

VCCFA UPDATE

October 11, 2005

<p>The BCTF Strike and Us Local Bargaining/Arbitration Governance Elections VCC's Strategic Plan -- Why the Rush?</p>
--

BCTF Strike and Us

Rally today: 5:30 pm, Canada Place

As Thanksgiving has us giving thanks for much, we have to also consider where we stand on important rights we have as working people in an advanced democracy. Can the provincial government simply decide they do not want working teachers to have these rights any more? Teachers say no. Should the excessive use of its provincial law-making power be challenged? Teachers say yes. The teachers are putting themselves in harm's way to stand up to the Liberals' unwarranted rewriting of their valid agreement three year's ago and to their refusal to allow bargaining or traditional job action this year.

It is clear that any other union in BC can share their fate. Indeed, the Act that undid many provisions of the BCTF collective agreement in 2002 also has a section that applies to our college sector agreements. However, due to our provincial and national affiliations and the threat of national boycotts, we have so far been able to forestall any implementation of those provisions. Our legal case against it is still winding its way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

So, through their impressive 90% vote in support of their BCTF leaders' strategy, the teachers have taken their stand. The rest of the labour movement cannot avert its eyes.

As your President, I sit on the Executive of The Vancouver District Labour Council. Our FPSE President, Cindy Oliver, sits on the equivalent body for the BC Federation of Labour. Both these bodies are calling for all workers to support the BCTF. We have already joined in teacher picket lines and sent messages of support. Our VCCFA Executive will continue to monitor the situation closely.

For VCCFA members:

~Join in the multi-union rally in support of the BCTF at Canada Place, today, Tuesday, October 11th, at 5:30 pm

~Please consider joining your local school's picket line.

~Our few members who were to work out of School Board facilities have been advised of the appropriate measures to take and we have concurrence from VCC administration.

~Stay tuned for further developments. If there is a call for more substantive action that may involve our membership, we will call a Special Meeting at short notice.

Local Bargaining and Arbitration

As previously noted, the long saga of 2004-07 bargaining that started two years ago is at the end-game stage*. Hopefully, we will know the results before 2006 rolls around. Final arbitration hearing dates on the outstanding local issues are set for November 9th and 10th, with arbitrator Peter Cameron's decision expected a few weeks later.

Last week, we agreed with the College's request to have one probably final go at trying to reach some agreement without resorting to arbitration. These meetings will be on October 11th. We will let you know the results.

**A significant exception is the question of the \$200,000 that is to go to PD or Education Leave activities. We have just started talking to the college on this and there is little initial agreement.*

Governance Elections

Posters are up with the results of last week's vote. Judging from the numbers of voters, it was about the most successful election we have had. Thanks to all candidates for putting themselves forward for these important roles. Thanks to Terry Mills, who did not run again, for his long service on Education Council. And, special thanks to Frank Fornelli, who also did not run. Frank was formerly Chair and always a dedicated member of Council. All would agree he was most diligent, consistent and principled in his approach to the issues before Council and before the College Board, where, as EdCo Chair, he had a non-voting place.

Refreshing the College's Strategic Plan ~ What's the Rush?

The College President has introduced his extension of the 2002 document, *Vision for the Future*. The extension is dated 2005-2008. The VCCFA as a major college stakeholder, and as member of Operations Council has a responsibility to give input to the President and Board on this document. We will endeavor to do so but we are at a loss as to why the timelines for this process are so tight and precisely in the middle of the autumn term.

It is appropriate to call for individual responses but in our view, better-informed responses come about after the widest possible discussion. Discussion of these types of issues happens best in small groups, ideally departmental or area groups, and given VCC's "full-on" type of educational scheduling it is extremely difficult for those types of meetings to happen mid-term. We have asked the President to consider extending the time-lines into next year. Why would it negatively affect the Board if they considered this in January or February rather than November?

Lizz Lindsay
VCCFA President