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Your Monthly Newsletter from the SCFA

ON STREAM

THE AGM CREW:

**PABLO, SHANNON, ERIN, ELIZABETH AND
TAKAIA**



Pablo Pastor (HRISC representative), Shannon Shaw (Pension), Erin Rodier (Non-Regular), Elizabeth Ferguson (DRISC) and Takaia Larsen (President) were this year's delegates at the Federation of Post Secondary's Annual General Meeting this month May 13-16th in Surrey, BC.

Testimonials from some of this year's delegates are included in this month's issue as well a copy of resolution 2324-75 which calls upon FPSE locals to divest in companies complicit in the violence and occupation in Gaza and West Bank and to support freedom of speech for students and faculty involved in related protests.

SCFA AGM ELECTION RESULTS: THANKS FOR STEPPING UP!

The AGM on May 2nd was a busy one that resulted in a number of new appointments to executive and committee roles. We would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting and to the members who stepped in to fill vacant positions. Here is a list of newly elected and re-appointed members:

- President (for 2 years) – Takaia Larsen
- VP Negotiations (for 2 years) – Jonathan Vanderhoek
- Retirement Issues Officer (for 2 years) – Shannon Shah
- Treasurer (for 2 years) – Kim Verigin
- Secretary (for 1 year) – Pablo Pastor
- Women and Gender Equity – Teresa Southam & Marla Gonzalez Palencia
- Non-Regular Rep – Erin Rodier
- Climate Action Committee – Lauren Rethoret
- SCOPE (2 reps) – Paula Vaananen & Janet Mayr
- PD Committee
- Alysha Baker and Coby Vandergaast will stand again
- Newly elected: Dylan Sargent and Josh Massey
- Financial Audit Committee – Allison Lutz, Ellen Strelaeff, Coby Vandergaast

TAKAIA LARSEN: A WEEK OF LEARNING AND CONNECTING

I recently had the privilege to attend my first FPSE AGM and represent you as the President of the SCFA. I was grateful to be in attendance along with 4 of our SCFA members, Elizabeth Ferguson (Decolonization, Reconciliation and Indigenization Standing Committee - DRSIC rep), Pablo Pastor (Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee - HRISC rep and newly elected SCFA Secretary), Shannon Shah (Pension Advisory Committee – PAC rep), and Erin Rodier (Non-Regular Standing Committee rep) at the 4-day AGM in Surrey, BC. A special thanks to our delegates for their time and dedication to serving the SCFA at this important event.

The busy week was filled with lots of learning and making connections with other locals in the Federation. The keynote speaker was Dr. Larry Savage, an expert on Labour Organizing and Labour Studies from Brock University. His keynote address, entitled “Bargaining 101” emphasized the importance of organizing and engaging your membership throughout the bargaining process. I also attended a bargaining workshop he facilitated that week which presented practical strategies and advice on how to better organize your membership and increase engagement. I am excited to work with your SCFA Executive to implement some of these ideas here in the SCFA as we prepare for our next round of bargaining in 2025!

Beyond providing workshops on a variety of labour related topics, the FPSE AGM brings together representatives from all 19 member locals who collectively represent over 10,000 post-secondary educators in B.C. If you have not had the chance to attend this event, we will be selecting the 2025 delegates at our Spring 2025 AGM. I had never gone before and I learned so much about the work of the Federation and the strength of collective action through my experiences there. I came away inspired about my new role in the SCFA and filled with new ideas about how to increase the strength of our own local and how to engage our members. I was also proud to represent the SCFA at this event. Our local has a long-standing tradition of active engagement at FPSE and our outgoing President, Victor Villa was thanked for his many years of service, along with Linda Harwood, the outgoing Chair of the Academic Governance Standing Committee. I also wanted to recognize what an important role our own Elizabeth Ferguson has played, and continues to play, at the provincial level. Elizabeth was constantly surrounded by folks who sought her out for advice, consultation, and of course, hugs throughout the week. I have always valued Elizabeth as a colleague and mentor here at Selkirk, but I learned that her sphere of influence is much wider than our Kootenay valleys. I want to particularly recognize her ongoing work on the DRISC Committee and here in the SCFA – we are very privileged to have her among us.

One of the key items of business at the FPSE AGM was the election of the FPSE Executive. These elections were quite exciting and some of the races were very tight. The new FPSE Executive consists of:

President – Brent Calvert (re-elected)
Secretary-Treasurer - Sean Parkinson (re-elected)
VP 1 – Jasmine Nicholsfigueiredo (newly elected)
VP 2 – Pauline Greaves (newly elected)

The position of Executive Director of FPSE continues to be filled by Michael Conlon. Over the coming year, I will be working with these folks, representing our local at the Federation and want to be sure to represent the interests of our members as best I can. I encourage you to reach out and ask me any questions you might have about our membership in FPSE, the work going on at the FPSE level, or more importantly, to help me better understand the issues that matter to you as an SCFA member. My office is in SEN 204 and my email is PresidentSCFA@selkirk.ca. I want to hear from you so that I can direct my work and energies toward collective action that will serve us all well today and in the future.

In solidarity,

Takaia

ERIN RODIER AND SHANNON SHAH: NON-REGULAR RIGHTS AND PENSION

ERIN RODIER:

As a new instructor at Selkirk and a new union committee member representing non-regularized members, I was honored that our union chose to send me as an observer to the FPSE AGM. As a non-regularized member, the opportunities to attend union meetings & conferences, especially out of town, are often not possible. SCFA understood the importance of all members being represented and chose to sponsor my attendance.

As this was my first large union & federation event, I was not sure what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised at the comradery and open nature of everyone. Our team of delegates were inviting and ready to answer all of my many questions. The other locals were friendly and approachable as well. I learned so much about our federation and our union's values during the AGM. By attending, I was able to understand not only how the policies & voting within the federation works but also valuable information on what the SCFA and FPSE provide for us.

The AGM also included information and workshops on member engagement, collective bargaining, digital learning resources, decolonization & racism, academic freedom, and conflict resolution. I especially found the workshop titled Resistance & Rights: Dismantling Indigenous-Specific Racism and Decolonization in Post-Secondary Institutions by Marcia Turner & Cheryl Stone very informative. This workshop was an overview of the project and resources that were approved at the last AGM. Over the past year, DRISC completed the RFP process and selected Daxgedim Haanak Nation Building for the project, which addresses anti-racism in the post-secondary context through an Indigenous lens.

The biggest take away from this experience for me was the importance of connecting with and providing representation for non-regularized members and minority members. By having the privilege to attend the FPSE AGM, I now feel more connected and supported within the SCFA. I would like to help improve connection, engagement & access for all members, especially non-regular members.

I am excited to connect with you all, get more involved and help support the SCFA as your non-regularized rep!

SHANNON SHAH:

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the FPSE AGM in May. It is always a wonderful opportunity to meet with other educators and explore shared experiences. One of our greatest treasures is our pension plan and it is good to hear how much it is valued and that its continued success and management will ensure that all retirees are able to have a quality retirement.

I attended a pension workshop hosted by BCI, our account managers. I learned that BCI has a retirement expert that is designated to handling complex retirement situations and giving advice on how pension funds should be divided in situations such as a divorced spouse. My big a-ha was how the pension plan calculates your pension based on your best 5 years. I encourage everyone to ask the questions to determine what best impacts your pension. Interestingly, a workload increase or decrease towards the end of your career may not make much difference.

There are continued conversations around post-retirement health and dental benefits and a strong voice from the retiree association CPPR - <https://www.cppr.ca/>. All Selkirk retirees are invited to join with the first year of dues being waived. Membership comes with great information and benefits.

Please reach out with any questions and I will do my best to help you figure out your options.

Happy Summer,
Shannon Shah sshah@selkirk.ca

ELIZABETH FERGUSON: DECOLONIZATION, RECONCILIATION AND INDIGENIZATION

Way Colleagues,

I was fortunate enough to attend the FPSE AGM in Surrey BC this past May. I represented Selkirk College as a committee member of the *Decolonization, Reconciliation & Indigenization Standing Committee*. Our committee's vision is to acknowledge the collective and inherent rights of self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. We honour and respect the human dignity, cultural identity, and ways of knowing of Indigenous Peoples and communities in learning, teaching, and research environments. We walk together with all our relations for present and future generations. We aim to build a foundation of mutual respect and balance between different ways of knowing and understanding. Our aim is for people of every background and experience to create a positive future together. In a humble way, DRISC will provide guidance and support to the FPSE President, the Presidents' Council, and FPSE membership. DRISC will respect the protocols of the territories in which each of our locals engage and will uplift, honour, and integrate diverse Indigenous ways of knowing and being (FPSE website).

It has been my pleasure to serve on this committee for the past five years. We have hosted workshops for the membership in efforts to educate and enlighten folks in Indigenous ways of being and doing. This year, however, has been my favorite. The DRISC committee hosted a workshop to introduce an anti-racism and Indigenization PowerPoint that will eventually be distributed to all locals. This has been in the works for a couple of years and it was wonderful to see some progress being made. Although it may take some time yet for the final project to manifest, when it is done, it is our hope to educate and guide all our locals in the reduction of racism and to promote a deeper understanding of Indigenous protocol.

We also hosted a giveaway. This giveaway was meant to honour and give thanks to the FPSE membership for all their support in ensuring our initiatives were at the forefront and that we had the resources to complete our tasks. All the gifts were set on a table and participants were invited to come and choose what they would like. We gave away indigenous blankets, stickers, tea, and various books. DRISC members shook everyone's hand, and there was lots of hugs and laughter. It was a great way to connect with each person and was the most fun!

We also had work to do. Our table collaborated with each other with all the different resolutions, guiding each other in the processes and engaging in hearty discussions during caucus. We did not always vote the same way; however, we engaged in respectful discussion and had each other's backs. It was also a pleasure to get to know Takaia, Shannon, Erin, and Pablo in a deeper way. All in all, it was a great AGM. I made some new friends, supported new important resolutions and reinforced old and new connections. The work continues, and I can assure you that everyone is dedicated and committed to providing the best vision for all. It is truly a privilege to be a part of it all.

In Solidarity,
Mahsi Cho

Elizabeth Ferguson

PABLO PASTOR: HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Earlier this month, I attended the FPSE AGM for the first time ever. I always wondered how an organization with 10,000 members—all with varying perspectives—is able to democratically make decisions, and witnessing this first hand reaffirmed the power of union organizing.

FPSE Leadership identified some important topics to address, such as the potential benefits and risks of artificial intelligence and microcredentials. There was also discussion of the NDP government's use of mandates and how this affects bargaining. The keynote speaker gave an excellent presentation on strategic bargaining and posed this question for members to ponder: *"What are the issues that you would strike for?"*

I should mention that not all FPSE locals and members are happy with the status quo of the Federation and its leadership, notably with the departure of Vancouver Community College from the Federation. This led to more contested elections than had previously anticipated as last-minute candidates were nominated. Although it is evident that the Federation has some work to do to address some of the diverse concerns of Locals, the AGM concluded with a overall feeling of solidarity.

We had presentations by Susanne Skidmore of the BC Federation of Labour and David Robinson of the Canadian Association of University Teachers on topics such as collegial governance, academic freedom, academic integrity, and institutional autonomy.

At the evening banquet ceremony, Victor Villa and Linda Harwood were both acknowledged for their service on President's Council and Academic Governance Committee respectively and both received applause from the room.

Lastly, there was a very strong resolution put forward by Local 02, Thompson Rivers University, in solidarity with students, staff, and faculty engaged in Palestinian solidarity protests on campuses across the province and defending academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. Furthermore, the resolution calls on FPSE, member locals, and locals' institutions to disclose and divest from investments in companies complicit in the violence occurring in Gaza and the West Bank. The resolution was passed virtually unanimously.

McGill University and Picket Lines during Congress 2024:

If any of you plan to attend the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences Congress 2024 at McGill University this June 12th to 21st, the Canadian Association of University Teachers requests that you please not cross any picket lines in solidarity with the McGill law professors' strike.

In solidarity,

Pablo Pastor

DIVESTMENT RESOLUTION, PASSED AT THE FPSE AGM ON MAY 16TH:



Resolution 2324-75

Mover: Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association (Local 2)

Seconder: Camosun College Faculty Association (Local 12)

Type: Non-monetary – late

AGM outcome: Carried Defeated Other

Whereas FPSE stands for academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly,

Whereas students at Thompson Rivers University successfully negotiated the University's disclosure of and potential divestment from any and all companies complicit in the violence, occupation, and dispossession occurring in Gaza and the West Bank,

And whereas post-secondary students nationally and globally are experiencing arrest and vilification by their administrations for their involvement in peaceful protest and assembly,

Be it resolved that FPSE shall disclose and divest from any and all investments, direct and indirect, in companies that are complicit in the violence, occupation, and dispossession occurring in Gaza and the West Bank against the Palestinian people,

And be it further resolved that FPSE shall call upon member locals and their respective institutions to

- Disclose and divest from any and all investments, direct and indirect, in companies that are complicit in the violence, occupation, and dispossession occurring in Gaza and the West Bank against the Palestinian people; and
- Advocate for the support and protection of the academic freedom and freedom of expression for all post-secondary students, staff, and faculty who demonstrate against Israel's military campaign of ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the complicity of Canadian institutions in Israel's colonial violence.

Open Letter in Support of Students Protesting for Palestine

We are faculty members, staff, and retirees of Selkirk College who are deeply concerned about the ongoing catastrophic violence in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). We are writing this open letter to express our support for students everywhere who are protesting Israel's military offensive and oppression of Palestinians, and to add our voices to the students' calls for institutional divestment from companies that are profiting from this war, which has been deemed a "plausible genocide" by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

We believe that students have a right to protest peacefully and in safety, without repression or reprisals. These rights derive from our constitutionally protected freedoms of conscience, thought, speech, assembly, association and expression. They are also in keeping with the goals of post-secondary education to promote the free exploration of ideas and encourage the development of engaged citizens in a healthy democracy. If campuses are not safe places for these freedoms to be exercised and respected, then where do such freedoms exist?

We also believe that the vast majority of the students organizing and participating in these protests are doing so in the long and respected tradition of nonviolence: practicing nonviolent discipline, opposing racism and bigotry of all kinds, and welcoming all those who share these values. In light of the many Jewish students, faculty and staff participating in these protests, we reject the notion that displays of solidarity with Palestinians are inherently anti-Semitic. We oppose anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Palestinian racism equally.

We support the students' calls for divestment for several reasons. First, we are horrified by the violence of war and the colonial subjugation of Indigenous peoples. If we are serious about decolonization, we must ensure that our investments do not contribute to the dispossession and displacement of Palestinians from their homelands. Second, because post-secondary institutions have a fiduciary obligation to act in the best interests of students, we believe that our investments should be guided not only by concern for financial returns but by a desire to help build a better world – one of peace, justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, freedom, security, human rights, and opportunity for all. Third, we believe it is important to act in ways consistent with the lessons we teach and our college's stated commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, including #16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions - promoting peaceful societies and justice for all. Finally, we note that on May 16, delegates at the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators AGM overwhelmingly supported a resolution supporting protesting students and calling on all faculty associations in BC to advocate for divestment.

College and university students have always been on the forefront of movements for peace and justice. Too often, older generations have stayed silent or become complicit in abuses of power, while youth have been derided for their idealism (though often lauded for it later). Too often, we have let students take the risks and do the heavy political lifting without our support, leading many young people to feel profoundly disappointed, cynical, and betrayed by the adults who purport to teach them. In writing this letter, we affirm our professional responsibilities to keep all students safe, to practice what we teach, to model integrity, and use our privilege to work in solidarity with them to help shape the world we share to make it more peaceful and just.

To sign this letter, click here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfptZIZVi2Mc4RQ508sSIAEv_qPygfJa7S2UN9bGI5ehzihPw/viewform

AMY BOHIGIAN: SOUTHERN INTERIOR



I've spent the last couple years developing a show based in Nelson called *Southern Interior*. It's a sketch comedy series that satirizes and celebrates our eclectic community. There's no other comparable town on the planet – with this many types of people living side by side. We don't just co-exist. We sing and dance together, we raise money for each other in tough times and we protest – everything from backyard chickens to drag story time. While the rest of the world is waiting for the apocalypse, we are still working to create our own form of utopia. *Southern Interior* is a sketch comedy series about "the last earnest place on earth."

We are proud to have 100% of our cast and crew from the local area. The feature ensemble consists of Lucas Myers, Michelle Hart, Jon Ramos and Lynne Karey-McKenna with Producer Gregory Mackenzie. It amps up the investment in the work when we are making a series about a place we all call home. We all have skin the game and are eager to share what we're capable of in the wild interior of British Columbia. Also, the show reflects the world we inhabit. We can bring empathy and humour to these local archetypes we are playing with, as these are our neighbours, our friends and even ourselves!

Sketches will take place where people work, live and play. Locations include the local ski hill, City Hall, Baker Street, Heritage Homes, Lakeside Park, The Farmer's Market, Art Studios, Kootenay Coop Grocery among other places. They'll be lots of familiar faces as well given we will need extras for many of our scenes. Stay tuned if you are interested!

Ultimately, I want our viewers to feel like a Nelson local is walking with them down Baker Street, showing them all the magic and quirk that people feel when they first visit. We are also looking directly at some of the frustrations of living in tight proximity with a lot of intense energy. I think it's important and healthy to laugh at ourselves. Humour often shines light in the darker corners, so I describe *Southern Interior* as a kind of court jester to royal court. We want to tell the hard truths from point of view that is from the lesser seen angles of the social landscape here. We also just want to be silly and have fun, as sketch comedy is meant to do.

I've got an amazing crew and cast ready to light up the screen. We go into production this summer and are planning to release six episodes by the end of this year on Shaftesbury's digital platform.

Amy Bohigian is a Digital Arts instructor at Selkirk College and the founder and CEO of Watershed Productions Inc. where the tagline is "Our Stories are Worth Telling." Amy engages communities and organizations to inspire social change as documentary filmmaker and new media artist. She has over twenty years of experience as an educator in a variety of settings and holds her Master's Degree in Education from Harvard University.



Local comedians Lucas Myers (left) and Michelle Hart (right) are both cast members of *Southern Interior*. Michelle Hart offered an improv class two years ago at Selkirk's annual "Discovery Day" PD event and Lucas Myers has been a guest speaker numerous times in creative writing classes. He is also a graduate

THE FINAL WORD: MEMBER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Sarah James** has been chosen to sit on the British Columbia Library Association's (BCLA) Intellectual Freedom Committee. In recent years there has been an increase in the prevalence of calls for censorship, book banning, and widespread distribution of mis/disinformation. The work of protecting intellectual freedoms starts in libraries but extends to our classrooms and communities, and can never be taken for granted. Protecting intellectual freedom will be part of her role on the committee.
- **Rebecca Jacobson** recently published a memoir titled *Prostitute to Professor: A Guide to Radical Transformation*. It recently achieved #1 International Bestseller status in 6 categories on Amazon. Order it here: <https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B0D2SK59VN>
- **Renee Harper's** first book of poetry titled *Boundary Territory* will be published in the fall. *Boundary Territory* finds its locus in British Columbia's sparsely populated interior valleys—on greyhound buses, in motel rooms paid for by social services, and in the unsettled body of its speaker. This collection of poems offers a dual perspective, exploring geographic location from the vantage point of a transient teenager navigating small towns and the immediacy of trauma, as well as that of an adult interrogating the language of academia and examining landscape through the lens of ecocritical theory, situating themselves within geographic and emotional landscapes and a family lineage of failed settlements. With precision and care, the poems of *Boundary Territory* offer meditations on homelessness, trauma and resilience as they find their footing in the sensory details of geographic space. <https://nonpublishing.com/boundary-territory>

UPCOMING SCFA EVENTS:

- **Labour Day Barbecue/Picnic!** This event will take place on Monday, September 2nd at Slokan Pools, centrally located between Nelson and Castlegar. More details will be given closer to the event but save the date! This barbecue/picnic will be for SCFA members and their families.
- Note: **Lunch Club** is now on hiatus until the fall semester. Thanks to everyone who dropped in this winter and spring!

REMINDERS:

- On Stream will be going on hiatus for the summer in July but we are currently looking for submissions for June. Tell us about a current project you're working on, recent PD, or anything else that might be of interest to members. Send your ideas and/or member news by June 10th to idean@selkirk.ca.

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