



- Massage Chair and Other Castlegar Campus Secrets
- Words From the President: Protecting Academic Freedom
- What's New from your Standing Committees? Pension and Non-Regular
- New Employee Spotlight: Laura Kristian and Jonathan Ramos
- Social and Civic Engagement: Lunch Club and Coldest Night of the Year
- The Final Word: Cartoons and Announcements

Your Monthly Newsletter from the SCFA

ON STREAM

BOOTCAMP? MASSAGE CHAIR? WELLNESS ACTIVITIES ON CASTLEGAR CAMPUS



TAKE A BREAK

Are you aware that we have a Wellness Room on the Castlegar Campus? In that room, meditation mats are available as well as a fancy massage chair. Check it out in **room 0-120** next time you need a break.

GET FIT WITH COLLEAGUES

Did you know that every Tuesday from 11:15-12 PM, there is a "staff bootcamp" class at the gym? Don't let the name scare you away; it is a beginner to intermediate level circuit training class. Give it a try!

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!

The 2024 FPSE AGM is being held May 13-16th at the Sheraton Guilford in Surrey. This is an election year, and there are several locals that are eager for some change in leadership. Our union has four voting delegates who attend the conference; we make it a priority to have one of those delegates be someone who has never attended. If you're interested, we recommend you attend the SCFA Spring General Meeting on March 14th and our local AGM on May 2nd to learn more.

On a more negative note, a few days ago Langara College instructor Dr. Natalie Knight was fired because she exercised freedom of expression and academic freedom (for more information see: <https://fpse.ca/news/fpse-news/fpse-lfa-statement-240126>). David Robinson, Executive director of Canadian Association of University Teachers, provides us with a brief history of how vulnerable "expressive freedoms" are during periods of conflict. History does show that paradoxically, the voices of academics are needed more than ever during times of conflict, but people are unjustly fired or blacklisted or worse for speaking out.

You can read Robinson's full article here:

<https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2023/12/executive-directors-corner-academic-freedom-times-conflict>).

In solidarity,

Victor Villa
SCFA President

FPSE Non-Regular Faculty Committee Report by Renee Harper

I recently attended the NRFC meeting in Vancouver on Jan. 12-13. Here are some key points:

Bargaining gains and the next round:

I was able to report some happy news from our local regarding our recent round of bargaining. Many thanks to Jonathan Vanderhoek for all of this information and the precise breakdowns. As a result of our last round of bargaining, one meaningful gain for non-regular employees has been the establishment of 4% in lieu of benefits for anyone who doesn't qualify for benefits (while some non-regs do get benefits, they are disproportionately more likely not to meet the eligibility requirements). Many locals don't have this language in their collective agreements and are fighting for these provisions for non-regular employees who are often without benefits.

Ability to attend meetings for non-regular faculty:

I was also able to report that as of our last UAS meeting, Selkirk has agreed to provide faculty whose short-term contracts have lapsed (Temporary Employment Contracts) a stipend attending school planning days – in the past, they attended without pay or did not attend at all. Thank you to Takaia who raised this issue in our last UAS meeting. The exclusion of non-regular faculty from key meetings (like planning days) was an issue the NRFC discussed at length, as many locals don't offer provisions or pay for academic service (assigned duties in our case) for non-regular faculty. This can keep non-regular faculty from being included in decision making at all levels.

Short-term contracts:

Another issue we discussed was the rise of very short-term contracts, contracts that are one semester in length and include very little prep time (from 2 to 4 weeks). It's an issue which has been noted at Selkirk and is one we might look at in terms of the next round of bargaining. I'm aware of two faculty members who arrived at Selkirk on short-term (1 semester long) contracts, believing that they would have another contract offered in the winter semester. However, they learned they didn't and needed to leave our institution. I don't have details on these specific situations besides anecdotally but as you can imagine, these kinds of very short-term contracts can adversely impact our members.

Micro-credentials:

The Province is pouring 480 million dollars into establishing a micro-credentials program. Micro-credentials are short-duration, competency-based learning opportunities that align with labour market or community needs and can be assessed and recognized for employment or further learning opportunities.

The NRFC discussed how this new program is being implemented, noting that it varies across institutions. Questions about who would be teaching these micro-credentials and whether the positions would fall under collective agreement protections were raised. Questions about intellectual property were also raised, as instructors at TRU have been asked to develop micro-credentials that can be taught online. Once the course has been developed, there is no guarantee of future work.

Monthly Meetings for Non-Regular Faculty:

The NRFC will hold an informal monthly Zoom drinks hangout to discuss non-regular issues. If you're interested in attending, drop me a line at rharper@selkirk.ca, and I'll send you a link. It's a great way to meet other faculty from across the province who may be dealing with similar challenges.

If you are a non-regular faculty member and have any questions about the Non-Regular Faculty Committee or your rights within the college, drop me a line and I can do my best to answer your questions or find someone who can!

Pension Committee Report by Shannon Shah

Thank you for supporting me in the role of your pension/ retirement SCFA rep. I have enjoyed increased connections with my peers and continue to learn more about our pension plan and how it interacts with strong retirement planning. Here are some key notes from December 2023's pension meeting:

Performance

Period	Actual Return %	Benchmark %	Return Objective %
1 year	6.55	10.58	6.00
5 year	6.70	5.68	6.15
10 year	8.06	7.07	6.25

The one-year underperformance is mainly due to private equity and real estate equity. Note that the 5 and 10 year periods are more important and are doing well.

Current assets under management (AUM): \$7.01 Billion

Cost of Living: The Plan will provide a cost of living adjustment of 4.4% effective January 1, 2024.

Carbon Footprint (Intensity) of BCI's Total Portfolio: The level has dropped to 60 CO²e/\$Million from 91 CO²e/\$Million in 2020.

Strategic Issues

- Investment Beliefs:** The Board has been working to update its investment beliefs. The Board has completed a draft statement and is now reviewing the draft. Once that process is complete, the Board will review the statement with BCI. The Board will also engage with plan partners.
- Expanding Eligible Employee Groups:** The Board is considering the potential impact of opening up enrolment to include support staff. Further consultation will be required.
- Excess Interest Transfer:** The Board is considering changing the rules around excess interest transfers so that such transfers are no longer automatic. This will better balance the priorities of stable contributions and index. The Board will be consulting plan partners on this issue.
- Enrolment Rules:** The Board is also looking at the possibility of adopting a mandatory "day one enrolment rule" or reducing the mandatory enrolment threshold. Again, no changes will occur until the Board has consulted plan partners.
- SFU:** SFU has applied to have English Language instructors and TSSU sessional instructors join the plan.
- PRGB Survey:** The board will be conducting a survey in early 2024 on post retirement group benefits. The Board wants to ensure the plans being provided meet the needs of retirees while remaining affordable. The Board is also interested in increasing participation in the plans. The survey results will guide possible changes.
- PRGB Premiums:** The Board is negotiating new premium rates with Green Shield for the coming year. The Board will have adopted the new rates just prior to PAC (3.5% increase to medical, 9.5% for dental).

Other News:

Vancouver Community College submitted an intent to leave FPSE on June 1. If this happens, current Trustee Alison might need to be replaced.

Please email me at sshah@selkirk.ca if I can be of any help in answering pension related questions or finding resources.

SCFA Member Spotlight: Laura Kristian and Jonathan Ramos



LAURA KRISTIAN

Numbers Whisperer, Adventure Enthusiast, and Life Balancer: While ledgers and financial statements are a second language to recently hired Accounting instructor Laura Kristian, when you look a little closer you'll find a passionate heart that thrives on life's adventures and its simplest joys.

Family First: As a dedicated mom and wife of two small children, her day often begins with the chaos of breakfast messes and daycare runs, but family is her grounding force, providing the perspective and drive needed to excel in her professional life.

Nature's Navigator: Outside of work hours, you'll likely find her with her family somewhere in the mountains navigating the trails on a side by side (S x S), hiking up a mountain, or cutting through waves on a boat. While on maternity leave, she took her 2 year old, 4 month old, two cats and a dog on a 33 day S x S trip in Southern Utah and Oregon. Now *that is* adventurous!

Diverse Expertise: With hands-on experience in both industry and public practice, she is also a community organizer. Thanks to her and the Ootischenia Community Society, a much-needed park with benches and picnic tables is in development just behind the Ootichenia Fire Hall. Nice work, Laura!

Mentor with a Mission: As a business instructor, her goal is to sculpt budding business minds. She believes in not just imparting knowledge but igniting the spark of curiosity, challenging her students to look beyond the textbook and into the real world.

Live. Laugh. Ledger: While she might be an expert in financial matters, her mantra has always been to live life to the fullest, find humor in everyday situations, and yes, keep those ledgers meticulously balanced.

JONATHAN RAMOS

Jonathan Ramos is a mixed multimedia content creator and producer who has been making creative connections in the Nelson area since 2012. Originally from London, Ontario, he graduated from Fanshawe College's Music Industry Arts program in 2009 and spent time in Montreal and Northern Ontario before following the breadcrumbs west. Like many Kootenay artists before him, Jonathan quickly realized that to thrive and survive in this valley, one must continually add new tools to their multidisciplinary Swiss Army knife and contribute to building a community of creative collaborators. He eventually enrolled in Selkirk's Digital Arts program, where he had the opportunity to build the foundation of several meaningful professional relationships that have been pivotal in his career development as an artist, content creator, and educator. As a Selkirk alumnus, Jon looks forward to the opportunity to bring his real-world creative industry experience full circle to help students build their skills and inspire them to carve their own path forward.

In addition to his new role as an instructor with Digital Arts, Jonathan's recent local multimedia collaborations include roles with Watershed Productions, Cilema Productions, Carlo Alcos Productions, Basin Food, and the Oxygen Art Centre. Jon also coordinates marketing and multimedia content development for the Kootenay Co-op, and is excited to be contributing his creative energy to both sides of the camera as an actor, writer, and designer in the Nelson-based sketch comedy series *Southern Interior*, currently in development. Jon looks forward to working with fellow faculty in the Digital Arts program with a vision towards shaping a dynamic curriculum that can meet the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing creative industry.



Membership Engagement Opportunities: Lunch Club and Coldest Night of the Year



Quick Links to Register for Coldest Night of the Year:

Nelson Team:

<https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/TeamFundraisingPage.aspx?teamID=1009218&langPref=en-CA>

Castlegar Team:

<https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/TeamFundraisingPage.aspx?teamID=1009206&langPref=en-CA>

Trail Team:

<https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/TeamFundraisingPage.aspx?teamID=1009420&langPref=en-CA>

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

Coldest Night of the Year takes place on Saturday, Feb. 24 this year. If you aren't able to walk with a team, consider **making a donation** to one of the Selkirk teams.

In the past, SCFA has had its own CNOY team, but this year, Healthy Campus decided to centralize and plan three Selkirk Employees Teams by geographical location. Katie Comrie (SCFA member) will be Captaining the Castlegar Team, Marissa Carrasco is heading the Team in Trail, and Andrew Jupp is the Nelson Team Captain. We would like to have **SCFA representatives** in Nelson, Castlegar and Trail. Some of us are already registered for Nelson and Castlegar! Need an SCFA toque for the walk? We've got you covered. This event is a great opportunity to make a difference in our communities. See the links above to register or donate.

UPCOMING LUNCH CLUBS: FEBRUARY 8TH AND 22ND

Did you miss the inaugural lunch club on January 25th? Fear not; you can catch the next one! Lunch Club is an opportunity to connect with other SCFA members and meet people who work outside of your department. Lunch Club is **every second Thursday** from **12-1 PM** in the Staff Lounge. See you there!



THE FINAL WORD: CARTOONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Consider this your official invitation to attend our two upcoming SCFA meetings:

- Thursday, March 14th, 4-6 PM:
Spring General Meeting
- Thursday, May 2nd, 4-6 PM:
Annual General Meeting

We are always interested in meeting new members and gaining wider perspectives on workplace realities across campuses and disciplines. **We encourage in-person attendance** (come for the food and good company) but will have a hybrid option.

- Reminder: your VP for Membership Engagement (Leesa Dean) has drop in hours every Tuesday from 10-11 AM. Come say hi, ask questions, and get an SCFA toque. We have pens, too!
- If you would like a toque delivered to a different campus, ask Leesa Dean (ldean@selkirk.ca) to have one sent via interoffice mail.
- On Stream is always on the lookout for **submissions** relevant to our work, professional development, interests and well-being. Send your ideas at the beginning of each month to ldean@selkirk.ca.

LOOK FOR MORE SCFA NEWS IN FEBRUARY'S ON STREAM!