

**SCFA**  
FPSE LOCAL 10

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:**  
LUCAS PAVAN

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**  
CLIMATE ACTION + WGEC

**JOB ACTION COMMITTEE**  
LEESA DEAN

# On Stream

November/December 2025

Selkirk College Faculty Association

## THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE

by Takaia Larsen, SCFA President

As the Fall 2025 semester comes to a close, I hope you are all looking forward to a winter break filled with warmth, good cheer and well deserved rest. It has been a difficult year here at Selkirk College and in the post-secondary sector, and I want to recognize those challenges and also express my admiration for all of you who continue to show up every day for our students. Unfortunately, we will be looking at the college implementing further cost savings measures in the new year, including further layoffs. As this process unfolds again, the SCFA will work hard to support members however we can and ensure the Collective Agreement is followed. Please reach out if you have any questions or need support during the process.

At the provincial level, I spent a week in November with FPSE's President's Council lobbying at the legislature in Victoria. Over the course of 3 days, we met with nine provincial public officials including Premier David Eby, Minister of Post-Secondary and Future Skills Jessie Sunner and Minister of Labour Jennifer Whiteside (among many others). We began each session with the following collective statement which illustrates FPSE's current messaging to government:

"Over the past fifteen years, governments across Canada have steadily reduced their financial

commitment to higher education. We began the 2010s with one of the best-funded systems in the world — and we've watched that advantage disappear. As public funding falls, the share of the cost carried by students and families keeps

As one Globe and Mail opinion article recently put it, the "student-as-customer" model has become an operating error. The logic sounds sensible: treat students as customers, manage programs like products, compete for satisfaction. But it's a retail mindset applied to a public service.

A university or college is not a store. A degree is not a product.

As per the 2025 budget, our federal government now plans to restrict Canada Student Grants and Loans to public and not-for-profit institutions. That change is meant to stop public money from flowing to private-for-profit schools that don't deliver high quality programs. Even government policy now recognizes what's at stake: If education becomes a profit opportunity rather than a public mission, quality, accountability, and trust begin to erode.

These trends — funding decline, market logic, private substitutes — are not isolated. They all weaken the same thing: our sense of higher education as a shared public project. If we lose that, we lose a social infrastructure that sustains innovation and promotes equality.

Our colleges and universities are vital public assets, essential to both British Columbia's and Canada's innovation, workforce, and social fabric. That public infrastructure is currently under strain. Institutions are struggling to keep up with costs. So, in the short term, we need stabilization funding just to protect the capacity that is there.



*Presidents from post-secondary faculty union groups travelled to Victoria in November to lobby the provincial government.*

rising. When affordability erodes, inclusion erodes. And when inclusion erodes, the social connection between education and the public weakens.

This isn't just an issue of how to split the bill between government and student — it's a philosophical shift. When education is increasingly understood as a private purchase rather than a public investment, it changes what institutions value — and who they serve.

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# THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE:

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We need to start treating post-secondary the way we treat other long-term public investments: managed with discipline, foresight, and a focus on societal returns. That means:

-A better funding framework for long-term stewardship of the post-secondary system. With both funding \*levels\* that are adequate and a funding \*model\* that's responsive, transparent, and will protect the public value of higher education.

- Strengthening partnerships with communities and employers grounded in public goals.
- Embracing technology and innovation, but always in service of public outcomes.

As vital public assets, our system's strength depends on being inclusive and embedded in the life of society, and our future depends on remembering that post-secondary education is not a private purchase, it's a public promise."

It is my hope that our message made an impact, and I was grateful for the opportunity to also bring our rural perspective to these provincial table discussions where I, and the other four Presidents of FPSEs rural faculty associations consistently reiterated how fundamental access to education in rural areas is to our communities.

Quick on the heels of this week in Victoria was an unexpected announcement by the government that they are launching a review of the entire post-secondary system in BC. FPSE's response can be found here:

FPSE calls for provincial commitment to public education - Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC

While we don't know what the results of this review will be, it seems fairly certain that big changes are coming. The extremely quick turnaround on this review is highly concerning and FPSE has serious doubts that robust consultation with all sector partners will be accomplished in the timeline

set out for the review (to be completed by March 15, 2026). FPSE is committed to having the voice of faculty associations considered in the review and I will be representing Local 10 and our perspective over the coming months as the process unfolds. I will try and keep members updated on the review process as I learn more, but in the meantime, I am happy to chat further about this anytime.

Come by my office, catch me at an SCFA lunch or social event, or let me know if you would like me to come and visit your campus for a meeting or event - I am always working towards building increased engagement with all SCFA members in order to better represent our collective interests every chance I get.

In solidarity,

Takaia



*Over a two day period, faculty union presidents from across the province met with nine ministers to discuss the chronic underfunding of post-secondary education.*

# CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

BY LAUREN RETHORET

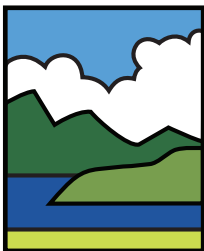
In early November, our committee held a virtual two-day meeting focused on how we can help locals address the climate emergency by building understanding and supporting action. Here are some key highlights:

- **Sharing Experiences:** Members discussed climate-related initiatives at their institutions. Many noted a lack of coordination and urgency, especially with competing challenges like declining international student enrolment and the disruption caused by AI.
- **Funding for Local Events:** The committee has set aside discretionary funds to support local climate action events. If you're planning something and need help with expenses like refreshments, reach out to [lrethoret@selkirk.ca](mailto:lrethoret@selkirk.ca)
- **Climate in Bargaining:** We explored whether climate issues are reflected in collective agreements. Most said there's nothing currently included, though one local shared a proposal to redirect unused professional development funds into a climate action fund for instructor-led projects.
- **Upcoming Survey:** The committee will survey FPSE members this spring to learn how climate change factors into teaching and what types of action members want to see at their institutions. Watch for details soon!
- **Student-Led Advocacy:** Representatives from Climate Education for All presented their work. This student-led initiative aims to make climate education accessible to all post-secondary students.

## JOB ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE



**FPSE**



**SCFA**  
FPSE LOCAL 10

The SCFA's job action committee last met on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

The existing committee consisted of 6 members (Jonathan Buttle, Leesa Dean, Aubrey Demchuk, Pablo Pastor, Shannon Shah, and Jonathan Vanderhoek) and we welcomed three new members at our last meeting: Jessica Adrain, Michelle Pearce, and Todd Solarik. If the work of this committee interests you, please email [ldean@selkirk.ca](mailto:ldean@selkirk.ca) as new members are always welcome. Our next meeting will be in mid-January 2026 (date and time TBA).

What does a job action committee do? The members of this committee meet during the bargaining process to discuss what job action could look like in the context of our union and to do the necessary groundwork to be strike-ready should a strike vote

pass. The group is currently revising the existing strike policy in order to finalize the revised language, including updated strike pay, to be presented at the March 2026 Spring GM. We plan to bring in picket captains and other leaders from the recent BCGEU strike to a meeting in the near future and to begin a process manual that could be used as a resource in the case of a strike.

In the case of a strike, the committee would be responsible for planning, coordinating, and supporting collective job actions—such as strikes, walkouts, picketing, or other forms of workplace pressure. The committee would communicate with members using personal emails in a strike situation, so please submit your email address to [ldean@selkirk.ca](mailto:ldean@selkirk.ca) if you haven't already.

# LUCAS PAVAN: A NIGHT IN CAMEROON'S DJA RESERVE

It was dusk, the sun had dipped below the trees, and the surrounding rainforest was quickly becoming a confused tangle of shadows and shapes. In front of me, a ranger in military fatigues stood solemnly looking into the gathering darkness, an automatic rifle strapped across his back. A local hunter whom I had befriended and worked with for several years was squatting to my right, examining the four human-like knuckle prints that we had stumbled across at the edge of a mud wallow. The mood was tense.

I was in the Dja Reserve in Cameroon – one of the largest remaining tracts of rainforest in Central Africa. Three weeks before, I had trekked 35km into the forest to set up a research base in a clearing with a wooden platform. We were to have very limited contact with the outside world for the next three months and had to perform this trek several times, hauling in all the food and equipment we would need. Every movement was shadowed by a ranger with a gun.

Camera traps we had installed in the area a few days ago had detected a troop of chimpanzees which we were now trying to track through the forest. We had been on the move for five hours, cutting through dense vegetation and using wet logs to traverse gullies and streams. Throughout the day, we had heard the chimps in the distance hooting, screaming, and drumming against tree buttresses.

We were now very close. The freshness of the track suggested that we were only separated by a few hundred meters at most. Gaston, the expert hunter examining the tracks, looked back at me with an expression of worry. The light was failing

trees with obvious trepidation. Many of the bigger males were in the branches above us, their powerful arms (fully as long as their body) stretched out above their heads, oozing with confidence. The hair along the sides of their chests

and armpits fanned out and they stared down at us with the intensity of a creature expecting to find a wounded animal.

In my memory, we hung in this moment for several minutes. I am sure that it was actually only a matter of seconds before they receded back into the dark and left us standing alone in the forest, about to face the coming night.



Lucas Pavan, UAS and SEG instructor, worked in Cameroon over a five year period while completing his PhD at Stanford University.

and we both knew that to encounter a group of chimpanzees in the dark would be extremely risky. This was our last chance.

"Do you want to try calling them in again?" he asked. I nodded and he proceeded to insert a finger into each of his nostrils, letting out a loud, nasally moan. Gaston had an uncanny ability to mimic the sound of a dying duiker (a kind of small antelope).

We sat in loaded silence, straining our eyes into the gloom when suddenly, a mass of black shapes separated themselves from the blackness behind. Some were on the ground only 15 metres away, peering around the sides of large

I lived and worked in Cameroon for parts of five years as I completed my PhD at Stanford University. By working closely with local communities and with the Cameroonian Ministry of Forests, I studied how widespread hunting is changing the function of rainforest ecosystems in the Congo River Basin. Throughout this experience, I was deeply impacted by people's intimate connection to land and community. It was this that inspired me to move back to BC, immerse myself in the ecosystems I grew up around, and support the next generation. At Selkirk, I aspire to teach and share these experiences in a way that connects people to the land and the broader systems we are part of.

# WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY COMMITTEE

## REPORT SUBMITTED BY THERESA SOUTHAM

Last month, I attended the FPSE Women and Gender Equity Committee (WGEC) summit meeting. Here is the report of what we discussed:

- The committee discussed the impact of the layoffs across the sector and the impact of that on equity deserving groups.
- The committee discussed whether their institutions have an EDI office, and whether there have been cuts to administrative positions in the EDI departments in the institutions that have them.
- The committee discussed and provided feedback on the FPSE Framework for Equity and the FPSE Equity Statement.
- A list of ideas to engage members was compiled which ranges from movie nights to speaker panels, attending marches, and information booths.
- A book club has been initiated, and the first meeting will be held in the early evening prior to the start of the in-person summit in February.

- Personally, I could see the cracks forming in our committee as we were unable to get someone to stand for Chair and some institutions are truly suffering more than others - especially non-regulars and equity-deserving



*Theresa Southam and Marla Gonzalez Plasencia are co-representatives on the FPSE Women and Gender Equity Standing Committee.*

- members!
- I reported to the FPSE group on recent committee advancements here at the college such as my consultation with the SCFA President, Director of HR, and Chair of the EDI Committee regarding an institutional gender equity group. The recommendations from that

meeting were to form an institutional Gender Equity working group.

A call was made through the All-Employee Newsletter for members, and seven joined from BCGEU and SCFA.

- A recent initiative includes collaborating with Student Services for the showing of the film Major on November 20th, 2025, on the Castlegar Campus. The committee also met with Indigenous Partners to create greater awareness of sexual orientation and gender for an event in March 2026. We were granted \$3K for this event from SCFA and BCGEU Common PD funds.

Do you have any questions or concerns regarding the work of this committee, or do you have EDI concerns

you would like to discuss? Feel free to reach out to Marla or I at any time, and keep an eye on the college's events page and On Stream for future activities and opportunities related to this standing committee.

In solidarity,

Theresa Southam



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NEWS - EVENTS - MOVERS - SHAKERS

- » The SCFA hosted an **after work social** at Mike's Place in Nelson on Wednesday, November 26th and it was such a success, we will be planning more in the new year. The next after work social will take place at **The Dam Restaurant**, centrally located between Nelson and Castlegar. Stay tuned for the date! These events serve to connect members from various disciplines and offer opportunities to ask the President questions in an informal setting.
- » This winter's **Lunch Club** events will alternate days (Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays) in order to accommodate different teaching schedules. The first lunch club of 2026 will be in the Staff Lounge in early February. The date will be announced in January. Thank you to all members who attended this fall's events.

- » Digital Arts faculty member **Zen Wang** had one of his sculptures permanently installed in Lakeside Park in Nelson (near the boat launch entrance). It is called "A Song for Mothers". He wanted to capture the resiliency, courage and audacity of mothers from all over the world in this crazy time. It is also a tribute to his own mother, who passed away in 2019.
- » Member **Jamie Bliss** had an essay, "The Spirit of Radio" published in a book about the history of radio in our community. He has hosted the radio show "Funkytown" for 22 years. Learn more about the book here:

<https://www.kootenaycoopradio.com/kcr-releases-its-first-book/>



18 members gathered at Mike's Pub in Nelson on November 26th for the SCFA after work social.

## SCFA Executive

**Takaia Larsen**  
President

**Shannon Shah**  
VP Contract Administration

**Jonathan Vanderhoek**  
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  
LDean@selkirk.ca

