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**GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 10TH
ROOM 2654
CCA AREA
KING EDWARD
CAMPUS
3:30 PM**

**REPORT FROM
BARGAINING
CONFERENCE**

Get
Bargaining
Surveys
in
by
JANUARY 28TH

VIP = Very Important Part

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from Lizz
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



LIZZ LINDSAY
VCCFA PRESIDENT

WE HOPE YOU had a good holiday and an opportunity for some rest and renewal.

THE END OF the work year was very busy with grievance hearings, several new issues and ongoing accommodation issues with sick members. We had anticipated a quieter month in December as many members were on holiday or professional development but that was not the case.

THE EXECUTIVE MET all day on December 8th to develop our work plan for the next six months. It was good to see that we have completed most of the tasks we had planned for 2003. One highlight finally off the list was the completion of the downtown office library space and the clean up and refurbishing of the KEC office.

OUR NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE worked several days in December and has its survey out to you. It's very important to get your input in by January 28th because the CIEA

Bargaining Conference is on February 6 and 7. Vinit Khosla, Chair of our Negotiating Committee, Ingrid Kolsteren, Chief Steward and Lizz Lindsay, President will attend the meeting.

Personal Information
Protection Act (PIPA)-new privacy legislation became law in January so we are working to be in compliance. Secretary Colleen van Winkel is our designated Privacy Officer. She will be working with us to develop a privacy policy and to help us implement any changes to our current practice.

OUR EXECUTIVE IS undertaking a review of internal union policies. We have voted to increase the **retirement gift** given to members from \$10/year of service to \$15. The last increase was in 1976 when it was increased from \$6. We are also looking at our **picket pay** policy to bring it into the 21st century and will be getting back to you with our Executive recommendations at a future meeting.

IN DECEMBER WE met with our lawyer, Carolyn Askew, to review our constitution and bylaws to see what changes we needed to consider to improve the protection for the union's assets. We are working with her to help us protect them from **liability claims** and to make sure there's coverage in case of any bodily injury at a union event.

ON YOUR BEHALF, we delivered thank you **gifts to our CUPE brothers and sisters** and others who work closely with us at VCC before the holiday.

THE YEAR ENDED on a very sad note as long time colleague, **Lew Bloomingdale**, Department Head of Automotive Collision, passed away on December 22, 2003 after a valiant fight with cancer. A celebration of his life was held on January 3 at KEC. **Mario Trettenero**, Acting Department Head, co-ordinated the use of the College facilities during the break and did a great job setting everything up. Good work Mario and deepest sympathy to Lew's partner Ann, and his daughters, their spouses and his grandchildren.

Please get your bargaining surveys in by January 28th

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE ARE PLANNING to have **Dennis Anderson**, retired faculty from the former Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology and faculty union leader there, talk to us about **BC Campus** early this spring. This will be the second joint initiative between the **School of Adult Education** and the FA and will be open to the entire College community. **Dennis will be attending VCC as a student January and early February.** Watch for announcements of this event.

BY THE WAY, several members had **difficulty with their STD claims** last year. We continue to work with Human Resources to try to develop an independent process that will support members when their claims need to be appealed. HR and the VCCFA are also meeting with Sun Life this month to review claims procedures and concerns.

THE **JOINT BENEFITS Committee** has recommended that Sun Life and Pacific Blue Cross continue as our carriers after completion of a tendering process through Western Benefits Consultants. We could not support moving all of our coverage to Sun Life, even if it would be cheaper, as we have too many concerns to address with them. (see article on page 15)

THE COLLEGE IS in the middle of an extensive review and planning process for **International Education**. Donna Hooker, Director of VCC International, has welcomed our participation in the process. VP Frank Cosco will represent the FA at faculty related sessions. (see article on page 15)

in **Program Review policy** introduced at Education Council last fall. The current policy, written in 2000 has never been used while the parallel Service Review policy has been used successfully.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES remove the constituent groups from the process and have the Deans, not the Instructional Associates chairing the reviews. We have an arbitrated Consent Award that recognizes program review as "in scope" work to be done by the Instructional Associates, VCCFA members. The Award outlines a dispute process that the parties can use if there is no agreement. (see article on page 10)

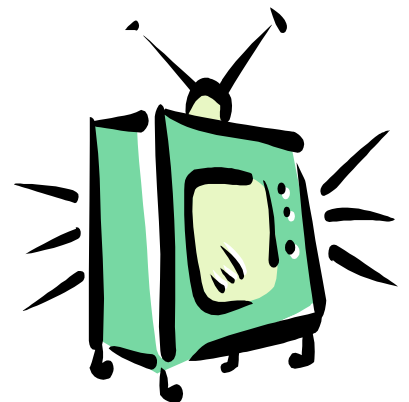
A NEW FEATURE we will offer to members this year will be our **own mini-film festival**. This will be an informal get together held monthly. We'll have beer, wine, nibbles and an interesting video each month starting **February 11 from 4-5:30 pm**. Drop in at our downtown office and join us when you can or make this a monthly treat.

PLANS ARE UNDERWAY for the **Annual VCCFA Appreciation Dinner** on March 29 at a location to be announced. This is when we thank the many FA representatives to all our committees and representative positions for their work on your behalf throughout the year.

IF YOU WOULD like to become active in the Faculty Association, just give us a call. We are looking for a member to serve on our

Scholarship Committee, which vets applications from union family members, (see page 12) and John Shayler, Chair of our **Community Action** group has asked for help finding folks to join this committee. This Committee finds worthy agencies and/or projects in the local communities around our two main campuses which can use some modest but we hope significant help from us, (see page 12). If you like giving away money, we have a job for you.

BEST WISHES TO each of you for a happy and healthy 2004



**VCCFA
Mini-Film Festival
February 11
4:00—5:30 pm
Downtown office**

THE 2003 VOTE OF NON-CONFIDENCE IN the Appointed College Board Members and the College President

FROM TIME TO time, some members ask why we don't lighten up on the College Board and College President. They say things like, "Get over the bad feelings. Move on. Withdraw the non-confidence vote."

OTHER MEMBERS ARE equally hard on us for not doing more. They feel that we should be doing everything in our power to have these folks removed from their positions.

MOVING ON MAY sound great to some people. Actions such as non-confidence votes often cause difficult and uncomfortable feelings and emotions to rise. However, relations between unions and management are not fundamentally about feelings. The members' vote, while naming the Board and the President, isn't against them as people, it's against their actions and policies.

THE VCCFA AND its officers try to live up to the standard of being hard on the issues and soft on the people. We are willing to be judged by that standard and we know we are not perfect. Nevertheless, we can't take full responsibility for how others react to our issue-based actions.

**So... what is the status of the non-confidence vote?
It is still in full effect.**

Why?

WELL, THERE ARE many reasons. The original issues that drove us to hold a vote of non-confidence about a year ago remain. And what's more, current practices have raised new issues that seriously affect many of us. A bit of a review may be in order.

- ◆ The cuts at VCC were the worst, the absolute worst, to happen at any post-secondary institution in BC, ever. The Board and President said they were needed because of fiscal constraints and projected deficits. But it turns out there was no way so many cuts were needed because of budget deficits. When we crunched the numbers and challenged the misleading naming of the "problem," the Administration and College Board could not show that we were wrong but they continued to take drastic actions based on a huge "anticipated financial problem".
- ◆ It's clear the size and scope of the cuts over the past two years was an action planned and carried out at VCC in order to run it as a business, ensuring surpluses (profits) and more flexibility for management in redesigning the college.
- ◆ It cost the jobs of over a hundred of our members and has, along with huge tuition fee increases, has produced the largest surplus the College has ever seen. (The latest news is that the College will use 3/4 million dollars of the 2003/04 surplus to buy equipment, even before the year is over. Isn't equipment supposed to be funded by the ministry?) It's clear that the College cut too much.
- ◆ Tuition and other fees have been raised to the point that many students we were serving can no longer afford to come to VCC. Enrolment is down in some areas and fear of further layoffs is rampant.
- ◆ The layoffs were to have been deep and painful but quick so we could move forward in new strategic directions. This has not happened. We're starting our third year of dealing with members who have been transferred, extended, recalled and re-laid off. This has created a climate of distrust and despair in many areas. For many, morale is at an all time low.

THE 2003 NON-CONFIDENCE VOTE

- ◆ There has been little or no re-investment in our remaining people and programs. If, for the first time in thirty years the College now has a sizable surplus, why not make its people the first priority instead of equipment?
- ◆ Making people a priority would mean creating a sense of security for those still at the College. It would mean investing in people and programs, creating curriculum development projects and funding people-centred projects. Instead, we have over two dozen people who are being treated as if they were yo-yos, constantly moved in and out of work. There is currently no need for any more layoff notices.
- ◆ Faculty continue to be frustrated by the lack of infrastructure and educational support at the same time as they are expected to plan university transfer and degree programs and many other new initiatives.
- ◆ “Discipline”, a word seldom heard in our years at VCC, has been used a great deal in the past few months. Even Department Heads have been called to disciplinary meetings, mostly over perceived affronts to the authority of management. The days of trust, respect and a collegial workplace are becoming a memory.
- ◆ Access to the College Board has been reduced. Subcommittee meetings are in camera and the ability to speak at the “public” portion of the Board meeting has been restricted to our report at the end of the meeting.
- ◆ On the labour relations side, we have the largest numbers of unresolved grievances of any College in the province. The climate of resolving grievances at an informal stage has disappeared and many grievances have advanced to arbitration. This is expensive for the College and extremely time consuming for us. A wise manager once told us, “... management gets the labour relations it deserves.”
- ◆ The cuts were concurrent with the new Strategic Plan. Some features of that Plan were helpful and enabling to many programs. The VCCFA did not therefore oppose it outright. However, those remaining at the College want to feel they are just as important and valued as any other part of the College and, unfortunately, many still do not feel they are being treated equitably.
- ◆ The College has become a much more top-down operation. There is a concerted effort to both limit input by the College constituents and limit their role. Faculty, who do the primary work of the College, are not being given the appropriate respect for their views. Our role as educational leaders in our disciplines continues to be diminished and challenged.

So, by way of conclusion, the vote of non-confidence was taken by the members and belongs to the members.

As matters stand now, nothing has happened over the past year to raise our confidence in the President or the Board.

We will continue to work with them and with administration as cordially and professionally as we can, but at this point our members’ judgment of their performance is still correct.

When we see some significant movement on even a few of these issues we should notice a difference in the climate and morale at VCC. At some point it may lead to a restoration of confidence. We will be delighted to report any improvements if and when they happen.

We welcome your input. Call us at the VCCFA Office or respond to us through this Newsletter on this or any other areas of concern.

Lizz

for the Executive

Freedom 55--Not Likely

Why are there no Early Retirement Incentives being offered?

Letters of Interest should be sent out and Incentives Offered

Article 22 of our Collective Agreement says that the College "may offer" or faculty "may request" an ERI (Early Retirement Incentive). To facilitate that process the college is to send out an annual "letter of interest" to the +55 set. Anyone interested in receiving an ERI is to respond and the college then does a ranking and estimate of how many it can offer. It is not obligated to offer any but over the past decade VCC led the province in this area. It usually offered about ten a year. Ironically, even the post of Director of Human Resources opened up early a couple of times when both Bonny Baty and Karen Kelly took ERIs.

The College has told us they won't be bothering to send them out because they won't be offering any ERIs in fiscal 04-05 as they didn't for 03-04.

But, why not?

We thought it might be that they think they're too expensive. But, rather than being expensive, we think they are essentially free to the college as long as it can come up with money for the initial incentive.

We asked for a meeting with Peter Legg, Director of Financial Services and Rob Henderson, Director of Human Resources. We detailed the effects over five years of allowing a step one instructor to leave with an incentive. The chart below details the effects depending on which step the person is replaced at. One can see that when replacement instructors are at step 10 through 7, they not only essentially pay for the incentive, but, at the bottom three steps, they also allow the college to **make a profit**. At higher steps the college doesn't cover all the cost of the incentive but such costs can be set against the gains made by replacing others at lower steps. Of course there is also a gain that cannot be costed in that a replacement instructor is in place rather than a senior instructor who would rather retire early.

Chart of Potential Cost and Savings of replacing top step instructors with instructors at various steps.

(Only full time instructor salaries are used. Amounts are rounded.)

	ERI of \$73257				
1	73257	84978			
2	68238	79156	5822	(5822)	67435
3	65445	75916	9062	(14884)	58373
4	63048	73136	11842	(26726)	46531
5	60651	70355	14623	(41349)	31908
6	58254	67575	17403	(58752)	14505
7	55857	64794	20184	(73114)	143
8	53460	62014	22964	(87016)	(13759)
9	51063	59233	25745	(100919)	(27662)
10	48666	56453	28525	(114821)	(41564)

A - base salary in 2003-04
 B - A plus 16% benefit cost
 C - differences between top step + benefits (\$84,978) and each of the other steps in B
 D - cumulative savings to the college as a replacement instructor progresses through a 5 year cycle. A replacement instructor at step 2 only saves \$5822; one starting at step 10 and moving up to step 6 would save the college \$114,821 dollars compared to an instructor at top step for five years. The five year period is used because leaving around age 60 was the most common example of people taking ERIs, the savings would continue but because the instructor would have to retire at 65 in any event, any further savings wouldn't be due to the ERI.
 E - this column shows the amount the ERI of \$73,257 either costs or saves the college according to which steps replacement instructors come in at. For steps 6 and below, the calculation ends after 5 years.

WRITE TO ROB HENDERSON

At our meeting the college reps agreed that these numbers show the type of costs or savings that would occur.

So, why no incentive?

The College reps said our model was not complete because we didn't take into account that the person leaving might have retired early anyway, without an incentive, and therefore the savings gained through the early retirement would not have been as great.

We think that's unlikely to say the least. While everyone's finances are unique, almost all faculty at VCC cannot maximize their pension benefit even by the time they reach 65. It's only possible if one has worked full-time from age 30 or earlier.

The incentive is just that, an *incentive*, it has given many a sizable amount that helped to bridge the gap between what their pension would have been and what it will be upon leaving early. If the pattern of no incentives continues, people will not retire early at anywhere near the rate they have. Currently, the words "retention and renewal" are often bandied about between management and labour--we know what retention means, renewal has to mean something too.

The last VCCFA member to receive an ERI left on March 31, 2003. That and the other 02/03 ERIs were arranged in fiscal 01-02. In fiscal 02-03, no letters were sent out.

Because the college was laying off many, many people in 2002/03 it focussed its attention on Voluntary Departure Incentives (VDIs), which are mandated in Article 8 of the Common Agreement. There are two main differences between VDIs and ERIs. One, VDIs are only available to senior instructors in areas where there are lay-offs, while ERIs are available to anyone in the College over 55 and are allocated according to age and seniority. Two, the amount of the incentive is lower with a VDI (\$40,000 in 02/03 and 03/04) because it comes from a pool of money that is to be used for severance to those being laid off.

Now, with 2003-04 almost over, no "letters of interest" have been sent out. Our college is now in a surplus position. There is no comparable need for VDIs.

We believe it has more than enough to kick-off a comparable annual ERI program to what it offered in the previous decade. It will then get its money back. It will achieve renewal of faculty by helping those leave who want to and creating spaces for new hires. It makes good sense.

So, why are there no incentives?

We can't figure it out.

Dennis O'Neill, a senior instructor and a former VCCFA president, has recently written the college requesting an offer of an ERI as per the collective agreement. They said no.

That's not good enough.

We have raised this issue several times with the College Board and with College Management. In order to strengthen our campaign and give us an idea of how many instructors would seriously consider accepting an ERI, **we encourage every interested instructor over 55 to follow Dennis' example.** Write to Rob Henderson, Director of Human Resources, cite the collective agreement, and request an offer of an ERI. Make sure you copy the union on your request; and, if the college doesn't, copy us on their response. Here's a suggested letter format.

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Mr. Rob Henderson
Director, Human Resources
VCC, King Edward Campus

Dear Mr. Henderson

Re: Early Retirement Incentive

As per Article 22.1 of the Collective Agreement, I believe I will qualify for an Early Retirement Incentive in fiscal 2004-2005.

I have not received a "letter of interest" from the College as referred to in Article 22.3(a) so I am writing to request that this letter be considered my application for an Incentive.

In order to facilitate my planning I would request a response as soon as possible.

Yours truly,
cc VCCFA

Annual Report to Faculty

By Faculty member of the VCC College Board

Norm Dooley

The last 12 months have been marked by some of the most difficult decisions and resultant actions that any VCC college board has faced in the nearly 40 years of its history. While I can say with confidence that I have acted and voted consistently for the protection of programs and student access to education during this time, it was nonetheless an enjoyable period when viewed in hindsight.

I consistently found my views to be those of a vocal, but largely ineffective minority. I did not like many of the decisions that were taken by the Board at the management's recommendation. I put my point of view across, but still I lost all of the critical votes this year that dealt with the lives of students and the careers of my colleagues. At least, I put forward a point of view that was consistent and unapologetic in its defense of the college's true business. However, what I did not like was the tenor of some of the meetings. Allow me to explain.

Unwillingness to Deal with Details

Repeatedly, members of the Board have expressed a wish to deal with the College's business only at the policy level. In other words, information about college programs, problems, changes and detailed actions were discussed only if they bore relevance to the college's greater mission which for now is the fulfillment of the Strategic Plan. The demise of a good program--like Printing Production--with a fifty-year history went largely unnoticed. Nor was the loss of hundreds of seats of access in ESL seen with much remorse. Decisions about tuition increases were weighed comparatively. "Tuition in Ontario and Alberta are, after all, higher than in BC". I found the absence of a personal connection between board members and the lives that were affected to be disturbing. The atmosphere was almost corporate in quality. We had simply eliminated costs and improved the bottom line.

A Black Picture

The Board was presented with a number of financial scenarios early in 2003 in preparation for a vote on recommended tuition increases and program cuts. Each picture was more desperate than the preceding one. The presentations by management that took place over several sessions were--without exaggeration--bleak. Dire financial scenarios were presented with certitude and most Board members were convinced that the college stood at the precipice of financial disaster for the coming three years if action was not taken immediately. And while I took it as true that the college's financial position for 2003-04 was not ideal, I could not accept the need to implement measures in 2003 in order to balance a budget in 2006. I lost that vote. The college is running a substantial surplus as it approaches the last quarter of the fiscal year.

Actions without Impact

Still in December of 2003, the Board can not fully appreciate the ramifications of its actions. The board does not know the extent of job losses at the college nor does it appreciate how tuition increases have affected students because they do not receive much information on those topics. Recently, I complained that the management's reporting of enrolment was substandard because the reports that were given were inexact and lacking in detail. This is not a trivial point for the Board needs to understand the status of enrolment. Enrolment figures are the primary means of assessing the college's overall productivity. The Board needs to know whether enrolment is being affected by increased tuition; but that is difficult to determine when it is not provided with clear, unadorned information.

Annual Report to Faculty

Fear

I was surprised to see security measures being discussed at one meeting and when I asked why, it was explained that there was a possibility of violence during the public session of the Board. Some Board members were actually frightened by the potential for extreme action from unhappy college employees and students. I was shocked to hear that. I knew that the ensuing public session of the board would be emotional, but I also knew that violence was an extremely remote possibility. That episode still bothers me and indicates to me that there is a need for better and more direct communication between Faculty Association members and individual members of the Board.

Few Hard Questions

At times the elected members of the Board alone are left to query management on issues and recommendations. It is as if there is a gentleman's agreement not to delve too deeply, or at least a reluctance to ask hard questions. As I have mentioned, this may be due to how some members of the Board see their role. I think this reluctance to probe, however, speaks more to some members' lack of understanding of the business of education. Unversed in the operations of a college and the regular issues that it must deal with, some of the appointed members do not feel comfortable asking questions for they are not sure where to begin.

Are Better Relations Possible?

My last thoughts are neither pessimistic nor optimistic. I think that in the final analysis better relations and communication between the Board and the faculty at VCC depend on the initiative of individuals and their departments. Faculty needs to establish working relationships with individual members of the board in order that they better understand our programs, our students and us as professional educators. We need to assist the Board to make more substantial connections with the larger community on our behalf; and we need to help the Board communicate the value of our work to the community and to the province. This can only be done if we reach out to the Board in ways that challenge existing stereotypes. Such efforts to communicate can not hurt and they will undoubtedly result in better governance of the college.

Norm Dooley



ADMINISTRATION WANTS MAJOR CHANGES TO

Program Review Policy

Program Review is the internal process by which departmental programming is evaluated. As well as leading to beneficial renewal, it can become the basis for changes in programming and even for terminating programs. Except for externally-accredited programs such as Dental Hygiene etc, most programs have not been reviewed recently. This is despite the fact that since 2000, there has been a clear VCC policy mandating annual "informal" reviews and once every five years a "formal" review for every department.

To our surprise and without any type of notice, VP Joan McArthur-Blair introduced a radically-different Program Review Policy to the November meeting of Education Council. The November meeting also happened to be the first meeting for many newly-elected council members. We were quite alarmed that the VP seem to say she would have no difficulty if Council passed the policy as it was at its next meeting in December.

We intervened with the VP, with faculty Council members, and with interested IRAs as soon as we could. We did an analysis of the proposed changes, and pointed out what we felt could be the results of passing the policy as it was written. On the process side we asked that as a minimum Council not pass the proposal in December and that it create a process where there could be hearings for any group or person who may want to present.

Our initial critique can be viewed on our website at vccfa.ca, click "News," then "Bulletins," it is the first one. If anyone would like a paper copy please contact the VCCFA office.

Council did create an Ad Hoc committee that was to review the policy and report back. Given the Christmas holiday and the fact that quite a few departments close even earlier in December we anticipated that the committee would meet in January. We received an email, dated December 22nd, from the VP (not the committee) stating that their process was finished, the policy had been redrafted, and would be before Council at its January 13th meeting.

We again intervened in the first week of January. We stated that it still was not appropriate to pass this policy without a real opportunity for input. We believe this policy is very important. The proposed draft moves a great deal of program evaluation and eventually program design--what had been under faculty discretion and control--to Deans and Vice-Presidents. When we get a chance we will voice our views. In addition to the point above, we think the current policy proposal:

- ◆ increases the workload of Department Heads
- ◆ weakens the previous role of the VCCFA on review committees
- ◆ weakens the opportunity for staff and students to take part on the review committees
- ◆ makes unnecessary changes to the 2000 policy
- ◆ heightens the formal role of external groups
- ◆ reduces the ongoing role of Education Council itself
- ◆ creates a major jurisdictional issue in that the settlement of the arbitration of the Associate Dean issue specifically placed program review in the job description of the new Instructional Associates, this policy once again tries to remove that work to management

**There will be a meeting for input on Friday,
January 23rd in Room 200
(Administration area of City Centre)**

We urge Department Heads to make themselves familiar with what is planned and to discuss the implications of the changed policy with Education Council representatives

NEWS, VIEWS AND THANK YOUS

College Surplus Getting Too Big so Money Moved

At least that's our take on it. As we have reported, at the halfway point in 03-04, the surplus was about \$3.4 million. That must have been getting a little too rich, so at the November Board meeting about \$1 million of it was allocated, about \$250 thousand to student bursaries, which is a good thing, and about \$750 thousand to capital projects. (This was reported at the December Education Council meeting.)

Operating surpluses moved to capital, will wonders never cease? It is the responsibility of government to fund capital needs not our students through their inflated fees. If we have to have an operating surplus, could we think about using it to invest in our people and programming for a change? Just as one small example, we all know that at VCC there's never been enough curriculum development and research funding for faculty....they're so used to us working full out in the classroom, they can't seem to imagine anything different.

College Board

The Board met in November without us in the cheap seats as it fell on the same night as our Annual Meeting, Norm reports that we were conspicuous by our absence.

Survey

Marg Nelson, our rep to the CIEA Status of Women Committee has distributed a survey on family and workplace issues. Please return them to her, c/o the CCA Dept., KEC, her local is 7356

Student Day of Action, February 4th

The burden of tuition fees continues to be the focus of the national "Day of Action." Our student unions will be organizing mass participation of VCC students on that day. Please show your support by facilitating your students' participation. In December, Education Council passed a motion stating that it supported the request that *"no students be penalized academically for his/her participation..."* and Council requested that *"faculty make every effort to accommodate those students who wish to participate...."*

Awards Ceremonies

It was most heartening to attend the award ceremony in November and to watch the stage-full of fine people receive their awards. In conversation at the reception, one student said he had come from business where they pay \$1000 a day for training that was nowhere near the quality, breadth and depth of what he received at VCC.

The VCCFA members give 5 awards of \$500 twice a year. The 4 fall winners were

Health: Usuf Mohammed--Resident Care Attendant

ESL: Safiqua Noorzay--College Preparatory English

Hospitality and Business: Michael Elrington, Hospitality Management

Career, Design, Trades and Technology: Mariko Tsuruga, Hairstyling

We received the following thank you note from Safiqua.

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The Faculty Association's Awards Department
Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to take this opportunity to present my heartfelt gratitude for selecting me as the recipient of this award. My special thanks go to the donors who by selecting me as a champion have opened up the doors for me to reach even higher goals in pursuit of my education.

I would also like to thank the CPE, ELS, and Visually Impaired programs, the teachers, coordinators and my counsellors who supported me by providing proper equipment...and books... Their support and encouragement has been the key to my desire for continued education and to live a normal life despite the debilitating blindness that I suffer. At this time I am looking forward to achieving my grade 12 English certificate which will help me reach my goal of becoming a counsellor.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Safiqua Noorzay

Thanks for the work of the Community Action Committee

Ten students at the Adult Learning Centre at First United Church wrote to say thanks for a grant the

To the VCCFA,

We, the students at the Adult Learning Centre would like to thank you very much for the generous cheque you have given us for our food program. Many times it has come in handy when we are most hungry or have something special to celebrate. In some ways, we learned to budget or make decisions about what to buy with the weekly amount, as some choices are cheaper than others. We really appreciate the opportunity to come to the Centre to study, and as Norm says, it's one of the few glimmers of hope many students have in their lives. We hope you will continue to support this class in the future and know that your kindness is truly appreciated by each and every student.

Yours sincerely, (it's signed by 10 students)

Centre received from our members.

Kudos for our Website: www.vccfa.ca

Nice note from Hope Mooney, Office and Legal Administration Department, who says she likes "the format, layout and easy to read information.... Congrats to all those who had input into the design...."

Negotiations News

The Committee has worked hard to put together a detailed survey on possible bargaining issues. It needs to be **returned by January 28th** so they can digest results before the provincial bargaining conference on February 6-7th.

PSEA (the Post Secondary Employers' Association) takes over College Board's Mandate Role

When it gets to the crunch in bargaining; the union may say, "Ok, we'll take that to our members," or "We can't go there, our mandate is for the opposite." Management has said, "We'll have to check this with the mandate committee of the Board." Well those days are gone for management as PSEA is taking over the role of bargaining agent from the College Boards. We don't know yet what exactly this will mean, but it may be very significant. This move gives PSEA authority to tighten its control over all aspects of bargaining. Stay tuned on this one.

Provincial Conference on Education

On February 13th and 14th, in Richmond, the BCTF along with CIEA, CUPE and the Canadian Federation of Students are sponsoring a conference entitled "*The Education We Need for the Future We Want.*" VCCFA members are encouraged to attend, registration is free but needs to be done in advance. For more information call the office. There'll be VCC and VCCFA presence in that our music department students will be doing music on Friday night and two members, Lyn Lennig and Nina Kozakiewicz are among the presenters on Saturday. Their workshop is on immigrant and ESL issues. Registrations are due by January 30th.

Scholarship Applications now Available

Call the office for an application. Applicants must be family members of VCCFA members. The scholarship is for study at a Canadian public post-secondary institution.

The scholarship application is also available as a PDF document on the website homepage (www.vccfa.ca). Due date is March 31, 2004.

The Dangers of Knitting

From the foreign news desk of the Globe and Mail: Teachers in Uttar Pradesh, India, have been told to stop knitting in classrooms and pay more attention to their students. "They are often more interested in knitting than teaching," the principal secretary for education claimed. Teachers though aren't dropping this stitch. "People concentrate better when they knit," argued their representative in the state legislature. In a related local development, members of the BCGEU have been told not to bring their knitting to union conventions. Can CIEA and the VCCFA be far behind? *[How come they get a rep in the legislature?]*

What to call a group for new faculty? How about the "New Faculty Group"

For many years we have used the term "non-regular" faculty to organize terms, auxiliaries and part-timers around issues of fairness and equity for newer faculty. While many activists in Canada and the US say the VCCFA has negotiated among the best conditions for new faculty in North America, we can do better.

Our committee's been less active lately, but we still have terms, auxiliaries and part-timers and also new regular folks. We could use a few people to help get this group going again. For the time being we could call it the NFG (New Faculty Group) or any better name somebody can come up with. It would liaise with CIEA's provincial standing committee (still called the Status of Non-Regular Faculty Committee--SNRF--yes, snurfs) which gets together a couple of times a year.

Anyway let us know if you'd be interested. Call or email the office.

Court Case vis a vis term length and the powers of Education Council

The wheels of the law grind exceedingly slowly but by the time you read this we should have finally filed our court case against the College.

The case is quite simple. College administration decided to cut one of our major programs from 4 to 3 months in order to save money. In our view, the College and Institute Act sets out that they must take any such proposal to Education Council so that Council could give its advice to the Board. The College administration did not take a change in term length to Council or to the Board. It just imposed them. In our view, not to challenge that action would create a dangerous precedent. CIEA is supporting the costs of the case. We have twice discussed the case with the College President and sought assurances that would allow us to drop the case. In our view, his response was overly vague and non-committal, so we are taking the action forward.

Election of Executive and Stewards

Our new Executive and Steward group have both had their first meetings of the year.

The 2004 Executive are:

Lizz Lindsay, President	Brenda Appleton
Frank Cosco, Vice-President	Cheryl Draper
Perry Taylor, Treasurer	Robert Kunka
Colleen van Winkel, Secretary	Virginia Monk
Ingrid Kolsteren, Chief Steward	George Rudolph
Vinit Khosla, Negotiating Chair	Settimio Sicoli

Welcome to Robert and Virginia who are newly-elected (Virginia for her second stint).

Perry, Colleen, Settimio and George were re-elected to two year terms and the others are continuing members.

Many thanks to **Thomas McLeod** who stepped down due to a leave of absence.

The 2004 elected Stewards are:

Continuing

Wayne Avery	Wayne McNiven
Jim Davies	Rene Merkel
Lyn Lennig	
Ingrid Kolsteren [Chief Steward]	

Re-elected

George Rudolph
Maggi Trebble
Rose-Marie Watson

Newly-elected

Pauline Barratt
Leona Friesen
Janice Sigston

Volunteer Stewards-in Training

Malcolm Cant and Michelle Rosko

Many thanks to **Holly Cole and Moreah Hamend** who have stepped down after long service to many, many members. We know they'll continue in some capacity.

Also many thanks to former stewards **Janet Zlotnik** (ESL) and **Grant Gibson** (Printing) whose jobs were cut by the College. All the best.

Annual Meeting Report

We had a great gathering of over 100 members at the Croatian Cultural Centre, with the usual good food and cheer. There were also the requisite number of annual reports which members should have received in written form prior to the meeting, all were efficiently received and we quickly got to the social part of the event. Happy to see recent retirees **Thorne Husband and Lorne Houldson** from Counselling, **Grace Shaw and Jean Cockell** from College Foundations, **Eva Sharell**, Library and many union positions, former union treasurer **Sam Lewindon** who also did a few things for the College, and ESLers **Jim Barabe, Raminder Dosanjh, Geoff Flack, and Ed Soltis**.

We were also glad that CIEA President **Cindy Oliver**, who brought greetings, and our CIEA Staff Rep **Linda Sperling** could join us.

There was a short **General Meeting** just ahead of the Annual Meeting which featured:

(1) an interesting report from **Norm Dooley**, faculty representative on the College Board, on the disconnect between the appointed members of the Board and the actual work of the College. He has provided his points in written form which you can find on page 8.

(2) **by-law amendments** which will lower the quorum at membership meetings and clarify the ex-officio status of some Executive members were given Notice of Motion. That motion will be introduced at the next General Meeting.

(3) an interesting discussion of **the cap on the number of consecutive terms** (currently two except for Instructional Associates, which is at one) IRAs may serve. Points on both sides of the issue received a good hearing. The Negotiating Committee has included this point in their current survey

Next Membership Meetings

GENERAL MEETINGS SCHEDULE FOR 2004

Tuesday, February 10, 2004 - General Meeting - KEC - Room 2654, 3:30 pm

Wednesday, April 21, 2004 - General Meeting - Room 240, City Centre Campus, 2:30 pm

Thursday, June 10, 2004 - General Meeting - KEC Auditorium, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Friday, September 24, 2004 - General Meeting - Room 240, City Centre Campus, 2:30 pm

Thursday, November 25, 2004 - Croatian Cultural Centre - Annual General Meeting and Elections

You can find a more detailed calendar of events on our website www.vccfa.ca Click "Events" then "VCCFA Events"

University Transfer Issues

The union has heard from the new group of faculty involved in these courses and brought forward their workload and organizational concerns to administration. There has been some agreement on the nature and severity of the problem and we anticipate a resolution

Message from Dorn on International Education

There are many factors, many of which are beyond our control, which directly affect the number of international students VCC has at any one time. While increasing in some areas, overall registration slipped in 2003. There were quite a few negative rumours going around late last year and we intervened through a memo from Lizz to the Board Chair and the President to request an open process of dialogue with all concerned. As it happened, (probably spurred by the financial report for the first half of 2003/04 which showed about a \$124,000 shortfall where a \$385,000 surplus had been projected) about the same time the Board itself had asked administration to undertake a review, so President Dorn responded on behalf of himself and Board Chair Barefoot:

"...I do not think that the co-sponsored forum you suggest is appropriate within the context of this broader planning assignment. I do agree that the timing is right to reflect on our work to date and to have broad input into looking at the future, and intend this reflection and discussion to be accommodated with the planning assignment."

VCC International Director Donna Hooker is leading the review and has a schedule of consultative meetings set up, we indicated our interest in attending those meetings involving faculty, and have had our delegate at a couple of them.

Joint Langara-Vancouver Community College Benefit Committee Update

This committee is probably the last remnant of the old VCC which, prior to 1994, included what has become Langara College. Each college has voting representation from its faculty, staff and nurse unions and their administrators' associations. Up till now, it has been considered mutually advantageous and cheaper to market our plans jointly.

At a couple of meetings at the end of 2003 the much-delayed re-tendering of extended health, dental, disability, and insurance plans was on the table. Western received quotes from ten providers. Our current carriers, SunLife and Pacific Blue Cross, were among the most competitive and could in fact lower their rates somewhat. The total savings for VCC would be about \$68,000 a year. The total savings for VCCFA members (annual std premiums) would be about \$12,300, about \$2 a month per member. Union reps Lizz Lindsay and Frank Cosco supported Western's recommendation that the committee advise their Boards to renew with them.

After the joint meeting, the VCC committee continued meeting to discuss the future. Since past accumulated surpluses, such as the one-time demutualization monies, have been liquidated by improving coverage, there currently is not much ongoing joint activity except the tendering of plans. There was some consensus that continuing the joint committee only for this process was becoming a bit cumbersome so, we gave tentative agreement to exploring the separation of the plans from Langara. That issue will be explored further.

**NEXT GENERAL
MEETING
TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 10TH
3:30 PM
ROOM 2654
CCA AREA
KING EDWARD
CAMPUS**

STEWARDS

STEWARD UPDATE

First, we are happy to welcome our new stewards elected at the November Annual Meeting, **Pauline Barratt**, **Leona Friesen** and **Janice Sigston** and **Malcolm Cant** and **Michele Rosko**, stewards in training. (see back for full list). At the same time we will miss **Holly Cole** and **Moreah Hamend** who have stepped down from their steward roles, and **Grant Gibson** and **Janet Zlotnik** who lost their jobs in the cuts. We owe them much thanks for all their work and contribution to our union.

As always stewards are busy responding to many issues and questions. This report will focus on some of the main issues which underscore the current state of our challenging and troubling labour relations.

6 of 8 Grievances Near Arbitration

Currently we have 8 **outstanding grievances**, 6 of them are at the **pre-arbitration** state. One of our grievances is around our **grievance process**. Our past practice and Collective Agreement in article 12 lays out the grievance process. A steward representing the member and the relevant dean handles first stage grievance. Last spring the College took the position that the Associate Director of Labour relations would be present at all meetings. Instead of a member and steward meeting with their Dean to try and work things out, meetings now involve the Dean, the labour relations Associate Director. In response we have involved another union representative and the steward and the member.

Aside from scheduling problems, labour relations seem to be less about solving problems. They have become more formal and more adversarial. This is one of the grievances going to arbitration.

Sick Leave Changes

Another troubling issue is around lay off notice time and members who are sick. The college has taken the position that when an instructor becomes sick during the notice time, the notice clock will keep going. This is a change in practice, a contravention of the collective agreement and the Employment Standards Act. Although we have very few members in this situation, we were horrified to hear the College state that they have no obligation to put lay off notice on hold while some one is sick. Even more disturbingly, was the accusation that some of our members were 'abusing sick leave' and 'manipulating the sick leave to avoid lay offs'. We take huge offense at this. Our members who are on notice and are sick have serious illnesses and need to be supported and accommodated. We used to have an employer who supported and helped instructors who were sick. Is this the new strategic direction? We have filed a stage 2 grievance on this as well as a grievance for an individual who is in this situation. We have met with the college and are waiting for their response.

Last December we filed a policy grievance around the **ESL layoffs**

instructors were about to be laid off while there was work for them. That grievance has been resolved and the College rescinded the layoffs. Unfortunately they did re-issue new advance notices to 8 of the instructors. Issues around the cuts, lay offs and recall continue. We continue to work for our members and take up the many concerns.

Department Heads on Probation

Another grievance was the College's attempt to **place a department head on probation for their second term**. The College heard our arguments and the grievance was resolved at stage one. There are still other issues around department heads that we are following up, including one where the college has not informed the department head of the election result, an election that was held early December.

Breaking Up PD Time

We will, finally, be at **arbitration** for the **PD scheduling issue** this March. We look forward to having this resolved and our members being able to initiate their PD.

Consultations

We continue to meet to have regular 3:11s, these are union-management meetings. We meet about every three weeks. 3:11 is the 'Consultation on Instructional and Administrative Matters' clause in our

STEWARDS

agreement. The purpose of the meetings is to have a serious exchange of ideas and information before action is taken. At these meetings we continue to raise important issues of **Early Retirement Incentive** and the **Voluntary Departure Incentive**. More and more of our members are raising this issue. The College has raised the issue of **IRA release**. We have stated our concern that the work of IRA seems to be increasing and that we need more support to do the work and time.

Disability Claims

One issue that has been of concern to the College and us is when our members **are not able to access their STD, Short Term Disability**. We have been working with our members around accommodation back to work and have met with Sun Life.

There are many other issues that stewards continue to handle, including: scheduling, seniority, member to member issues, leaves etc.

Thankfully most of the issues do get resolved informally.

Stewards had a daylong workshop/meeting and we are ready to answer your questions (or find the answers) and represent you.

Please call a steward if you have any questions.

This year we will continue our practice of having steward drop ins.

Here are the upcoming dates:

Tuesday, January 20 @ International Ed
1 to 2 pm

Wednesday, January 21 @ KEC
12 to 1:30 pm
and
5 to 6:30 pm

Thursday, January 22 @ downtown Union office
12 to 1:30 pm

in solidarity for the stewards ing



DID YOU KNOW?

VCCFA
family members
can win a
\$1000
Scholarship
for study at
a Canadian public
Institution

Applications forms
are available
from the office

or off the union
website homepage

www.vccfa.ca

PARTICIPATE

VCCFA welcomes your input. Send your letter, comments and pictures to the editor.

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**We're on the
web
www.vccfa.ca**

Newsletter Editors:

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and
Audrey Vickaryous

for the
VCCFA Executive

**BARGAINING
SURVEYS
IN
BY
JANUARY 28TH
PLEASE**

VCCFA STEWARDS

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Malcolm Cant (in training)
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**To all VCCFA members:
Please print any changes that may apply to you
and forward through intercampus mail to the VCCFA office
Attention: Audrey**

Notice of Address Change

Last Name: _____
 First Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ Province: _____
 Postal Code: _____
 Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____
 Effective Date: _____
 Division: _____
 Department/Area: _____
 Status: _____