



# On Stream

Newsletter of the Selkirk College Faculty Association

April 2013

## SCFA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday April 10, 2013

5–7 p.m., Staff Lounge

Castlegar Campus

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### Latest Bargaining News Inside

#### SCFA Special PD Deadline June 1, 2013

PD review dates for Special PD are July 1, October 1, January 15 and April 1. Information and Eligibility criteria for all SFCA PD are found online [here](#).

#### BC Elections – Vote! Tuesday May 14, 2013



## **PONDERINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**David Feldman**  
**President SCFA**

Hello colleagues! It has been a busy and interesting semester and year. We are, we hope, close to reaching an agreement to bring to you for your ratification. We have resumed labour-management meetings which are leading to better communication between the SCFA and management – another, and sometimes a more effective, way for us to advocate on your behalf.

Last year, at this time, we were facing the news of serious cuts to programming and faculty positions. This year we still feel the pain of those cuts (in fact, I believe some of the layoffs resulting from those cuts still lie ahead of us) but thankfully we are not facing any new challenges of that nature this year.

Some of the important issues I see before us as a union:

- (1) to resist any erosion of regularization rights and to improve regularization for some members who are marginalized by the type of work they do;
- (2) to deal with the many inequities created by our arcane workload system;
- (3) to ensure that we have the academic freedom to teach and speak the truth;
- (4) to resist the intrusion of corporate management styles into what has been traditionally and for good reason the domain of academic governance.

This is a challenging agenda – in recent years the momentum is very much the other direction. Nevertheless, we have a duty to do what we can to protect the integrity of our part of the educational system ... not only for ourselves but for teachers and students to come.

On a different, but related, note, we are also facing a Provincial election this year. Post-secondary education and what it will look like is on the table in this election, so, more than ever, I would encourage all members to vote your conscience.

I'm excited because, as a new citizen, this will be my first opportunity to vote in Canada!

Lastly, note that this issue of On Stream is our pre-AGM issue. A number of the reports for the AGM have been included. This will be an especially important meeting as we will be going over some of the details of the bargaining process. Please join us on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> (this Wednesday) at the Castlegar Campus Staff Lounge at 5:00 p.m.

See you there!

David Feldman

# BARGAINING UPDATE AND ANNUAL BARGAINING REPORT

**Doug Henderson**  
**VP Bargaining**

Members:

We have concluded our first week of local bargaining (during the week of March 4–8). I must thank Elizabeth Lund and Zoe Towle (our spokesperson and staff rep from FPSE) and David Feldman for the excellent work they all put in during that week. Most nights we were meeting until at least 8 PM, and on one night we stayed until almost 11 PM.

Special thanks also go to Tracy Punchard and Danielle Cossarini for their help in researching and presenting topics. Instead of the usual summary, I've decided to present the rest of my update in the form of a Q&A based on questions that the executive has received.

*Q. I just heard that we are still bargaining. Didn't we settle back in February?*

A. The settlement that was agreed to in February at the template table was only for salary and a few other related items, and was done to maintain a consistent pay grid across the province.

*Q. What is template bargaining?*

A. For this round of bargaining, we intended to do all bargaining at the local table (as opposed to past years where the big money issues would be settled for all colleges in common table bargaining in Vancouver). However, as bargaining stalled and the pattern of settlements seemed to indicate that little, if any, retroactive pay would be available, the unions across the province wanted to settle at least the money issues as quickly as possible; the fastest way to accomplish this was to bargain these issues in Vancouver, then attach this template settlement to our other agreements.

*Q. You said there was no common table bargaining this round, does this mean that the common agreement will become null and void?*

A. No, the common agreement will be maintained for the next contract.

*Q. Why do we have two agreements?*

A. The common agreement was designed to ensure that all colleges across the province were basically operating under the same model (e.g. same pay scales, similar benefits, &c.) whereas the local agreement deals with issues particular to the SCFA. In some cases (such as the Early Retirement Incentive), we can claim the superior benefits listed in the common agreement, as opposed to the less generous provisions in our local agreement.

*Q. If we settled the money issues in February, why haven't I received a raise yet?*

A. The template deal settled in Vancouver must be attached to our local agreement once that one has been agreed to. Each of the four 1% raises are guaranteed except for the one coming this upcoming September. That means that as long as we settle the local agreement by then (which we are fairly certain we will be able to) you will get all the money due to the raises in January and April of this year in a lump sum at that time.

## Bargainer's Report 2012-13

The 2012-13 school year was certainly a busy one for myself and anyone else involved in the bargaining process. It started with a meeting in September in Vancouver, where we and our fellow FPSE bargaining units laid out our plan for the upcoming bargaining sessions. Unity was going to be very important for us, particularly with the limited amount of bargaining being permitted by the provincial government.

Preparations on the local side were soon underway, with some bargaining members having to back out due to time conflicts or health reasons. Twice we thought we had some dates to begin bargaining (once in late November, and again in early February) but these were cancelled so that our management reps could be involved in provincial bargaining (the first time with the BCGEU, the second time with FPSE).

I was also in Vancouver during early February (for what was called 'template bargaining') and it was there that we reached agreement on the financial details of the new contract. The main gain for us was the 'staggered ones' raises which will be applied in stages between January of this year and January 2014 (note that the first 2 raises have yet to be applied to your paycheques, but will be applied retroactively once a local agreement is reached).

Finally, it was time to turn to the local bargaining situation. Our team (myself, spokesperson and FPSE rep Zoe Towle, Elizabeth Lund, as well as Tracy Punchard and David Feldman providing valuable support) met with College reps over four days and made some solid progress. We have another set of four days planned at the end of April where a settlement is quite possible.

Special thanks also need to go to all the other members who have volunteered to do any work behind the scenes for the bargaining team, either through doing research, serving on the bargaining team itself, or volunteering for the bargaining support team.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Henderson

### 2013 AGM ELECTIONS

- VP Liaison,
- VP Contract Administration
- Secretary
- Board Observer

# ALL ABOUT LEAVES

**Tracy Punchard**  
**Acting VP Contract Administration**

This is the time of year when timetabling and workloads are being figured out for next year. So this is also the time to put in your request for a voluntary workload reduction (deadline April 1) or for an unassisted leave/leave without pay. Having dealt with a few of these requests now, I'd like to offer a some clarification. You have to request the reduction or leave. Although such requests are usually granted, the employer does have the right to say no. If the answer is no, the SCFA would look at the reasons for the refusal and see if there are grounds to grieve it. The grievance process takes a very long time and in the meantime you have to keep working. So just like students writing exams, don't book your plane tickets until the leave has been approved. If you don't show up to work, the employer could find you insubordinate, or treat your absence as a resignation.

An unassisted leave (leave without pay) can be requested for "any purpose". And really, it is up to the employer to have a good reason (proof of hardship) before denying the request. There is some interesting case law. A bus driver had his license suspended for refusing a breathalyser test. He requested a leave until his licence was reinstated. The employer denied the leave and thus without a valid licence, the driver lost his job. The arbitrator ruled in favour of the driver. There was some inconvenience to the employer to grant the leave, but the driver suffered great hardship by being denied the leave.

What if you want a leave so you can work at another job for a year? You already have a job at the college so there is no hardship to you if the employer denies the leave. On the other hand, the employer would have to show hardship to them before saying no.

Be warned: you are not allowed to lie. You cannot ask for a leave for one reason, and take it for another.

What if the employer denies the leave and you take it anyway? Case law says you are assuming the risk. At the Commercial Foods Union, a worker was granted ten days leave to visit her sick mother. She wanted five weeks. On day 11 she did not return to work and was terminated. The arbitrator found in favour of the employer, noting the worker bought five-week plane tickets even though she was denied the full leave.

Finally, do your research before you finalize the leave. Employees are often shocked to discover how much it will cost them to not be at work and maintain benefits, etc. Talk to Michelle Laurin or Liana Zwick and don't forget that most useful of all documents, your collective agreement which can be found at [www.scfa.ca](http://www.scfa.ca)

## **PENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Duff Sutherland**  
**Retirement Issues officer**

There have been two Pension Advisory Committee meetings since our AGM last April. I was able to attend the meeting in October, 2012. Unfortunately, my flight was cancelled and I was unable to attend the recent meeting in March.

There are several issues which you should be aware of regarding our College Pension Plan. The trustees reported that as a result of the actuarial evaluation this spring there is likely going to be a “modest” increase in the contribution rates.

The pension survey has now been completed. You will recall that one of our FPSE trustees, Weldon Cowan, came to the college last November and gave us workshops explaining the context for the survey. Broadly, the goal is to consider ways that the plan might be restructured to result in higher accrual rates (which would lead to a higher lifetime pensions) and improved inflation protection for pensions.

I missed the discussion of the results of the survey at the recent meeting; however, our president has a copy of the survey which he will distribute to the membership. As I understand the situation, FPSE, as a plan partner is continuing to consider the changes and will keep us informed about what is happening. Remember, any changes to our plan will be on a “going forward” basis.

FPSE remains committed to the Canadian Labour Congress’ campaign to double Canada Pension Plan pensions. This commitment flows from broader commitments to protect and expand defined –benefit plans for Canadians and to combat the growing problem of poverty among elderly Canadians.

I have materials on the campaign and would be happy to pass them on to any interested SCFA member. I would also be happy to participate in an SCFA effort to lobby our Member of Parliament on the issue. See me anytime about this.

PAC continues to educate itself about the ethical and responsible investment of our \$2.9B pension funds. At the meeting last October, Peter Chapman, executive director of the Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE) gave a presentation on the ways that environmental, social, and corporate governance issues can be integrated into investment decision-making processes. Chapman argued that ethical investing is becoming considered part of the fiduciary duty of pension trustees. In other words, protecting the interests of the beneficiary involves investing their pension contributions in an ethical manner. There does appear to be a growing momentum within FPSE for more action on the issue including the union partners in our plan and other public service pension plans in the province.

Finally, PAC recommended that President’s Council approve Candace Fertile (Local 2) as a nominee for FPSE trustee for the 2014-17 term. The vote will take place at the FPSE AGM this May.

# **SELKIRK COLLEGE JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT**

**Robert M. Macrae**

**Occupational Health & Safety**

## **Representative**

There has been a tectonic shift in the attitude towards health and safety at Selkirk College. Selkirk still pays one of the highest premium rates within the provincial colleges' sector to WorksafeBC (WCB) for coverage as a result of the high number of compensable claims received by WorksafeBC from Selkirk College.

The current rate Selkirk College is paying is approximately \$0.60 per \$100 of pay role. The baseline rate (the rate a new college would pay for WCB coverage) is approximately \$0.22 per \$100 of pay role. An institution in our sector could conceivably pay a lower rate if the frequency of their compensable WCB claims is sufficiently low. The WCB premium rate per \$100 of pay role is a good indicator of the effectiveness of health and safety programs.

Selkirk's high premium results in tens of thousands of dollars of additional premiums paid per annum by Selkirk College to provide WCB coverage for its employees. The College has over the past two years focused on lowering this line in its budget by addressing health and safety issues.

For example, Selkirk has experienced a significant number of accidents involving slipping in the Castlegar campus kitchen. In the past, no slip wax and various mats in slippery areas have been tried. During the 2012 Christmas break, the College cleared the kitchen and replaced the floor with a no slip, washable, more comfortable material designed for a professional kitchen.

The College has taken a more aggressive approach to monitoring and remediating areas of the college where radon levels are high. Castlegar is located in an area where radon is an issue. A number of areas have been identified and remediation has been implemented.

The College has responded with requests for air quality monitoring and has identified classrooms where the ambient carbon dioxide level exceeds allowable limits at certain times of the day.

I will be participating in a college-wide search for defective or simply old chairs, especially chairs with four rather than five wheels.

Expect to see more handrails beside sidewalks on sloped surfaces approaching the college and a walkway from the parking lot immediately south of the A-wing onto a sidewalk.

The College Joint Occupational Health & Safety (JOH&S) Committee meets regularly with employer representation and I'm pleased to report there is active, constructive employer participation.

My time spent participating in JOH&S activities is counted towards my assigned duties.

As a worker member of the Selkirk College JOH&S committee I no longer feel like a pariah.

A second or alternate SCFA rep is required for the JOH&S.

# **DISABILITY MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**sally Glock & Mark Speilman**

**Disability Management and Rehabilitation Representatives**

The Disability Management and Rehabilitation committee is currently made up of Michele Lauren from HR with Mark Speilman and I (Sally Glock) as the SCFA reps.

We meet monthly and do keep in touch as needed when new issues come up ensuring support is extended to members in a timely manner.

We meet face to face when we are able to but still find this difficult because we are now working from both Castlegar and Nelson 10<sup>th</sup> street campuses. We continue to use teleconference technology and are working on getting "SKYPE" set up.

The purpose of our meetings is to discuss new and ongoing short and long term disability claims, (including the application process and current status of claims) and how we may be of assistance to members. Compared to last year at this time our bargaining unit has slightly fewer short term sick leave and 30 day claims.

We are currently following members on a combination of short and long term disability; some of whom have gradual return to work plans in progress. The claims continue to vary in the level of complexity and necessary accommodation.

Recently we have experienced difficulty with our carrier Manulife. It seems more common for them to deny claims than I have seen before. Members have the option to appeal the denial of their claims and we encourage them to do so. We, along with the the FPSE help with this process as needed.

We continue to see a steady number of claims for invisible conditions which remain the top diagnosis of claims made within our line of work.

Despite our different schedules and campuses this committee continues to function well as a team that is both supportive and collaborative. We share the task of staying in touch with members on claim with the intension of offering support and/or assistance to them.

Two FPSE meetings are held in Vancouver each year which we try to attend on behalf of the members of the SCFA. At these meetings we are able to work together with DMRC committees from our sister colleges within our federation. Due to early winter weather and repeated flight cancellations we have not made it down this past year. We do however keep involved with the meetings through regular updates and information from them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sally Glock & Mark Speilman



# STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE REPORT

**Robin Higgins**

**Status of Women Representative**

SCFA Local 10 Status of Women Report, April 2013

I am still on a steep learning curve around the role and concerns that the SWC committee deals with. One of the issues that was most disturbing to me was the report from an English instructor at VIU who has been asked to pull literature from their curriculum that has gay protagonists because students are complaining that reading these books infringes on their religious freedom. There are also ongoing concerns around the physical and emotional safety of female staff and students at many post-secondary institutions.

Some of the bigger campuses have committees and budgets for putting on big events for the Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> Memorial of the Montreal Polytechnic shootings and the March 8<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day Celebrations. I have been working on a smaller scale going into classrooms on those days and facilitating discussions around Women and Violence. I personally do not want to watch or screen the movie that is often shown around the Montreal Massacre and believe that one of the ways we can work towards decreasing violence and gender gaps may lie in dialogue around healthy relationships, communication, self-confidence and assertiveness skills. The following posts on the Student Healthy Living Blog explores some of these issues and I have really worked to get men's voices included in these important conversations:

<http://tenthstreetdinner.wordpress.com/2013/03/11/honouring-the-grandmothers-mothers-sisters-daughters-and-mentors-who-have-shaped-us/>

<http://tenthstreetdinner.wordpress.com/2013/02/02/am-i-in-a-healthy-relationship/>

<http://tenthstreetdinner.wordpress.com/2013/03/07/love-your-body-healthy-body-image/>

Please pass along the blog. We have some nursing and human service students joining us to write posts and market it. Having students and staff FOLLOW it (new posts come to your e-mail), post on facebook or comment on articles will help make this resource more meaningful and interactive.

I am glad to be representing Selkirk on the SWC committee and would love to hear suggestions for directions or initiatives that others think would be worthwhile.

Regards,

Robin Higgins

SWC Rep Local 10

# BOARD OBSERVER'S REPORT

**Danielle Cossarini**  
**Board of Governors Observer**

Over the course of 2012/13, I have attended 8 open-session Selkirk College Board of Governors meetings. A few of the key highlights that I've observed over these meeting include:

1. June 2012
  - a. 2011/2012 Actual FTE Enrolment Report (for approval)
    - i. Overall, our FTEs were still low
    - ii. FTEs down in UAS and trades, but up in Developmental Ed.
    - iii. Most rural colleges manage to get in the 80% range of their required FTE target – COTR is the 90%
    - iv. Are we at risk of funding cuts because of low FTEs? It's a concern, but other rural schools are in the same boat, which buys us some time November
    - v. Board approved FTE Enrolment Report
2. October 2012
  - a. Strategic Plan to 2017 (Motion to approve): With small amendments - M/S/C
    - i. Rolling out the plan will begin in November and December
    - ii. Integration will hopefully occur so that it impacts department operating plans
    - iii. Maintenance phase – so that it stays on everyone's mind
    - iv. Start to get ready for the next plan
3. February 2013
  - a. Selkirk College Student Union
    - i. Rep from the SCSU spoke very well on the burden tuition is putting on students and its potential for deterring potential students. Norah urged the Board to consider not approving a motion for a tuition fee increase
    - ii. The Board thanked the SCSU for the positive presentation and reaffirmed their commitment to work together to advocate at the highest level to lower tuition for students
  - b. Tuition fee increase
    - i. "To approve a tuition fee increase up to the maximum tuition fee cap set by the Ministry of Advanced Education, effective August 1, 2013."
    - ii. "To approve a supplementary fee increase up to the maximum fee cap set by the Ministry of Advanced Education."
    - iii. MSC for both

If you would like anymore details on the happenings at open-session Board meetings, don't hesitate to contact Danielle at [dcossarini@selkirk.ca](mailto:dcossarini@selkirk.ca)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

**Elizabeth Lund**

**VP Liaison/purveyor of this year's ON STREAM**

I hope you enjoyed this super-sized pre-AGM edition of On Stream. In addition to the usual updates and informative articles we decided to include all of the written reports for this year's AGM in one handy location. Don't forget the AGM is this Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. There will be bargaining updates, pension news and elections as well. I hope to see you then.

If you have any questions you want answers to, or explanations for whatever's foggy in SCFA/FPSE-land please drop me a line at [elund@selkirk.ca](mailto:elund@selkirk.ca) and let me know.

I will do my best to find an answer for you. If it's of interest to a number of members you will see the reply right here in the next installment of our very own ON STREAM—coming soon to an inbox near you.

See you at the AGM.

Elizabeth

### **Your SCFA Executive**

**President:** David Feldman

**VP Contract Administration:** Tracy Punchard

**VP Liaison:** Elizabeth Lund

**VP Negotiations:** Doug Henderson

**Secretary:** Stephen Seaborn

**Treasurer:** David Feldman

**College Board Observer:** Danielle Cossarini

**Retirement Issues Officer:** Duff Sutherland

### **Your SCFA Standing Committee Representatives**

**Bargaining:** Douglas Henderson

**Contract:** Tracy Punchard

**Disability:** Sally Glock/Mark Spielman

**Education Policy:** Victor Villa

**Human Rights:** Mary Ann Morris

**Non-Regular:** Doris Hausleitner

**Pension:** Duff Sutherland

**Professional Development:** Rita Williams

**Status of Women:** Robin Higgins

**Health & Safety:** Robert Macrae