

SPECIAL EDITION ON THE EFFECT OF THE CUTS AT VCC

The following list of over 100 regular instructors is an indication of how great the disruption of the last couple of years has been. It includes those whose workloads have been reduced, those who are striving to keep a place at VCC, a few who have been happy to leave, and those who have been forced to leave. Every name represents a loss to us who remain.

We thank them for their past and continuing work and wish them all the best!

Kim Adams
Michael Agrios
Safder Alladina
Anita Anand
Patricia Andrew-Keith
Sylvia Arnold
Bob Audette
Horst Balthes
James Barabe
Miriam Bennett
Cynthia Bluman
Ruth Bornau
Norma Boutillier
Peter Bower
David Brooks
Betty Ann Buss
Beth Callahan
Gordon Cavenaile
Emma Chang
Ian Chisnall
Don Clarke
Jaime Clay
Jean Cockell
Karen Cohen
Kirk Costello
Tanya Cowie
Helen Cunningham
Laura Davis
Ingrid Defert
Jane Delost
Nina DiGiovanni
Raminder Dosanjh
Linda Duarte
Bonita Eberl
Susan Fielden
Geoffrey Flack
Margaret Franz
Jean Gallie
Jane Garnett
Sally Gellard
Barbara Gerber
Grant Gibson
Noreen Green

Bill Grose
Aphrodite Harris
Jacquie Harrison
Anita Henderson
Karen Jane Hills
Donna Hofmann
Loren Houldson
Thorne Husband
Anna Ilowiecki
Jostein Indbryn
Nadine Johnson
Tom Jurimae
Alexandra Karapanos
George Karpel
Jackie Kinnersley
Robert Kiyoshk
Peter Lear
Candice Lindsay
Ying Lo
Paulette Maglaque
Hilary Maguire
Jeanne Maki
Crystal Mann
John Marshall
Wayne Marshall
Randy May
Anne McElroy
Gwendolyn McKitterick
Thomas McLeod
Cameron McNamee
Shona Moody
Hope Mooney
Michelle Morissette
Jolanta Mroczek
Wilma Nederend
Nikki Nijhowne
Kata Niksic
Katharine Odgers
Kathy O'Donnell
Lisa O'Neill
Larry Perras
Thomas Petersen
Sarah Plamenig

Tom Quinn
Myrna Rabinowitz
Frances Rach
Mandana Rastan-Schnepf
Gail Reed
Bonnie Reimer
Bruce Rosen
Anne Ross
Susan Safyan
Jasjit Saraw
Maureen Sawkins
Barbara Schultz
Eva Sharell
Grace Shaw
Kerry Shepherd
Jack Singer
Ed Soltis
Helen Spencer
Ian Talbot
Mary Thompson-Boyd
Baiba Thomson
Taryn Thomson
Cathy Tolsma
Holly Vandale
John Vautour
John Villeneuve
Eroca Wheeler
Dan Zhang
Janet Zlotnik

.....and many non-regular
instructors.

TERMS FROM 2003 SENIORITY LIST

It's hard to know the fate of all term instructors. The list below is an attempt to show the names of some terms who worked in areas where we know there have been cuts well into the ranks of the regular instructors. This list of about 30 terms is a further reminder of the scope of the changes at VCC. One can imagine that several auxiliary instructors who regularly contributed to VCC are no longer able to do so. This list is not definitive. We apologize in advance for names we have missed.

E Warren, Library

W Reckord and D Maines of Electronics

F Hill and B Mitchell of Graphic Communication & Production Technology

N Beaulieu in Travel Agent

M Lynch in Business and Computer Studies

W Beauchamp, B Beeching, L Bowie, J Buckham, D Cartwright, T Fusco, K Georg, J Gilmore, E Harrop, C Indyke, E Joseph, J Keith, M Kotko, H Mankhof, S Pavlovic, B Raphael, N Ready, G Reisdorf, C Shelton, and R Zahar of English as a Second Language

R Acton, H Dempster and J Koch-Kalani of Basic Education

M Mills and D Jordan of Community and Career Education

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

Thank you to those members who have submitted short pieces on their thoughts on the changes at VCC. We have printed all which were sent in and will continue in the fall should we receive any more submissions. Submissions must be signed or have an email tag. If they are from a continuing instructor we will withhold the name unless there is a specific request to have it included. Each submission is from a different member, you will see we have included the name of a departing instructor.

Our students are under attack by the government – bus passes, health, childcare and now our college is part of the attack. I feel sad and disgusted and mad that our administration has not stood up for our students and programs. I feel we as instructors, the work we do and our students are not valued and not wanted. I feel sad to see my colleagues out of work in other departments and so much change and disruption and heartache. It is not necessary. I am grateful for support of my colleagues and students and feel determined to speak out and protect our program.

The cuts have really affected my morale. I feel that the college gave me the message that they don't care about students or employees. I've lost support for my students, support that is essential for their education – I.E.P.A., Computer Studies, and library hours.

I have been on advanced layoff notice since February 2002. This is an uncomfortable and depressing way to work. I watch my fellow instructors struggle every day to try and boost the morale in our program with our students. We do not even have the IEPA program as support. It is shameful. How terribly unnerving it is to work with an axe above your head.

There is no monetary value that can be placed upon the loss that VCC will suffer because of these faculty and staff reductions.

Those who remain will be expected to toil with their noses to the grindstone in a vain attempt to ameliorate the unamelioratable.

They who will be gone shall be an indelible memory of selflessness, in keeping with the others who have contributed to making VCC the fine institution it is today.

We thank you; will miss you; and, we wish you all the best.

What have we lost?

It amounts to hundreds and thousands of people! When I think of all our colleagues, including all the term instructors, who have left since the current downsizing first began, a hundred faces I know spring to mind. When I think of the impact of cutting ESL and ABE by over a third, I think of the thousand student faces that we should be seeing on campus, but won't. By changing the mandate of the college, I feel we are losing what we have always valued most: our local Vancouver community.

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

It is the uncertainty that weighs on us most. We can handle it, one way or another, if our jobs are terminated. We can and do handle the reduction in hours, the changes in location and the continuously shifting schedules. We cope with no longer being regular employees and take whatever work is offered us. But the shifting ground that is our future wears us down. We wait to see whether this job will continue for another month, let alone another year or two. All of us cope with this tremendous uncertainty daily. And we don't wear it well. I think we are all a little less healthy this year than last. I think we tire more easily. The stress we feel shows clearly in our faces and is palpable in the air of both campuses. We all suffer from this waiting – this waiting for more pain. I hope we weather this storm. I hope the waiting doesn't break us. I hope that in the end we will still offer something to the community that makes me proud to be a part of this place. I am worried.

VCC exists in a predominately immigrant community and, as such, the ESL Programs have historically been its "heart and soul" serving a myriad of students within the community. Over many years, we have worked diligently to build the excellent reputation of the programs at VCC. Based on our hard work, dedication, knowledge and a passion for teaching, we have been the biggest and best program in Western Canada. Although there has always been an uneasy peace between administrators and faculty, the attempts by previous administrations to try to destroy what has taken so much time and effort to create has always been to no avail, until now.

Once again we find ourselves under threat from a Board who have a mistaken vision of what's best for students and faculty. In addition we have an administration who haven't done a good enough job of defending our programs.

Change is inevitable, but it must be based on valid need, on the betterment of the environment in which students and instructors learn and teach; and finally, it must be based on mutual respect, trust and consultative procedure. Change is not based on one man's mistaken vision of VCC as a two-year university-transfer college; it is not based on a unilateral decision that because ESL is difficult to fund, it should be cut in half or eliminated altogether.

This college has made a profit of millions on the backs of students in the form of higher fees which they could ill afford, and the many excellent teachers who have lost their jobs in the name of "change." In reality this has nothing to do with change and everything to do with political power.

In closing, this board and administration does not have my confidence. They have served the needs of government more than the needs of our students. The final irony is that the cuts were managed by an administration made up largely of ex-ESL instructors.

Over the past year there have been many things that I have been dismayed about, but ultimately what has shocked me the most is the arbitrariness of the decisions that have been made. Throughout the long history of this community college there has been a spirit of camaraderie and trust along with a commitment to working together for our student. The past months have seriously eroded the trust instructors and students have in this institution. Sadly, this situation could easily have been avoided. We are not a bunch of dinosaurs clinging to the past; we would gladly have worked together on a strategic plan to meet the needs of government, the college and the community.

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

My personal observations relate primarily to changes in our department rather than changes in the entire College, as there have been many opportunities earlier on to address the overall changes at VCC.

Our College's Counselling and Advising Service is different than it was a year ago. We continue to be a strong department held in high regard by the entire College community although we are fewer in number, younger in age, and have more part-time workers. However, the availability and continuity of specific services and service providers have decreased. We continue to evaluate which services can be sustained.

Programs which have been supported by particular counsellors have and will feel significant loss. Three counsellors now alternate days between campuses. While this provides an opportunity for us to learn more about other program areas, it also means establishing new relationships and developing new liaison mechanisms.

The Advisors' responsibilities have expanded as they now respond to the questions that come through the VCC website. A Question & Answer information base has also been developed by our staff and will be up on-line by month-end.. The College has responded to these new demands with additional resources and there is a lot of excitement around the new ventures. However, continual bumping has meant that a significant amount of time has also been required for training new staff.

The part-time First Nations Advisor has found that her workload has increased significantly with the elimination of the First Nations Coordinator position. VCC was successful in its application for a second advisor on a short-term basis and that has provided some relief.

Disability Services have been impacted by a number of factors - the increasing number of students with multiple disabilities presenting, the elimination of IEPA, and the decrease in overall service as workers assume other responsibilities.

Changes in the length of term programs have resulted in some students with disabilities being unable to successfully complete programs or courses in the shorter terms.

I feel for the first time since starting at VCC many years ago, that my discipline, in general, and my department in particular are not seen as valuable programs by our administration. I feel demoralized by this lack of respect for the work we do and angry that my students are being dismissed as somehow unworthy. Our department has undergone serious maiming – too many of our staff have retired or transferred too suddenly; junior people who understand the department's culture are being laid off, the cuts to our program have meant limited choices for students and faculty. Other faculty who are transferring in to our dept are welcomed, but they don't understand fully who we are or what we do here. How can they? This departmental culture has taken decades to build, but it seems only months to start to disintegrate.

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

I have always felt that the innovative program offerings at VCC provided a unique and valued educational experience for a wide cross section of citizens within our communities. I hope that recent changes do not undermine this important role that VCC has undertaken in the past.

I see two trends that are bothersome. One is the emphasis on "training" as opposed to education. As services are privatized this happens. Employers only want workers who can come in and do the job for the least amount of investment and remuneration. But I believe the College's role is greater. I think it is very important that the College invests enough resources to permit teachers to be "educators" as well as just providing training for specific purposes. The College must continue to strive for excellence in programming beyond the mediocrity that seems so prevalent "out there" today. Yes, this costs more and takes more time but the end result is superior, and in the long run is beneficial for all in society. Margaret Atwood has touched on this in her latest novel *Oryx and Crake*.

The second trend indicates an ever-growing gap between those who have and those who don't. History shows that a civilization is marked not by how those at the top live, but by how those most in need are valued and treated. I recall hearing the recently deceased descendant of the Aga Khan speaking at the United Nations where he worked for many years. He pointed out that when we don't look after those less fortunate, all society suffers. I hear the word inclusive used a lot lately but I have the sense that it is selectively applied.

When we relegate those with learning challenges and barriers to fend for themselves and push them ever farther into the recesses of our society, we condemn all of us to a less worthy existence.

Despite the sadness I feel on leaving VCC, I will forever cherish the opportunity to teach here, as it has been a great privilege. From my heart, I wish all those remaining at the College the very best in the future as programs grow and follow new paths.

Nadine Johnson

Department Head of Institutional Aide, which has been cut

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

The cuts have really frightened my students. Most are very dedicated and responsible single parents desperate to get their education. Their Human Resource workers are constantly threatening to cut off their school funding and send them for job training. I am always fighting these workers and literally begging them to let these women stay another term. Our outreach Centre has been cut to ¼ time (2 mornings / week) as of April 2003. Students can only get preschool and childcare if they attend classes 4 days a week. These women are a very close-knit group who feel comfortable with the support at the Centre. Now it has become more difficult for them. They comment that now they are anxious and stressed out trying to look for other classes, look after and pick up their children and go to meetings with a different worker every time they turn around. They are burnt out. It is ridiculous to have these cuts when there is such a demand for adult literacy.

Some of their other concerns:

- No afternoon class means not enough time for reading and writing
- High tuition fees could affect them later
- Computer program gone – they have to learn to use computers so they'll have to go somewhere else
- Aren't as many tutors as before – not as much help
- Not as much support in the library
- Food prices have gone up
- Why is there money for new signs, new clocks, new numbers, new sidewalks but no money for students?
- Too much time between terms – no classes in December, July and August
- Worried about future courses and jobs
- Missing IEPA
- Less time for students
- Missing computer studies
- Waiting to see librarian – library closed when they need it
- Less choice – door is closing
- Application fee is too expensive and some have to pay it twice

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web
www.vccfa.ca

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Attention: Audrey**

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