



Federation of  
Post-Secondary Educators  
of BC

# A climate for learning, A climate for change



2008 - 2009  
Action Plan



## **A Climate for Learning, A Climate for Change: Taking Action to Advance Post-Secondary Education in BC**

Knowledge is critical to a sustainable future and through our work as post-secondary educators, we are able to contribute to the creation of knowledge. We look to governments, both federal and provincial, to ensure that there is opportunity and access for students who want to pursue a post-secondary education. In BC, the policy and funding choices of the provincial government have impeded that access and undermined that opportunity. Our members can become important advocates in the necessary public debate for changing those priorities.

Over the next twelve months, FPSE will target six major areas to ensure that our voice and input lead to progressive changes in post-secondary education policies and funding. Those six areas include:

1. **Continue to build capacity and skill within our activist ranks:** The 2008 Spring Conference marked an important point in FPSE's work with activists. The conference provided our activists with an opportunity to build new skills that will enhance their capacity to advocate on post-secondary education issues. FPSE will continue that work and provide ongoing research and updates on some of the critical issues in our sector.
2. **Organize the unorganized in post-secondary education:** At the 2007 AGM delegates committed to supporting an organizing strategy in post-secondary education. That strategy is beginning to have an impact. However, we need to do more and over the next 12 months FPSE will continue to support the work of the Federation's Organizing Committee to ensure that unionization becomes a viable outcome for faculty working in non-union institutions, and, where applicable, for those who work at our public institutions under the umbrella of a private enterprise or in continuing education departments
3. **Advocate for benefits and protection of our current members:** FPSE has a dedicated and talented group of labour relations Staff Representatives who provide counsel and advocacy for members involved in grievances and arbitrations. As well, our staff provide advice and input on a variety of benefit programs, as well as in emerging policy areas. Over the next year that work will continue with additional emphasis on advocacy for non-regular faculty, the strengthening of the College Pension Plan, benefits review, and preparing for 2010 provincial bargaining. An equity lens will be applied to this work.
4. **Increase public awareness of the importance of post-secondary education:** May 2009 is an important decision point for our province and we need to ensure that post-secondary education is an active part of the public debate leading to the May 2009 provincial election. As part of our ongoing

advocacy for post-secondary education, FPSE will push for measures that improve both access and affordability. In particular, FPSE will develop a broader campaign highlighting the problems within university transfer programs and the progressive solutions that need to be implemented.

5. **Work with our allies:** FPSE recognizes that our strength and effectiveness is greatly enhanced when we work with allies in both the labour movement and the broader community. Over the next year, FPSE will continue that effort by working with the Canadian Federation of Students, the BC Federation of Labour and progressive community organizations. Our efforts will target regions in BC where access and affordability problems have become critical.
6. **Preserving and strengthening BC's public post-secondary education system:** The recent conversion of some post-secondary institutions to universities is, despite the current funding policy of the liberal government, an opportunity to reshape the delivery of post-secondary education. All FPSE college, institute and university locals will continue working together in solidarity to ensure that the post-secondary education system delivers the broad array of educational opportunities that students need and want delivered in their community.

To achieve these outcomes, FPSE will focus its resources, campaigns and staff on actions that include the following:

**To build capacity and skills within our activist ranks FPSE will:**

- Work with locals to enhance their capacity to mobilize their members on critical post-secondary issues.
- Provide locals with workshops for their activists on topics important to skills building within their activist ranks. Those workshops could include the following topics: Facing Management, Advanced Shop Steward Training, Running an Effective Meeting, Occupational Health and Safety Programs, Negotiated Benefits, Women's Rights, Equity Policy and Procedures, and Organizing.
- Support and encourage the work of FPSE activists who are prepared to mobilize their locals and communities around issues critical to post-secondary education.
- Provide regular information updates to our locals on issues related to labour relations, post-secondary education, and the broader labour movement.
- Work with FPSE Standing Committees to draft policy papers on emerging issues in post-secondary education and labour relations issues.

**To organize the unorganized in post-secondary education FPSE will:**

- Support and resource the ongoing work of the FPSE Organizing Committee.
- Provide new certifications with labour relations staff support that will ensure the successful conclusion of first collective agreements in those new certifications.
- Strengthen the capacity of new members to engage in union activities by providing workshops on issues important to newly organized workers.
- Ensure that our materials and research are available to new and prospective members and that our materials address the concerns and interests of newly organized members.
- Where applicable, help locals organize instructors, lab assistants, coordinators and others who are not covered by collective agreements at their respective institutions.
- Work with the BC Federation of Labour and its affiliates to ensure that our organizing strategy supports the broader objectives of increasing union density and advancing worker rights.

**To advocate for benefits and protection of our current members FPSE will:**

- Make effective and strategic use of the Policy Table negotiations to ensure that the public post-secondary education system becomes more accessible, more affordable and better able to accommodate the growing skills, training and knowledge demands of our province.
- Use the Policy Table to inform the research and communications agenda in support of bargaining to ensure sufficient preparation for the 2010 round of bargaining.
- Lobby MLAs and MPs for adequate funding for the public post-secondary education system and for policies that protect the professional integrity and working conditions of post-secondary educators and the quality of public post-secondary education.
- Work with FPSE Standing Committees to develop strategies that identify ways to strengthen our current collective agreements in the areas of employment security, improved benefits, effective protection for non-regular faculty, better provisions for work-life balance, and equity policies and procedures.
- Work with the other College Pension Plan partners to address the lack of sufficient funding for inflation protection.

**To increase public awareness of the importance of post-secondary education FPSE will:**

- Work with member locals as well as the BC Federation of Labour to secure changes in the current system of trades training and apprenticeship that recognize the important role that public post-secondary institutions play in the delivery of trades training programs in BC.
- Collaborate with the Canadian Federation of Students on public campaigns and research that build greater public awareness of the importance of post-secondary education, and the affordability and access problems created by the policy and funding choices of the provincial and federal governments.
- Work with progressive community organizations and local Labour Councils to pressure local governments and other elected representatives to address post-secondary education issues in their community.
- Strengthen the ability of FPSE to advocate on behalf of member locals by staying actively involved in political action and social justice campaigns sponsored by the BC Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and other progressive allies.
- Work with member locals and our community allies to challenge post-secondary employers and their Boards who are attempting to cut programs and reduce access to post-secondary education in their communities.
- Continue to organize public forums to draw attention to the problems created by chronic underfunding of our public post-secondary education system and the unwarranted discretion given to senior administrators as a result of block funding. In particular, FPSE will press for system-wide changes that enhance the capacity of post-secondary institutions to deliver university transfer programs in those institutions.
- Work, in preparation for the May 2009 provincial election, with its allies to advocate for a comprehensive set of legislative and policy changes designed to strengthen all sectors of the post-secondary education system that FPSE locals represent.

**To work with our allies FPSE will:**

- Continue to support the campaigns of our provincial and national labour organizations with emphasis on the yearlong CLC campaign for women's economic equality "Equality: Once and For All!"
- Through organizations like the Charter for Public Education Network (CPEN), the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labour (COCAL), the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF), the Tri-National Coalition for the Defense of Public Education and other groups, work to promote both the importance of a properly funded public post-secondary education system and the full inclusion of faculty in the governance and delivery of that system.

- Create opportunities for partnership on specific issues with the Canadian Federation of Students and with faculty organizations that are currently not a part of FPSE.
- Advance our efforts to create an International Solidarity Fund by working with international organizations committed to the values that we believe are critical to sustainable international development and justice.

**To preserve and strengthen BC's public post-secondary education system FPSE will:**

- Fight to reinstate funding to colleges, institutes and universities to allow them to reinstate lost capacity such as the loss of university transfer, degree, diploma, trades and developmental education programs.
- Work with the other members of the Policy Table to enhance the transfer system to ensure a smooth transition from college to university.
- Work with the new universities to ensure the collective agreements of these institutions recognize their new mandate in a manner that respects the interests of all faculty.
- Work with college, institute and university boards to ensure the preservation and enhancement of trades and developmental education programs.
- Work with the Canadian Association of University Teachers to lobby the BC government to:
  - broaden the mandate of the new universities to recognize and protect the research and scholarly activity that has always been part of what has been happening at the colleges, institutes and, as they were formerly known, university colleges; and
  - ensure the governance structure of the new universities is more suited to their new role as universities.