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Your Monthly Newsletter from the SCFA

ON STREAM

STANDING COMMITTEE VACANCIES: AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE



Above: FPSE reps at a recent AGM.

Are you interested in union work? Do you want to get more involved? Some standing committee positions will need to be filled at the AGM on May 2nd:

- Women and Gender Equity (2 positions)
- Non-Regular (should be filled by someone who is not yet regularized)
- Health & Safety: rep needed in Nelson

Standing committees meet at least twice a year. Most committees meet face to face in Vancouver in the fall and spring whereas others meet once in Vancouver and once or more online. For more information about these positions, you can contact anyone on the executive or consult FPSE's website: <https://fpse.ca/committees>

WORDS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

It has been a great privilege to have served our union for many years. My first role in the SCFA executive was when I volunteered to serve as the Board Observer in 2008. After 3 years as President, I am encouraging others to become more involved in the functioning of our union. Several positions in the executive are up for re-election (VP Contracts, Board Observer, VP Member Engagement, and Secretary). With regret, I will not seek re-election. If one of these positions is not yet how you would like to contribute to our union then perhaps you will volunteer to be on the nominations committee or serve on a standing committee. I have enjoyed serving in several positions of our union as well as on standing committees, but with retirement on my mind, it is a good time to let others take on this work.

At the beginning of this year, I (we) received the following note from James Haydon-Devlin:

Dear Victor and everyone at Selkirk College Faculty Association, I'm very grateful to have received an SCFA scholarship prior starting my second year at Selkirk College. I got news while I was living in camp while firefighting in Northwest BC. I've been paying down my credit card and saving money for my second year all summer and that I would have less tuition to cover was a joy at the end of a long day at the fire line.

I took my schooling very seriously last year and it feels good to see my hard-earned grades being rewarded. I'm grateful to all those who have decided to incentivize academic achievement and look forward to getting back to school with a running start!

In solidarity,

Victor Villa
SCFA President

WHAT'S NEW FROM YOUR STANDING COMMITTEES? PENSION REPORT

Pension Report PAC March 2024

Thank you for supporting me in my role as your pension/ retirement SCFA representative. 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.

Updates on our Pension:

With this report, I have also submitted the **FPSE trustee report** from the March 8-9 meeting in Vancouver. It will be sent as a separate attachment.

Figures as of December 31st, 2023:

Assets under management (AUM):	\$7.31 billion
1 year return:	6.9% against benchmark of 11.99%
5 year return:	7.9% against benchmark of 7.70%
10 year return:	7.82% against benchmark of 7.71%

While we had a lower 1 year return with a 6.9%, the plan is considered one of the best and an amazing part of our benefits at Selkirk. It is important to note that on retirement, the benefit package from Manulife closes and retirees have 45 days to secure new plans if they wish to continue having a health insurance plan. Both the trustees and the retirement association are working to collect data and ensure the best possible plan and better understand the new federal benefits. The association is offering free membership for the first year following retirement. This is a great way to understand the resources and the current pension plan details as the Chair reports to PAC and sits at the table for all the reports regarding the pension plan.

During the PAC meeting, three candidates for Allison's position as Trustee were interviewed and the new trustee recommendation will be sent to Presidents' Council and should be confirmed at the AGM.

Please reach out if I can be of any help in answering questions or finding the best resources.

Shannon Shah sshah@selkirk.ca

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: HEATHER AUSTIN AND TANMAY DESHPANDE



TANMAY DESHPANDE

Tanmay Deshpande has been with Selkirk College since December 2021. Originally from Mumbai, India, he began his career as a college instructor before moving to Vancouver to pursue a master's in Mathematics at Simon Fraser University. His research at SFU involved exploring the theoretical aspects of mathematical optimization.

Having written a lot of code for his mathematical experiments, he transitioned to writing software after graduation. He has held software development roles at various Vancouver-based companies. However, cubicle life was never his forte, so he started looking for opportunities elsewhere before finally deciding to open his own meal-prep business. This taught him a lot about running a business in general and the food industry in particular. After a couple of years, he returned to the industry as a web developer in data engineering and analytics with a particular focus on marketing data.

After spending all his life in big cities, he decided to move to the Kootenays. He found employment with the Advanced Computing department of Selkirk Innovates. In his first term, he guided summer interns with their software projects. This experience, combined with the connections made at the college, prompted him to return to teaching. He joined the University Arts and Sciences and Academic upgrading departments at Selkirk College, teaching all the computer science courses and a few math courses. He has been able to use all his experience in the industry to provide real-world examples to his students.

Outside of work, he runs an informal tech volunteering program that helps local non-profit organizations with their tech needs. In particular, he helps out with data management and website updates. His work with the "Central Kootenays Invasive Species Society" was appreciated with a 2022 Volunteer of the Year Award.

The Kootenays have welcomed Tanmay, his wife Pallavi and their dog Frodo with open arms. On their days off, they can be found hiking, snowshoeing, running, and enjoying all the mountains offer.

HEATHER AUSTIN



Heather was born in Newfoundland but has been drawn to B.C. more than once for its rivalling splendour. Invested heart heavily in social justice and environmentalism, she/they are passionate about the healing power of egalitarianism.

A fellow of the School of Graduate Studies (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sociology), Heather's thesis work examined the self-produced social media discourse of Canadian sex workers, advocates, and allies that countered harmful narratives of sex work through the COVID-19 crisis: <https://t.ly/lD1nQ>. After graduating, she/they proudly worked in the community sector for the St. John's Status of Women Council - Specifically, as Outreach & Advocacy Organizer for the Safe Harbour Outreach Project. This position involved advocating for the rights of sex workers in St. John's. SHOP operates out of a confidentially located harm reduction drop-in centre.

Heather is a film and music fanatic. She spends spare time blasting records, and she strives to find movement and connection in nature.

Delighted to be a part of the Selkirk community, Heather values critical thinking and open, honest conversation in educational spaces.

THE FINAL WORD: MEMBER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMBER NEWS:

- Digital Arts instructor **Nichola Lytle** has great news about a book she illustrated titled *The Heart of a River* (written by Eileen Delehanty Pearkes): it has been picked up by Rocky Mountain Books for a third print run! Copies can be preordered on Amazon: https://www.amazon.ca/Heart-River-Eileen-Delehanty-Pearkes/dp/1771607009/ref=sr_1_2?qid=1706936044&refinements=p_27%3AEileen+Delehanty+Pearkes&s=books&sr=1-2
- **Raoul Kemper**, math and physics instructor, recently welcomed baby Atticus Ramsey Heckley Kemper into the world. Congratulations on becoming a father!
- **Dr. Todd Kettner**, psychology instructor, co-wrote this great article about intersections of climate and health as part of his work with Doctors and Nurses for Planetary Health: <https://cpa.ca/psychology-month-social-connection-trust-and-the-intersection-of-climate-and-health/>
- **Yann Troutet** (geomatics and Outdoor Recreation Management instructor) recently appeared in a documentary on the CBC's *The Nature of Things* ([The Nature of Things | Shows | CBC Gem](#)). He has also created a "Story Map" to help raise the profile of the Magpie River located in Northern Quebec. For more information, have a look at Yann's story map: <https://selkirk.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f281ccbb86e845d5bc1c10ec07c0b4b3>

UPCOMING SCFA EVENTS:

- Lunch Club
2nd and 4th Thursday in April (11th and 25th)
Noon-1 PM in the Staff Lounge
- Annual General Meeting
Thursday, May 2nd, 4-6 PM: SEN-219 or online
- 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. There will be elections for numerous positions, so be sure to come and make your vote count!
- Do you have any member news to share? Email it to idean@selkirk.ca and we'll include it in the next issue of On Stream!

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