia, including our own college.

The general trend right now in the post-secondary sector is an increase in short-term/sessional positions since many

colleges have secondary pay scales that result in sessional instructors being “cheaper” than full-time, regularized instructors. These cost savings manifest in different ways: at many institutions, non-regularized staff is not given access to PD funds and/or benefits and at others, contract faculty is actually paid a significantly lower salary for their teaching time. Management will often capitalize on cost savings by finding ways to circumnavigate regularization language (for example, giving contracts for a few semesters and then offering no work so those instructors will have to start accumulating consecutive service from the beginning). In other cases, colleges do not even *have* regularization language to protect employees.



It should be noted that Selkirk College *does* have regularization language to protect employees, but as mentioned in the December 2016 issue of *On Stream*, that language changed in the last collective agreement, which may make it difficult for certain employees to become regularized (contracts for workloads of less than 50% do not count towards regularization). Fortunately, Selkirk College does *not* have a lesser pay scale for non-regularized employees.

In an effort to raise awareness of precarious working conditions, FPSE created a website, <http://www.precariousprofsbc.ca>. The site includes testimonials from non-regular faculty who have faced job insecurities, but more are needed. Consider sharing your story if you are currently a non-regularized employee or have been in the past. There is also a petition to support the notion of “same work, same rights” —by signing the

petition, you are showing that you believe equal pay should be given for equal work. Please visit the site.

Another initiative that is currently underway is the *Precarious Academic Labour in the Age of Neoliberalism* conference, to be hosted by Okanagan College May 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> 2017. The conference will explore many facets of precarious labour through the lens of corporatization and managerialism in an attempt to find sustainable solutions to the growing issue of precarious academic labour (PAL).

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Jason DaCosta**  
Health and Safety Rep

Thank you for being safe at the workplace. If you do have concerns about your physical or psychological safety do bring them to my attention.

The focus of this year’s Workplace, Health, Safety and Environment Committee was psychological safety. The major concerns raised were email interference in work-life balance and violence in the workplace. Due to these concerns, two surveys have been created and will be distributed to you hopefully sometime in April. Do keep an eye out for these and fill them out. The surveys will provide us with data to determine if there is an issue and help determine how we can address it.



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**Your president and VP along with Gabrielle Feludi from the SCSU in Grand Forks promoting the Open the Doors Campaign**

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## DISABILITY MANAGEMENT REHAB COMMITTEE

**Sally Glock**  
DMRC Rep

The DMRC is made up of three members: SCFA members Sally Glock, Trish Foy and Michele Lauren from Human Resources. This committee functions well as a team that is supportive and collaborative in nature. Its purpose is to help support and educate members with the process of making an application for a sick leave claim, going on a claim, and getting back to work. There are two levels of claims: Short Term Disability and Long Term Disability. Our committee meets every six weeks to get updated on current and new claims and discuss how we may be of support to our members.

### Our Involvement with the FPSE

Our DMRC is supported by our Federation of Post Secondary Educators. We are on a list serve of all the DMRC committees in the Federation and can call on them for support (or just points of view) as needed. We meet together twice a year to discuss common issues.

### SCFA members who needs sick leave

If you feel that you may need to be off sick longer than the 3-4 days permitted by the college, the first steps are to speak to your Chair and see your disability rep. This begins the process. This is all that you have to do at this stage.

You do not have any obligation to disclose the nature of your situation to anyone at the college and no one can legitimately ask you this.

If you have any questions please contact either Sally Glock [sglock@selkirk.ca](mailto:sglock@selkirk.ca) or Trish Foy [tfoy@selkirk.ca](mailto:tfoy@selkirk.ca)

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## OUR PD FUNDS IN ACTION

**Rebecca Jacobson**  
Professional Development Committee Chair

As you may know, every year part of our PD funds go to supporting one member to take an Assisted Leave. If you'd like more information on how this works, I'm

always happy to help. For the 2016-2017 year, we sent Rob Macrae to Germany. Here's Rob's update.



### Assisted Leave in Germany

First, I gratefully acknowledge the Selkirk College Faculty Association and the SCFA Professional Development Committee for their support of our outstanding professional development program.

I am presently on a PD assisted leave. That means that for my leave, I receive 75% of my salary and 100% of my benefits.

I'm teaching at Brandenburg Technical University, in Cottbus, Germany, in the Environmental and Resources Management BSc program.

In addition to teaching, I'm a student taking German as a Foreign Language. Some of my classmates are my students in the course I teach. I have far more appreciation for ESL instructors.

I teach Environmental Techniques I, which I was invited to develop. I have a class of 34 students, approximately half of whom are German. The rest are from other European countries, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Nigeria, Chile, Hong Kong, Korea, India, and Australia.

Originally, when I discussed teaching at BTU with the ERM Chair, I was given the freedom to teach whatever I felt to be relevant with the request that I focus on applied environmental skills and renewable energy. With that in mind, I developed curriculum based on what I teach at

Selkirk College.

ERM students love being outside so I've focused on field labs and excursions. Cottbus is in the centre of a soft coal (lignite) mining region. Lignite mining and thermal power are two major employers. They also have major adverse environmental effects.

In addition to taking my students to lignite mines and a huge thermal coal power plant, we've visited villages that have installed renewable energy systems that power the whole community at a fraction of the cost of fossil fuel. These communities generate a surplus they sell to the grid. They use advanced technologies: third generation wind energy, biomass, biogas, and solar photo-voltaic energy. It's an interesting contrast to Canada's pipelines, Tar Sands, and fracked gas.

Being in central Europe has allowed me to travel. I've gone hiking in the Saxony Alps. I've made many short excursions by bicycle on a vast network of trails dedicated for bicycles. For longer trips, to Dresden, Leipzig, Prague, Krakow, and most recently Görlitz, Bautzen and Bad Muskau, I took the train and my bicycle. I've really enjoyed exploring central Europe.

BTU and Selkirk share similar missions, but the execution of the missions differs.



It's worth seeing how similar problems are addressed differently. This leave has allowed me to develop my teaching skills, assess what I teach, acquire new knowledge, develop new curriculum, meet people, and travel. I'm certain I will return to Selkirk with fresh perspectives and with a better understanding of what I share in the classroom. There are opportunities for further exchanges between students and faculty from

both institutions. If you'd like more information, please contact me.

## JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

The SCFA has a closed (private) Facebook page and we'd love to get you in the loop. Send a quick email to Duff or Rebecca to join!