



# NEGOTIATIONS NEWSLETTER #8

vccfa@telus.net

(604) 688-6210

www.vccfa.ca

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## Common table adjourns with no progress

Since October 18, the VCCFA, along with 13 other FPSE locals and 7 BCGEU locals, has been in talks with college employers, including our own. The unions seek a common agreement on a variety of issues in the areas of salary, benefits, job security, working conditions and employee rights. So far we have not reached agreement with the employers on any major issues. They are telling us there is no money available for our cost-related demands, and that they are not prepared to move on issues that don't cost money. There has been no significant progress on issues that are important to VCCFA members: salary increases that match inflation and keep us competitive with other jurisdictions; placement and progression on scale; improved benefits coverage; no layoffs for the term of the agreement; mandatory measures to prevent layoffs, such as voluntary departure incentives; a minimum number of early retirement incentives; increased release for IRAs; and increased funding for PD and education leaves. Issues that are important to faculty at other colleges have also gotten short shrift.

The provincial government's "zero-zero mandate" guides the employers' response to our cost-related demands. We question why college instructors are being held to a wage freeze, when the government is promoting a record budget surplus and windfall gains from transfer payments. We also don't understand why we can't get assurances of job security in a rapidly expanding post-secondary education system.

More information about common table bargaining is contained in the attached bulletin. Bargaining is expected to resume at the end of January.

## Local bargaining begins on January 18

The VCCFA gave the College notice to begin local negotiations on September 23, 2004. On October 13 we met with the College and negotiated a protocol agreement. We also proposed 31 dates for bargaining in 2004. The College rejected all of these days and responded with a commencement date of January 18, 2005. The Negotiating Committee is frustrated by this delay, but we hope to make progress when we meet the College's team.

## Possible strike vote in the New Year

However, our experience at the common table has not been encouraging, to say the least. We'll repeat what we said at the VCCFA AGM: If talks at the common table continue to go nowhere, and if local negotiations follow the same pattern, we will need your help. Within the first couple of months of the New Year, we will report to you and ask you for further direction. At that time we may recommend taking a strike vote. Meanwhile, we'll keep you informed through newsletters and the VCCFA website. We also encourage you to talk to members of your negotiating committee. Thanks.

If you have any questions or comments, contact a member of the negotiating committee.

	<b>local</b>	<b>e-mail address</b>
Mark Goertz	871-7183	mgoertz@telus.net
Karen Griffiths	443-8331	bustergee@hotmail.com
Vinit Khosla (Chair)	871-7255	vkhosla@shaw.ca
Ingrid Kolsteren	688-6210	ikolsteren@telus.net
Maggi Trebble	871-7254	trebblem@hotmail.com
Rose Marie Watson	443-8495	ebwatson@shaw.ca
Linda Sperling (Federation of Post-Secondary Educators – spokesperson)		