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- Stephen Phillips

## Layout

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## Contact Us

For more information about the LFA contact Amy Kwan, Executive Assistant, 604-323-5343.

Our office is in Room A212.

Website: <https://www.lfaweb.ca>

## From the President

Some of you may have noticed the recent announcement in the media about the Economic Stability Dividend and its impact on public sector unions' wages. Although many of us who bargained in the last round thought that we were unlikely to see any wage increases as a result of the Economic Stability Dividend (ESD) language in our Collective Agreements we have been pleasantly surprised.



We learned recently that during the week of November 10 Statistics Canada released the 2014 provincial GDP data which showed that BC's economy had grown beyond that which was forecast. This is good news for all unions that negotiated the Economic Stability Dividend (ESD). The ESD links wage increases to the economic performance of the BC economy. In order for the ESD to be paid as a wage increase, the GDP growth for British Columbia must exceed the Economic Forecast Council's forecasts which were set at the start of the (2014) fiscal year. The wage increase is calculated based on 50% of the positive difference between the forecast and the data released by Statistics Canada.

This November, Statistics Canada released its report, *Real Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices* that included the actual GDP growth for the provinces in 2014. The GDP growth in BC was 3.2%. This exceeded the Economic Forecast Council's projected GDP growth of 2.3% by .9%. According to the ESD language in our Collective Agreement bargained in the last round, "Employees will receive a general wage increase (GWI) equal to one-half (1/2) of any percentage gain in real GDP above the forecast of the Economic Forecast Council for the relevant calendar year."

This means that since the BC's GDP growth exceeded the Statistics Canada forecast by .9% we will have our pay increase by .45% effective February 1, 2016. Since we also negotiated a wage increase of .5% effective April 1, 2016 our wages will rise .95% this spring. Let's hope that the economic forecast for this year is also a modest one and that the economy out performs the forecast. If so then we could see another modest ESD wage increase next year.

*Lynn Carter*

## Bargaining Committee Report

The LFA settled our bargaining with the new agreement expiring in March 31st, 2019. The main features of our new agreement are represented below. It should be noted that many of the gains were negotiated through a detailed costing process driven by our bargaining team.

**Grievance and Arbitration:** Old language permitted a 3-person panel. Since we never used 3 people in an arbitration, we successfully got the employer to agree that a single arbitrator would be permitted.

**Advance of sick leave:** Faculty have been allowed up to 10 days of sick leave advance, however new language now stipulates that if faculty have been advanced the 10 days, they must repay the College prior to leaving their employment. In 20 years, only 1 person has failed to repay advanced sick leave.

**Medical and extended health benefits:** We maintained our deductible at \$50.00 and managed to improve access to hearing aids from \$1000.00 every 4 years to \$1000.00 every 3 years.

**Short-term disability:** STD cut-off was raised from 65 years to 70 years.

**Dental Plan (B: prosthetics, crowns and bridges):** Coverage was 60% with no provision for implants. We now have coverage to 70% and implants will be allowed up to \$2500.00 per person per lifetime.

**Dental Plan (C: orthodontics):** Coverage was 60% with a lifetime max of \$2500.00 per person. Coverage will now be 70% with a lifetime max of \$3500.00 per person.

**Additional parental leave benefits continuation:** College will now pay premiums for medical, extended health, dental. Faculty member can opt to pay own premiums for group life, voluntary life, STD, Long Term Disability, AD&D. As was the case before, new parents can still take that second year of leave without pay, but this new language means that fewer of their benefits premiums will be paid by the College.

**Personal leave:** Full time faculty can take 24 months full time leave then must return to work for 24 consecutive months. Faculty can take up to 48 consecutive months of personal part time leave then must return to work for 24 consecutive months. We are working on an interpretation document for this change. The change was considered necessary by the employer because under the old language, some faculty were taking  $\frac{1}{4}$  leave for 8 years. This will no longer be permitted.

**Harassment:** Changes to this article reference the investigator's report and who sees it and when. New language states that there be consultation with the LFA, College to determine what, if anything, should be redacted from the report in accordance with FIPPA principles.

**Expedited arbitration:** Previous language had a timeline of 10 days, however it was successfully argued that these timelines were almost impossible to achieve. New timelines have been extended to 30 days.

**Supplementary employment benefits:** Effective immediately, faculty not eligible for EI are not eligible for SEB. Effective March 31, 2018, SEB coverage increased to 75%.

**Offices:** College commits to principle of faculty who work on campus full time will be assigned to an individual office. Also there was a commitment from the College to a principle of no more than 1.25 FTE's per individual office.

**Technology:** A committee will be convened to prioritize the provision and maintenance of technology for classrooms, labs and offices. The College is committed to provide a laptop to any faculty member working half time or more and who has not been assigned an office.

**Support for department chairs:** A new committee will be convened to explore the administrative support needs of department chairs and programs.

**Salary:** 5.5% over 5 years. Same as the rest of the public sector.

**Economic stability dividend:** Same as everyone else.

*Our Bargaining Committee was: Lynn Carter, Darrell Kean, Cheryl McKeeman, and Scott McLean.*

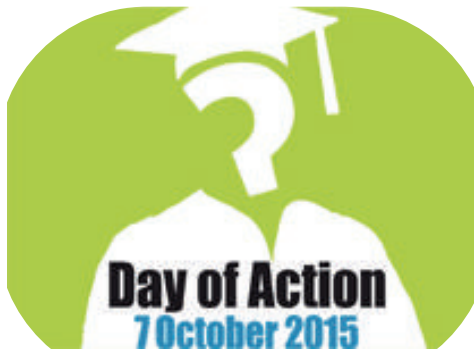
## Non-Regular Faculty Committee

On the evening of September 18th and day of September 19th I attended a meeting of the FPSE Non-Regular Faculty Committee. Here is some news from this meeting that might be of interest to LFA members:

Most colleges have now completed bargaining, but some are still in the process, for various reasons. One particularly ugly trend that has emerged at a number of institutions is regular faculty bargaining away basic non-regular rights (such as right of first refusal and/or re-appointment) in exchange for privileges for regular faculty (such as a right to take excessive overloads in order to benefit from increased pay). This mirrors the trend noted at American institutions by scholars such as Keith Hoeller (see my review of his Equality for Contingent Faculty in the Summer 2015 LFA Newsletter). "Divide and conquer" seems to be the order of the day.

In a number of institutions, representatives noted that their non-regular colleagues are increasingly afraid to speak up about their rights for fear of not receiving continued work. This is particularly demonstrated by the reluctance of non-regular faculty to participate in activities intended to raise awareness about their situations. Thus administrations are increasingly able to rule by fear.

Another point of interest is that an increasing number of colleges are recognizing that some teaching faculty engage in research, or are even expecting it. However, it is not clear how far this is going to be reflected in course releases, pay that recognizes research as equivalent to teaching, or similar forms of acknowledgement. This concern applies equally to permanent and contract faculty.



### Fair Employment Day

Some of you will have seen me in the foyer of A Building on October 7th, staffing a table to inform students, staff, and faculty about Fair Employment Day. This day was sponsored by CAUT to raise awareness of the situation of non-regular faculty at institutions across Canada, who now number about a third of faculty at our colleges and universities. On that day I was able to collect 100 signatures on a Pledge of Solidarity in support of non-regular faculty, which I then sent on to CAUT to indicate that despite the favourable situation that our Collective Agreement gives faculty at Langara, its students, staff and faculty will not simply stand by while others experience abusive working conditions at other institutions. Thank you to everyone who signed this pledge, and to Stephen Phillips for helping me to assemble materials for the day, Alison Curtis for doing a stint on the table, and Lynn Carter, Amy Kwan, and the LFA Executive for their support.

*report by Niall Christie, local 5832*

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## The Status of Women Committee

The Status of Women Committee met October 2-3. Committee reports from post-secondary institutions across BC highlighted two trends: the on-going cuts to post-secondary institutions which have had a disproportionate effect on women, who remain over-represented in part-time and non-regularized faculty roles; and harassment (especially stalking) of women faculty, staff, and students, both on-line and in person.

On October 26th, I organized an assertiveness and empowerment workshop for women students here at Langara. Facilitated by SafeTeen, a local organization, and funded by the College, the 2 ½ hour session provided a venue in which students could practice assertiveness in challenging, sexually charged situations. The workshop had 14 participants and was well received by attendees.

*Report by Lealle Ruhl, local 5392*

## The New Liberal Government: an auspicious beginning for higher education

It would be an understatement to say that the great majority of Canadians were relieved by the results of the October 19 federal election. Post-secondary educators had particular reason to welcome the election of a Liberal government given the dismal record of its Conservative predecessor on a host of issues. Academics were especially dismayed by the former government's apparent disdain for evidence-based policy, by its efforts to block public access to federally funded research, by its curtailment of trade union rights, and by the troubling implications for academic freedom posed by recent anti-terrorism measures.



*Photo by Steven W. Dengler*

These tendencies were evident in the short shrift given by federal ministers to evidence of climate change and in the PM's refusal to lead a coordinated national effort to reduce carbon emissions, leaving the provinces to develop plans of their own. Then there was the Harper government's embrace of mandatory minimum sentences for a series of criminal offences, despite near universal condemnation by criminologists and legal scholars. Noteworthy too was its abolition of the mandatory long-form census in favour of a statistically unsound voluntary household survey—a decision that prompted the head of Statistics Canada, Dr. Munir Sheikh, to resign in protest in 2010. Meanwhile the government abolished the office of National Science Advisor; weakened federal environmental laws; and laid increasingly heavy emphasis on applied science at the expense of basic research through changes made to the mandate of the National Research Council and the targeting of funds to NSERC. It also cast a chill on charities critical of government policies by conducting tax audits widely seen to be politically motivated. Trade unions were singled out for punitive treatment by Bill 377, enacted shortly before the election. The new law imposes stringent public reporting requirements on expenditures by unions but fails to apply similar rules to employer groups and industry associations.

Academic and professional associations like the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) helped to draw public attention to these matters during the recent election campaign. So too did faculty associations in BC. In cooperation with the CLC, FPSE supported efforts to boost voter turnout among educators and students, the latter group being especially vulnerable to the more onerous ID requirements introduced under the so-called Fair Elections Act. These efforts bore fruit as voter turnout rose markedly, including among youth.

The new Liberal government lost no time reversing several of the former government's most egregious policies. It lifted the ban prohibiting federal scientists from responding directly to requests for media interviews about their work.

*Continued on page 5*



## **The New Liberal Government** *(continued from page 4)*

It confirmed that the mandatory long-form census will be restored in time for next year's census. It also reiterated its promise to repeal Bill C-377.

Although higher education did not feature prominently in the campaign, the Liberal platform made a strong commitment to evidence-based public policy. A Chief Science Officer is to be appointed to ensure "that scientific analyses are considered when government makes decisions." The Liberals also undertake to make public the information on which key decisions are based.

That would be a welcome departure from the practice of the Harper government, which was found to be in contempt of Parliament in 2011 for refusing to disclose to MPs information on the estimated costs of major legislative initiatives.

In another welcome development, the Liberals have pledged to clarify the rules governing the political activity of charities, based on their recognition of the "important contribution" charities make to debates on public policy. On Bill C-51, the Liberals have promised to establish parliamentary oversight of national security agencies, but have yet to address concerns about specific provisions of the new law affecting academic freedom.

Higher education largely falls under the authority of the provinces. Even so, many of the problems besetting colleges and universities today stem from reduced federal transfer payments. That includes tuition fee hikes that have left Canada with the distinction of having some of the highest post-secondary fees in the developed world, according to a recent OECD study. Meanwhile recent federal cuts took a heavy toll on ESL programmes in BC. The Liberal platform made no commitment to increased transfers to the provinces, to granting agencies, or to student aid programmes. But in its Throne Speech, the new government pledged "to work with the provinces...to make post-secondary education more affordable." There are, then, some grounds for optimism. In any case, we can at least be grateful that the new PM appears not to share his predecessor's aversion to "committing sociology."

*report by Stephen Phillips*

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## **Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee Report**

Our HRISC met in October to plan for events on campus and the upcoming meeting of the FPSE HRISC meeting which will take place at the end of November.

Each year the FPSE HRISC organizes a speaking tour around the province. Last year we brought Jacinda Mack to 12 campuses across the province to speak about the Mount Polley Mine Disaster Response. Jacinda is the Mining Response Coordinator at the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council.

This year our local committee decided to suggest to the province-wide committee that the speakers tour feature someone who can speak about how we can get the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission implemented. You can read the TRC report and recommendations here: [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca)

At our meeting we also discussed the appearance of army recruiting posters on campus and decided to look into finding counter-recruitment materials that we could post up alongside them.

We are hoping to bring a speaker to Langara this semester from the organizers of *The Leap Manifesto*. The subtitle sums up the project quite well: *A Call for a Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another*. There is plenty to read on the Leap Manifesto website and you can also sign onto the manifesto as an individual: [leapmanifesto.org](http://leapmanifesto.org)

To join our committee please email Bradley at [bhughes@langara.bc.ca](mailto:bhughes@langara.bc.ca)

*Our HRISC committee: Alison Curtis, KC Emerson, Lisa Hale, Bradley Hughes, Robin Macqueen, and Stephen Phillips.*

## Education Policy Committee

The Education Policy Committee (EPC), a standing committee of FPSE, met in Vancouver September 25 - 26.

Most institutions have begun to charge tuition fees for Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses at the full rate charged for regular studies courses. Selkirk and Okanagan College are two of the few institutions still offering such courses free of charge. VCC and other colleges (including Langara) are now also charging tuition fees for domestic ESL programmes. As cuts in government support for ABE and ESL adversely affect the most vulnerable students in our midst, it remains a priority of FPSE to advocate for the restoration of adequate public funding. (Postscript: following pre-budget consultations this fall the BC Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services issued a report last month calling on Victoria to restore "full and sustained funding" to ABE and ESL programmes.)

In the months ahead a key focus of EPC members is to monitor the impact of classroom technologies on students and faculty at local institutions. In that connection Committee members are asked to provide their response to a discussion paper on education technology prepared earlier this year. Faculty wishing to read the paper may contact me to obtain a copy.

*Report by Stephen Phillips, local 5828*

**Name  
Your  
Newsletter!**

Since last Fall, this bulletin has been published under the working title, "LFA Newsletter." While serviceable, it's unlikely to win any prizes for originality. We'd like to publish the next issue under a new name; one that captures some aspect of who we are or aspire to be. So put on your thinking cap and come up with a felicitous name for our masthead. Amusing puns are especially welcome, as long as they're in good taste.

Please send your entry to Alison Curtis or Stephen Phillips by February 1 2016.

## College Pension Plan Seminar

Listen to pension plan experts provide insight on member benefits, pension options, and potential retirement income. Gain a better understanding of the tools and resources available to you. Note that registration for this session is required; reserve your seat though the website of the BC Public Sector Pension Plans: [www.pensionsbc.ca](http://www.pensionsbc.ca)

**Date:** Wednesday, January 27th

**Time:** 9:00 am - 11:00 am

**Place:** Rm. C509

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government has  
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and compromised the  
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