



FAREWELL RETIREES!
AGM and Celebration

CHIEF STEWARD UPDATE
Shannon Lancot-Shah

FPSE AGM REFLECTIONS
Various Attendees

On Stream

May/June 2025

Selkirk College Faculty Association

MOBILIZATION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

by Takaia Larsen, SCFA President

Last month I had the privilege to attend the FPSE AGM and represent you as the SCFA President. I was grateful to be in attendance along SCFA members Elizabeth Ferguson (Decolonization, Reconciliation and Indigenization Standing Committee rep), Pablo Pastor (Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee rep and newly elected SCFA Board Observer rep), Shannon Shah (VP Contract Administration and Co-Chair of FPSE Contract Administration Review Committee), Jonathan Vanderhoek (VP Contract Negotiations) and Leanne Reitan (FPSE AGM observer) at the 4-day AGM in Richmond, 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 connecting with other FPSE locals. There were several key-note speakers throughout the week including Dr. Don Wright, former Deputy Minister to the Premier, who presented an address titled "Economic Future and Trends in Post-Secondary Education." Wassim Garzouzi, President of the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers, spoke about "better outcomes" with relation to the grievance and arbitration process. But the highlight for me was the address by Dr. Stephanie Dick from SFU who delivered a riveting keynote speech titled "A History of AI: Knowledge, Learning and Automation." Her historical analysis of AI technology was fascinating and terrifying at

the same time. Her takeaway message was one of continued hope for a future where we might once again respect and value human intelligence and potential rather than artificial



Elizabeth Ferguson, Pablo Pastor, Takaia Larsen, Shannon Shah, Jonathan Vanderhoek, and Leanne Reitan were this year's SCFA delegates at the FPSE AGM.

intelligence. She also argued that the history of AI is a history of low self-esteem on the part of humans after WW II, a concept I have been thinking about continually ever since her address. If you are interested, I would be happy to share more.

Beyond providing workshops on a variety of labour related topics, the FPSE AGM brings together representatives from all 19 locals in the Federation who collectively represent over 10,000 post-secondary educators in B.C. If you have not had the chance to attend this event, I recommend you put your name into the draw in future years. We will be selecting our delegates for 2026 following our GM next spring. The AGM provides an excellent opportunity to learn more about the work of the Federation and the strength of collective action. This year, I was particularly proud to be able to recognize the retirement of our own Elizabeth Ferguson, long standing member of the DRISC Committee at FPSE. At the close of the AGM, her fellow DRISC members honored her by wrapping her in their gift, a Pendleton blanket called "Meeting of the Waters", in front of the entire FPSE delegation. It was a moment I will remember forever.

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 energy toward collective action that will serve us all well today and in the future.

In solidarity,

Takaia



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE SECTOR

COMPILED BY LEESA DEAN

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS REGARDING INTERNATIONAL STUDY PERMITS

In late May, a petition was submitted to the House of Commons, supported by Courtenay-Alberni MP Gord Johns, on the topic of post-secondary international student study permits. Here is an excerpt:

We, the undersigned, concerned citizens of Canada, call upon the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to

1. Amend the caps limiting post-secondary, international study permits and PGWP changes in order to align with Canada's critical labour needs;
2. Increase federal post-secondary education funding transfers to provinces to ensure a robust economic future for Canada;
3. Allocate dedicated funding to develop affordable student housing through purpose-built facilities and innovative solutions; and
4. Defend the vital role public-funded higher education plays in sustaining Canada's economic health and global competitiveness.

Sign the petition [here](#).

THE COST IMPLICATIONS OF AI IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Higher Education Strategy Associates' Alex Usher discusses the cost implications of AI in post-secondary. Quote: AI and LLMs are only a threat to education and students' intellectual development if academics don't update their assessment methods. But in many disciplines, that almost certainly means a change in the teaching production function of academia, one which institutions will have real difficulty accommodating if we remain in the current era of Nobody Wants to Pay for Education. But if universities and colleges don't accommodate, the education they provide really will become sub-standard and unlikely to produce the graduates society needs, an outcome that can only reduce the esteem in which institutions are held.

Read the full article [here](#).

VIU STUDENT FILES COURT PETITION TO OVERTURN SUSPENSION FOR PRO-PALESTINIAN ACTIVISM

A Vancouver Island University student suspended for participating in pro-Palestinian activities last year is going to court to try to overturn that decision. Sara Kishawi and lawyer Noah Ross have filed a petition in B.C. Supreme Court arguing that the process was unfair, and that the suspension was unreasonably punitive and might have infringed Kishawi's Charter rights. The case could set a legal precedent for students sanctioned or punished for political activity by B.C. universities.

Read the full article [here](#).



▲ Members from all three campuses attended this year's AGM in Castlegar.



August 9th, 2025
International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

CHIEF STEWARD UPDATE: BUILDING BRIDGES

BY SHANNON LANCTOT-SHAH

I love this time of year with spring leaning towards summer and the excitement of graduation in the air. I was able to attend the FPSE AGM this May as the interim co-chair for our provincial CARC (Contract Administration Review Committee). Many members were present and as co-chairs, Erin McConomy and I meet with our staff reps and started making plans for next year. I am looking forward to learning from a great group of stewards who have amazing

knowledge and understanding of various processes. We are also continuing the work of creating stronger records and references for our collective agreements.



DRISC members honored Elizabeth Ferguson at the FPSE AGM by wrapping her in their gift, a Pendleton blanket called "Meeting of the Waters."

It was such a special week with lots of team building and shared laughs. The best moments for me were spending time with our soon-to-be-retired Elizabeth Ferguson. She was celebrated by many members of FPSE and recognized for her continued efforts to build bridges to

understanding as well as honoring and embracing Indigenous ways of teaching, learning and being.

I wish everyone a great summer and hope to see you all at the SCFA Labour Day picnic on September 1st.

Thank you for your trust in me and electing me as your Chief Steward for the next 2 years. I appreciate it and will do my best to support you.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns at shannonlanctot-shah@gmail.com.

Shannon Shah

FPSE AGM Reflection: Robust Dialogue, Bargaining Strategies

BY JONATHAN VANDERHOEK, VP NEGOTIATION



The 2025 FPSE AGM provided an excellent opportunity to connect with faculty from other locals who are preparing for bargaining. Not only did I discuss proposals and timing with provincial colleagues from the Bargaining Coordination Committee, I also met members who are not the chief bargainers but will be serving on their local's bargaining committee. I had an interesting conversation, in

particular, with members of the Emily Carr University Faculty Association who described the multi-year and multi-pronged strategy they employed to create leverage that led to workload gains in their 2022 bargaining round.

The AGM showcased some of the strengths and challenges of the decentralized, federation model. Although we share much in common with one another, each

local has its distinctive culture, priorities, and ways of doing things. This can lead to long sessions of debate on how to handle issues such as reimbursement and compensation for non-regular members, charitable donation, and in-person vs. virtual meetings. The trade-off for this inefficient approach is that it opens space for robust dialogue and the organic unfolding of a democratic process.

◀ Photo by: LEANNE REITAN



CAT, I FARTED

and other lessons from the FPSE AGM

by Pablo Pastor

I had the privilege to be an SCFA delegate at the FPSE AGM this year. I find it quite fascinating to witness democracy at work for a 10,000-plus member organization. If I had to sum up the meeting, I would say that it was bittersweet. On the one hand, the mood was somber, as every local has been dealing with their share of layoffs and austerity measures. On the other hand, I drew inspiration from the spirit of solidarity that occurs when we all come together.

Among the highlights was the honouring of Elizabeth Ferguson, who was an active and influential member of DRISC. Elizabeth received a standing ovation in recognition of her contributions to FPSE over the years. Thank you, Elizabeth, for representing our local on FPSE's DRISC committee.

Artificial Intelligence was another prominent theme. SFU Assistant Professor Stephanie Dick gave an informative plenary address on the history of AI. Dr. Hicks referenced the "manifest destiny of computing," in which AI is the culmination of colonial capitalism. The presenta-

tion discussed many implications of AI use and how both representation and non-representation in AI outputs can cause harm. Dr. Hicks challenged the notion that AI will become more and more accurate because the more AI outputs are used

in AI inputs, the greater the risk of hallucinations. Dr. Hicks explained the inherent bias in AI and the need for epistemic pluralism, as well as collective agreements needing to refuse prompting work if it displaces labour. One final takeaway was that Chat GPT = "cat, I farted" in French (chat, j'ai pétié).



Elizabeth Ferguson received a standing ovation in recognition of her contributions to FPSE.



Dr. Stephanie Dick delivered a captivating keynote speech on the history of AI

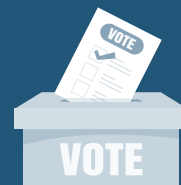
Results of this year's elections for SCFA positions:

Executive Positions

- » **Secretary:** Celina Duarte
- » **VP Contract Administration:** Shannon Shah
- » **VP Liaison:** Leesa Dean
- » **College Board Observer:** Pablo Pastor
- » **Retirement Issues Officer (1-year term):** Jessica Adrain

Standing Committee Positions

- » **Decolonization, Reconciliation & Indigenization Committee:** Danica Weager and Melissa Dorey
- » **Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee:** Pablo Pastor & Sahana Madhyastha
- » **Disability Management Committee:** Angela Kelly and Jennifer Reid
- » **SCOPE Representative:** Sahana Madhyastha
- » **PD Representative:** Katie Comrie



OVER TWO CENTURIES OF SERVICE: FAREWELL RETIREES!



(L to R) Retirees Paula Vaananen, Stephen Seaborn, Elizabeth Ferguson, Coby Vandergaast and Duff Sutherland were all long-time members of the SCFA. Not shown: Charla Beaulieu, Jackie Belza, Susanna Harrison, Rebecca Jacobson, Ian Parfitt, and Deanne Steven.

On May 1st, the SCFA held their annual general meeting which was followed by the inaugural SCFA retirees' celebration. The 11 SCFA members who retired this year or are retiring at the end of July have a combined service time of over 200 years. Laughter and tears were plentiful during the retiree celebration; it is an understatement to say each of the retirees will be missed.

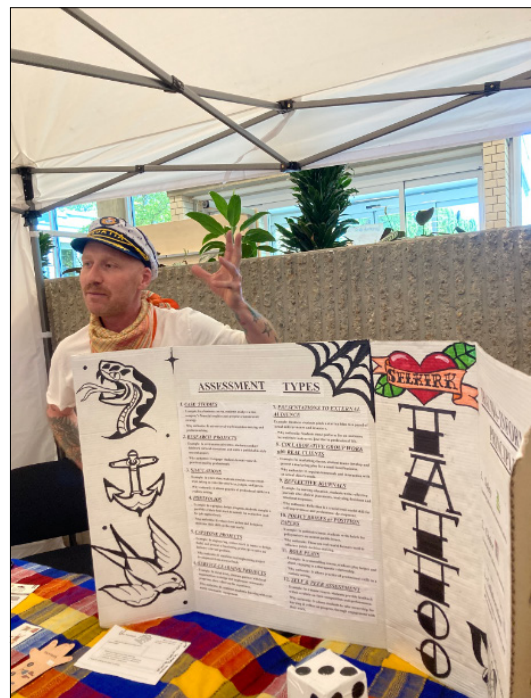
Charla Beaulieu, Jackie Belza, Elizabeth Ferguson, Susana Harrison, Rebecca Jacobsen, Ian Parfitt, Stephen Seaborn, Deanne Steven, Duff Sutherland, Paula Vaananen and Coby Vandergaast, thank you for all the wisdom, learning, joy, innovation and friendship you brought to the SCFA and your individual departments during your time at the college.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS - EVENTS - MOVERS - SHAKERS

- » **Matty Hillman** has been awarded the SCFA assisted leave for the 2025/26 school year. For the duration of the leave, Matty will be developing a trauma-informed teaching resource. This project will be a culmination of his work over the last several years and will draw on findings produced over the winter term's **Community of Practice research project**. The completed project is planned to be an open education resource, available at no cost to educators throughout the province. Matty will be returning to his positions as counsellor and educational developer in the 2026/27 year.
- » This August, **Dr. Renee Harper** will be presenting at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (UK and Ireland) Biennial Conference. Her paper is called "Eroding Edens: The Cultural and Ecological Legacies of Imperial Orchard in Okanagan Literature" and is based on her doctoral work.
- » Members who are interested in university governance are encouraged to read this report by **CUFA: University Governance: From Surviving to Thriving**. Thanks to member Linda Harwood for sharing the link.
- » **Join the SCFA** as well as students and staff in this year's **Pride Parade in Nelson**, which takes place on Sunday, August 31st. Here is the sign up [link](#).
- » Did you order an **SCFA T-shirt** in the spring? Good news: all colours and sizes have now been printed. Leesa Dean, VP Membership Engagement, has now sorted and dispatched them to various campuses. We hope you will enjoy your shirt and wear it to SCFA events.
- » **Save the date: the SCFA's second annual Labour Day picnic** will be on Monday, September 1st, from 12-2 PM at the **Crescent Valley Beach** picnic area. You will receive more information and a sign-up link in August.



Matty Hillman will be developing a trauma-informed teaching resource during his assisted leave.

SCFA Executive

Takaia Larsen
President

Shannon Shah
VP Contract Administration

Jonathan Vanderhoeck
VP Negotiations

Leesa Dean
VP Member Engagement

Kim Verigin
Treasurer

Celina Duarte
Secretary

Pablo Pastor
Board Observer

Jessica Adrian
Retirement Issues Officer

On Stream

is the official newsletter of the SCFA, keeping members informed and connected. Whether you're new or a longtime member, this is your space to stay engaged.

Published monthly, we welcome submissions from all members—share your stories, photos, ideas, and achievements.

Submit your ideas to:

Leesa Dean, Editor
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