

FA Executive July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017

President:	Erik Jensen
Vice-President:	Stephen Rader
Past President:	Jacqueline Holler
Secretary & Member-at-Large	
Librarian representative:	Heather Empey
Treasurer:	Wendy Fellers
Members-at-Large:	
Faculty representatives	Kristen Guest Matt Reid Paul Siakaluk
SLI representative	Saphida Migabo
Term representative	Monica Mattfeld
Grievance Officer:	Catherine Nolin
Executive Director:	Donna Plourde

Newsletter Highlights:

- *President's Message*
- *Vice-President's Message*
- *Arbitration Update*
- *Chief Negotiator's Message*



Membership Social to Welcome New Members of the Faculty Association

Wednesday, September 30, 2015
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Wine Tasting at Northern Lights Estate Winery
745 Pulpmill Road

Fall Annual General Meeting

Thursday, October 29, 2015
12:00 noon – 1:30 pm
Location: 5-123 Gathering Place



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Erik Jensen, President UNBC-FA
Professor and Chair, Physics Department*

an excellent University that is focused on our students, both in the short and longer terms. As we settle into the rhythms of the Fall semester I wanted to update you all on the activities in the Faculty Association.

The new Executive Committee took office on July 1 and we have met several times so far. I am looking forward to working with the Executive - a great mixture of returning and new members with a lot of energy, enthusiasm and dedication to the membership. We have a new Association Grievance Officer: Dr. Catherine Nolin (Geography) who has stepped into this role as of September 1, following Fiona MacPhail's completion of her two-year term (Thanks again Fiona!). In addition we have hired a new Part-Time Administrative Assistant Wendee Copeland, who is located in room Admin 3084. The Association previously had a P/T Assistant for a number of years but had to work without this position filled until recently – having Wendee work with our Executive Director, the FA Executive and our Members will enable the Association to function more smoothly and better apply attention where it is needed to serve the membership.

One of the first important tasks for the Executive is to plan a strategy for the upcoming arbitration proceedings to complete the negotiations for our Collective Agreement. Although the previous Agreement expired on 30 June 2014, we continue to work under its terms until the decision from the Arbitrator. By working through the processes under the provisions of Section 55 of the Labour Relations Act that ended the strike, we have agreed with the Administration on Arbitrator Stan Lanyon, and we have the arbitration hearings scheduled up to 5 days running from mid-November to early December. The Executive Committee has asked Drs. Jacqueline Holler and Ted Binnema to take the lead on preparing our arbitration brief, and they will be working hard on this in the coming weeks. Their report is included separately in the newsletter. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of other members of our Negotiations Team (Darwin Coxson, Shannon Wagner and Paul Bowles) who did so much to get the Association to this point in a difficult negotiating environment. They will be continuing to provide advice to Jacqueline and Ted as needed. After the arbitration hearings, we will await the Arbitrator's report, which would be expected in early 2016 and will not only conclude the terms on outstanding articles but also determine the duration of the next Agreement.

Welcome to the start of a new academic year!

I hope that you were able to re-energize after a difficult Winter semester– we all made a supreme effort to complete the semester successfully after the strike in March and reinforce our reputation as

While the FA Executive, Grievance Officer and Executive Director have been working on a number of issues over the summer, one in particular will require attention and participation from our entire membership. The Provost has begun an Academic

Planning process this past summer – a Stage 1 process has been running for several months now and will report out in the next few weeks. From the perspective of the FA, the Stage 1 process has been problematic in being underrepresented by Faculty in what is to be an *Academic* Planning process. It is proposed that this be remedied in the Stage 2 of the Academic Planning process, and it is important that the academic mission of the University have fulsome input from our entire range of Faculty Association members so that the Academic Planning process can properly build from our current strengths. You will be seeing requests for making contributions to this process, whether it is serving on the various planning subcommittees or making submissions to these. It is also vitally important that our various community partners participate, so I also encourage you to engage with your contacts to encourage their participation.

The recent events at UBC that led to the resignation of President Arvind Gupta after only one year, and the subsequent fallout, have again highlighted the challenges in academic governance and the relationship between the Board of Governors, the Senate, the President and administrators, and the faculty. The BoG membership at BC Universities is now dominated by order-in-council provincial appointees (at UNBC there are 8 such appointees, compared to our two faculty representatives), a situation that has gradually occurred over many years and has the potential to allow a schism to develop between the academic and administrative components of the University. The events at UBC demonstrated that a variety of issues of central importance to faculty, such as academic strength and structure and academic freedom, can be poorly understood by Board members. This will be an ongoing challenge for universities to manage and an important task for our Members to take a role in addressing. One positive approach is to ensure that the BoG members gain a deeper understanding of the academic mission of the modern university through various engagements with faculty and students. In that light, President Weeks' proposed joint Board-Senate events scheduled in March are an important step in this direction. I'm always surprised when I meet people out in the community who ask me about my long "summer off" – most of whom attended university here or elsewhere but have not seen or understood all of the other work that we do in our scholarly activities and administrative tasks that run all through the year. Educating this wider audience about what a university is and the role of faculty is of continuing importance for all of us.



Photo provided courtesy of the University of Northern British Columbia



A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

*Stephen Rader, Vice President UNBC-FA
Professor, Biochemistry Program*

Who cares about the Faculty Association?

I started working at UNBC in 2003, and initially I completely ignored the Faculty Association. In my naiveté, I assumed that on the one hand there would be competent, engaged colleagues ensuring that we had good contracts and working conditions, and, on the other, that we must have an enlightened Administration who recognized that the university's interests aligned closely with those of the faculty.

How young I was.

If the last four years have taught us nothing else, they have taught us that the Administration would happily negotiate us back to the stone age. Did you know they even tried to remove the Academic

Freedom article from the Agreement?

I now understand that, just like the price of liberty, the price of good working conditions is eternal vigilance. As American Abolitionist Wendell Phillips said, "Only by continued oversight can the democrat in office be prevented from hardening into a despot."

For these reasons, I have served the Faculty Association for two terms on the Executive, and now as the Vice President. I am honored to work with those dedicated colleagues who have given so much of their time and energy to ensure that we can carry out our scholarship and teaching with a minimum of disruption.



Photo provided courtesy of the University of Northern British Columbia

Greetings from the Vice President of the Faculty Association

As VP of the FA, my role is to support the President in promoting the interests of our members. Specifically, I chair the FA's Grievance and Appeal Committee, attend regional and national faculty association meetings, work with the administration to formulate effective policy and resolve conflicts, and of course attempt to help you, our members, in

any way I can. I also maintain the FA web site, so please don't hesitate to forward your suggestions and especially content that you feel colleagues would enjoy.

As we launch into a new academic year, I would like to welcome all of you and wish you a productive and rewarding year. I would especially like to welcome our new members and hope that I will be able to meet you in person in the coming days.

The FA web site can be found at: <http://unbcfa.ca/> It contains important archival information (the FA constitution and our current Agreement, for example), historical information about our certification drive and job action last Spring, and various resources to help you. We encourage you to think of your Faculty Association as your first resource if you ever have questions, concerns, or problems.

Freedom of research and the socially useful application of its results are dependent upon social factors. This explains why the scientists can exert their influence not as professionals but only as citizens. It further explains why scientists have an obligation to become politically active in the interest of free scientific research. They must have the courage, both as teachers and publicists, to enunciate with clarity their hard won political and economic convictions. Through organization and collective action, they must attempt to protect both themselves and society from any infringement upon the freedom to speak and the freedom to teach, and they must ever keep a vigilant eye in this field.

Albert Einstein

Source:

Einstein on Peace (1968) edited by Nathan and Norden
(<http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/12877644?selectedversion=NBD2945>).



ARBITRATION UPDATE

*Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator UNBC-FA
Professor and Chair, History Program
Jacqueline Holler, Past President UNBC-FA
Associate Professor, History Program*

We hope that you have all had a good start to this semester, and to our new colleagues, we wish you a seamless adjustment to your department, to UNBC, and (if you have just moved to northern British Columbia) to your new home community.

As you may recall, on 31 March 2015, the British

Columbia Labour Relations Board decided that the contract dispute between the UNBC FA and the UNBC Board of Governors should go to binding arbitration under Section 55 of the Labour Relations Code. On 17 April 2015, the parties agreed to request that Arbitrator Stan Lanyon be appointed to arbitrate this dispute. Mr. Lanyon has agreed. During the summer, discussions with the arbitrator were geared towards planning for the arbitration. A meeting with the arbitrator and the parties has been scheduled for 10 November. The actual arbitration is scheduled for 19, 20, 21, and 30 November, and 7 December 2015.

You will recall that our mantra throughout the negotiations has been that the members of the UNBC FA deserve a “sector norm” faculty agreement: salaries, benefits, and terms and conditions of work that reflect the norm at comparable universities in Canada. It is important to remember that the vast majority of articles of the new Collective Agreement have been negotiated successfully. The arbitrator will decide on only a relatively small number of articles—only all or parts of about thirteen articles are still in dispute. However, these issues are of great significance to you. They include tenure and promotion processes, compensation, leaves, benefits (particularly post-retirement benefits), and the duration of the Agreement. In the next few months, the UNBC FA bargaining team will be preparing our brief for presentation at arbitration. We will update you as soon as we have anything to report.

Have a great semester.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

*Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator UNBC-FA
Professor and Chair, History Program*

A Brief History of the Current Round of Negotiations at UNBC for those who are new at UNBC

Those who are new to UNBC will probably know some of the recent history at UNBC, but I will briefly provide a summary. Following a very frustrating round of contract negotiations/arbitration, the UNBC FA certified as a union in April 2014. Thereafter, the UNBC FA bargaining team immediately began negotiating our first Collective Agreement. Fortunately, there was a long and detailed Faculty Agreement in place for the first 25 years of UNBC's existence, and much of that Agreement was satisfactory to the members of the

UNBC FA. We expected that only a relatively few provisions in the Agreement would be subject to intensive negotiations, and we signaled that expectation to the employer on our first day of negotiations. Usually employers facing new unions are relieved when the union's bargaining team offers to retain most of the pre-certification Agreement.

Unfortunately, the Employer in our case announced that our whole first Collective Agreement would have to be negotiated from scratch. That was their right, of course, but when the Employer then tabled proposals that were not only completely out of step with Agreements in the university sector in Canada, but that were far worse than what had existed at UNBC before we certified, our members were very disappointed. We were also faced with very protracted negotiations over the Fall and Winter of 2014-15. Beginning in late October, at the UNBC FA's request, the parties also received the assistance of a mediator (Trevor Sones) from the British Columbia Labour Relations Board. It is important for you to know that the bargaining team, throughout the time of negotiations, was greatly assisted by the engagement of members. On several occasions, the membership availed themselves of opportunities to express to the Employer their views on the Employer's approach to negotiations. The involvement of the membership clearly had a very tangible and significant impact on negotiations.

Notwithstanding the support of members, and the work of the mediator, the Employer held firm on a number of issues, and the membership, on 15 January 2015, gave the UNBC FA executive an extraordinary 85% mandate to call a strike should it become necessary. The overwhelming success of the vote did cause the Employer to withdraw from some of its positions, but continued to hold firm on a few very important issues. Thus, on 5 March 2015, the members of the UNBC FA went on strike for the first time in its history. Encouraged by tremendous support from our colleagues in CUPE, by amazing public support, and support from other faculty associations, members were strong during the strike.

On 19 March, after 14 days of job action, the Employer made an application pursuant to Section 55 of the Labour Relations Code. Under Section 55 (available to the parties only in the context of a first collective agreement, and only after a successful strike vote), the UNBC FA was legally required to end its strike and to enter mediation again. After one day of mediation (on 25 March 2015) Mr. Sones recommended that the dispute be resolved through binding arbitration. Both parties agreed.

For all of those who are new to UNBC, I urge you to



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maintain the level of engagement that the membership has had at UNBC. The level of attendance at UNBC FA general meetings, and the attentiveness of UNBC FA members to contract negotiations is the envy of faculty associations at other universities. It makes a difference. Please, make every attempt to use the FA to stay informed about matters related to your workplace. The FA's ability to make a positive contribution to your job satisfaction is greatly enhanced when members stay informed and motivated enough to empower the FA.

I wish you a great start to what I hope will be a long and rewarding career at UNBC.

Ted Binnema, Chief Negotiator, UNBC FA

The Faculty Association Office has a drop-off basket for personal amenities (i.e. shampoo, soap, lotions) that are provided to travelers in most hotels and resorts, and are included in the rate charged per room per day. Please collect and bring any unopened personal amenities to the Faculty Association Office and these will be donated to the Elizabeth Fry Society and other shelters in our community.



Faculty Association Office

The Faculty Association Offices are located in Rooms 3084/3089 Administration Building:

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm
Drop-in hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30am – 12:00pm
By appointment: Monday–Friday, 1:00pm – 4:30pm

Donna Plourde, Executive Director

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Wendee Copeland, Administrative Assistant

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Website: www.unbcfa.ca

The Faculty Association Boardroom is located in Rm. 3085 Administration Building and is available for use by our Members. If you would like to book a meeting in the Boardroom, please contact Wendee Copeland.