



FPSE FOUNDATIONS

A guide for members



Updated September, 2021

This guide will give you a general overview of the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC. See our Policy and Procedures Manual for additional details and information.

We acknowledge that our workplaces are located on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories belonging to the Indigenous peoples of what is now known as British Columbia.

Welcome!

Welcome to FPSE! As a member of your faculty (and staff) union, you are part of our federation of post-secondary educators. FPSE is your connection to the labour movement and post-secondary organizations in BC and Canada.

FPSE in focus

FPSE's decision-making body between annual general meetings (AGMs) is our Presidents' Council. If there's an issue you are passionate about, talk to your union president to find out how you can become involved at the local and federation level.

You can find the full list of the objectives of our federation in our Policy and Procedures Manual (Section 3. Purposes), but here are the top 3 things we are working towards:

1. To foster and promote the objectives of post-secondary education in British Columbia.

2. To improve the economic and professional welfare of post-secondary educators, including faculty and staff, by organizing, providing assistance and support.
3. To foster effective communication and cooperation between member organizations and with other constituencies within BC's post-secondary education system.

We're looking forward to working with you to improve working conditions for educators, and in turn improving learning conditions for students.

Talk to your union president to find out how you can become involved at the local and federation level.



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Who we are

FPSE is a federation of faculty associations formed in 1970 to give post-secondary educators a provincial voice. We provide services and supports to our member locals, and enable the strategic focusing of resources on common issues. With 20 member locals, we represent about 10,000 faculty and staff at universities, colleges, and public and private institutions across BC.

Locals

Our locals are certified trade unions under the *Labour Relations Code*. Each local has a collective agreement with its employer, and is responsible for setting its own dues and running its own affairs. Each FPSE member local maintains its autonomy.

Locals have direct input in setting priorities, allocating resources, and drafting policy each year at our annual general meeting where delegates vote on resolutions to guide and direct our work.

We are 10,000 BC faculty and staff

The AGM allows locals to discuss challenges facing our post-secondary education system and explore how our collective response can make a real difference in the working lives of our members.

Executive

Members elect our executive at our AGM. The executive is led by our president, secretary-treasurer, first and second vice-presidents, and two members-at-large.

Presidents

Local presidents are elected by member locals. Presidents sit on Presidents' Council (PC), our decision-making body between AGMs. PC meets regularly.

Staff

Our president and secretary-treasurer work with staff at our provincial office to support member locals and enact initiatives voted on at PC and AGM. Staff representatives provide labour relations support, and organizing, education, policy, and communication services to locals. Support staff ensure the smooth operation of business.



Structure



Locals

Local 1	Capilano University Faculty Association	CFA
Local 2	Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association.....	TRUFA
Local 3	Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia	FACNC
Local 4	Douglas College Faculty Association	DCFA
Local 5	Kwantlen Faculty Association.....	KFA
Local 6	College of the Rockies Faculty Association.....	CORFA
Local 7	University of the Fraser Valley Faculty & Staff Association.....	UFVFSA
Local 8	Vancouver Island University Faculty Association.....	VIUFA
Local 9	Okanagan College Faculty Association	OCFA
Local 10	Selkirk College Faculty Association	SCFA
Local 11	Academic Workers' Union	AWU
Local 12	Camosun College Faculty Association	CCFA
Local 14	Langara Faculty Association	LFA
Local 15	Vancouver Community College Faculty Association	VCCFA
Local 16	North Island College Faculty Association.....	NICFA
Local 17	TRU Open Learning Faculty Association.....	TRUOLFA
Local 19	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Employees' Association	NVITEA
Local 21	Education & Training Employees' Association.....	ETEA
Local 22	Emily Carr University Faculty Association.....	ECUFA
Local 24	Quest University Faculty Union	QUFU

What we do

Labour relations

Our staff representatives are skilled advocates with in-depth knowledge of contract administration, the details of negotiated benefit plans, the grievance and arbitration process, and years of experience negotiating local and provincial collective agreements. Our budget includes substantial resources to cover the legal costs of arbitrations as well as additional legal challenges.

Skills and capacity building

We prioritize skill and knowledge building for locals by holding workshops on key issues. We established a Labour Relations and Public Advocacy Certificate program to ensure activists develop knowledge and skills to strengthen a local's capacity to represent its members.

Standing committees are part of our commitment to capacity building. Standing committees report to the Presidents' Council, providing advice, research and recommendations to local presidents. These committees address a number of important issues including decolonization, climate, pensions, education policy, health and safety, human rights and international solidarity, non-regular faculty, private sector faculty, bargaining coordination, the status of women, equity, contract administration, professional and scholarly development, disability management, and organizing.

Bargaining support

The importance of collective bargaining can't be overstated. We put considerable resources into supporting bargaining at the local and provincial level. Our staff representatives support negotiating committees to get the best agreement possible. We offer help with legal and contract research, draft language, strategic and tactical advice, team training, and can act as spokesperson at the negotiating table. We also prepare legal briefs and represent locals at the Labour Relations Board (LRB) or in arbitrations. We work closely with our Bargaining Coordination Committee and Presidents' Council to coordinate bargaining.

Defence fund

Our effectiveness is linked to our capacity to support job action. Our defence fund provides support for striking members. The defence fund is also used to support coordinated bargaining efforts in a bargaining year, covering some direct costs of having locals participate in the bargaining process. The defence fund has also been used to offset costs associated with court actions or for public campaigns.

Public policy and lobbying

We understand how public perceptions and government action affect institutions, and our members. That's why we monitor public policy issues and choices made by governments. We maintain an active presence on a number of fronts to ensure our voice is heard in the development of public post-secondary education policy. Every year, presidents meet in Victoria to ensure face-to-face time with MLAs. We undertake research polls to gauge public support for our issues. We work with community allies to ensure our views have broad support in the community. We issue policy papers and submit reports to governments, detailing specific changes we believe would strengthen access and affordability across our system. Part of our public policy work requires direct participation in government advisory processes.

Connect to labour

Our strength comes from our work with the labour movement. Through our affiliation to the National Union of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (NUCAUT), we participate directly in the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Canadian Council. The CLC represents 3.3 million workers in Canada; our affiliation allows our locals to participate in local labour councils and build strong links in our communities. FPSE is also affiliated with the BC Federation of Labour (BCFED), representing 500,000 members in BC; our president is one of sixteen BCFED officers. FPSE is also affiliated

with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), allowing us to access CAUT's national database on salaries, benefits and contract language in post-secondary collective agreements of 70,000 CAUT members at 123 universities and colleges. CAUT links FPSE to Education International, a global collective of educators working to improve access and affordability globally.

College pension plan

In the late 1990s, we achieved joint trusteeship in the College Pension Plan, giving plan members an equal voice in the management and oversight of our pension plan. Through joint trusteeship, we can appoint trustees. As a plan partner, we advise trustees on priorities that need to be addressed in the operation of the plan. We can also negotiate funding improvements through our work with plan partners.

We actively support the work of the Association of British Columbia College Pension Plan Retirees (ABCCPPR).



FPSE Purpose, Principles & Values

Purpose (10) The reason why we exist and why we do the work we do.

- To foster and support the objectives of post-secondary education in British Columbia.
- To improve the economic and professional welfare of post-secondary educators, including faculty and staff, by organizing, providing assistance and support.
- To foster effective communication and cooperation between member organizations and with other constituencies within BC's post-secondary education system.
- To work with other groups concerned with post-secondary education to create an environment which will better serve provincial and community needs.
- To act as the voice for member organizations on matters of provincial or national scope, while recognizing the need to preserve the authority of member organizations in matters of local concern.
- To seek effective representation on all relevant bodies dealing with policies affecting BC's post-secondary education system.
- To encourage inter-institutional cooperation, rather than competition, among members organizations and their own members in post-secondary education.
- To provide support, including strike/lockout Defence Fund and a disputes policy, to achieve satisfactory resolution of disputes.

- To foster cooperation between member organizations in matters of professional development activities.
- To assist member organizations in labour relations with employers.

Principles (12) How we do things or how our actions are guided.

- To represent the interests of its member organizations as established by the Annual General Meeting.
- Maintenance of local autonomy on all issues not assigned by the Constitution to the provincial body.
- Greater strength and credibility in making policy statements on a provincial level.
- Increased ability to provide management and information services on a centralized basis.
- Greater continuity of resources, services and personnel.
- Coordinated relationships with other resource groups.
- Stable commitment by member organizations.
- Maintenance of the right of each member organization to adopt central bargaining or to retain local bargaining.
- Recognition of, and respect for, the individual needs and interests of member organizations.

- Authority for the President's Council, between Annual General Meetings, to make policies in areas assigned to the Federation by the Constitution, provided such policies are not inconsistent with Annual General Meeting decisions.
- Provision for, and encouragement of, exchange of information on economic welfare and other terms and conditions of employment, and provision of assistance in the area of labour relations.
- Establishment and promotion of guidelines for professional and ethical standards for members.

Values (14) what we hold as worthy, useful and important.

- Education is of significant social and personal value.
- Respect between educators and learners is essential to quality education.
- Public education is an important social good and investment.
- Public education is a right and plays a role in supporting a democratic society.
- Academic freedom and the open discussion of ideas are critically important in the supporting of a democratic society by public education.
- British Columbia's public-education system should support equity in terms of learners, educators and the curriculum.
- British Columbia's community-based colleges, institutes and universities must offer a broad and comprehensive range of learning opportunities.
- British Columbia's post-secondary institutions must be responsive to learners, to the communities they serve, to the people who work in those institutions, and to the public which funds them.
- British Columbia's post-secondary system should strive for universal accessibility.
- Interaction between instructors and learners, and among learners, is essential for quality education.
- Quality instruction and support is key to student success.
- The rights of working people must be respected.
- Ongoing professional development is a member right and an institutional and member responsibility.
- Scholarly activity is integral to effective learning.

FPSE Strategic Priorities

2021-22 Strategic Priorities

The principles of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, anti-racism, climate action, and human rights will inform the following FPSE strategic priorities:

- Lobby all levels of government to recognize the importance of post-secondary with regards to achieving a just recovery from the COVID-19 crisis in BC, including the continued use of surpluses and deficit budgets in order that post-secondary educators can continue to do their work of getting the post-secondary education sector and BC economy back on track.
- Assess and address labour relation issues through employer associations, including collective labour board actions to address impacts to PSE faculty and staff as a result of COVID-19, as well as full consultative participation in plans for a safe and supported return to workplaces.
- Active engagement in the Advanced Education and Skills Training Ministry to review, revise, and restore public B.C. post-secondary education funding, including identifying funding gaps, challenges, establishing new goals and determining growth plans in line with a changing economy.



Ongoing Commitments

Labour Relations

- Enforce current collective agreement language and identify issues to address in the next agreement; provide labour relations and legal support services; and research bargaining, contract and labour issues. Keep non-regular faculty issues a high priority.
- Mobilize our power by coordinating and supporting members for collective bargaining goals and building high-participation unions through member education and engagement. Organize the unorganized at member institutions / regions.
- Provide education and training for members to fulfill a governance role, and coordinate with locals in monitoring board appointments and vacancies. Education and training shall emphasize the importance of prioritizing academic integrity in all governance decisions.

FPSE Policy-Driven Projects

- Adopt and operationalize the recommendations in the “Prioritizing Equity: Charting a course for a more inclusive and representative federation” initiative to advance the priorities of all equity focused standing committees, ad hoc committees and groups within FPSE.

- Strategic review of the current FPSE purposes, principles & values; operating procedures & policies; bargaining goals; training; committees & representation; staff representative capacity; education, labour & community organization partnerships, with recommendations for the 2022 AGM.

Advocacy & Policy Development Road Map

Ongoing:

- Collegial governance
- Improved working conditions
- Oversight of private institutions
- International education
 - regulation of recruiters/agents and international student tuition/fees
- Equity

Emerging:

- Data collection and data fluency
- Online learning
- Microcredentials

Committees

Bargaining Coordination Committee	BCC
Climate Action Standing Committee.....	CASC
Contract Administration Review Committee	CARC
Decolonization, Reconciliation & Indigenization Standing Committee.....	DRISC
Disability Management & Rehabilitation Committee.....	DMRC
Education Policy Committee.....	EPC
Human Rights & International Solidarity Committee	HRISC
Non-Regular Faculty Committee.....	NRFC
Pension Advisory Committee.....	PAC
Private Sector Policy Committee.....	PSPC
Professional & Scholarly Development Committee	PSDC
Women & Gender Equity Committee.....	WGEC
Workplace Health, Safety & Environment Committee.....	WHSEC

See fpse.ca/committees for committee details.

Meeting guidelines

- One person speaking at a time
- Allow everyone to contribute
- Respect each other's views
- Be aware of triggers (self and others)
- Ask questions to clarify
- Willingness to push boundaries and go outside comfort zones
- Be mindful of confidentiality
- The right to “pass” on commenting
- Contribute by sharing ideas and asking questions
- Acknowledge all types of diversity and experiences

Parliamentary procedure (basic)

MAIN MOTION

- Goal To get the meeting to take some kind of action.
- Rule Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable. No vote required if all agree and if confirmed by the chair. If agreement not achieved, majority vote required. All other motions apply to it.

TO AMEND

- Goal To make some change to the main motion without changing its intent.
- Rule Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable. Majority vote required. Amend, reconsider, close debate motions apply.

TO REFER

- Goal To refer the main motion to another body for consideration.
- Rule Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable as to advisability of referring, and as to instructions. Majority vote required. Amend, reconsider, close debate motions apply.

TO CALL THE QUESTION

- Goal To close debate on the motion under discussion.
- Rule Chair must first recognize mover. Needs to be seconded. Not debatable. Two-third vote required.

TO TABLE

- Goal To postpone consideration of a motion, usually to a stated time.
- Rule Needs to be moved and seconded. Not debatable. Majority vote required.

TO WITHDRAW

- Goal To withdraw any motion under consideration.
- Rule Not debatable. No vote required unless there is objection to withdrawal.

APPEAL / CHALLENGE

- Goal To appeal a decision of the chair.
- Rule Must be seconded. Not debatable. Mover states reason for appeal, then chair states reason for decision. Majority vote required.

POINT OF ORDER

- Goal To correct an error in the conduct of the meeting.
- Rule Not debatable. Point is decided by the chair, subject to appeal.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

- Goal** To propose a motion or raise an issue on a matter that may affect the honour, dignity, or safety of the meeting or of individuals.
- Rule** Not debatable. Point is decided by the Chair, subject to appeal. If a motion results, it is debatable. All other motions apply to it. Majority vote required.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- Goal** To allow informal discussion with straw votes that can lead to consensus.
- Rule** Motion to go into committee of the whole, needs to be seconded, discussion of options without normal restrictions of debate, motions, amendments, points of order, etc. Motion to come out of committee of the whole, chair reports to meeting. Action is formally moved, seconded, debated, agreed.

TO ADJOURN

- Goal** To adjourn the meeting.
- Rule** Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable. Majority vote required. Not normally made until all business has been completed, except in cases of urgency.

Post-Vote

TO RECONSIDER

- Goal** To reconsider the vote on the main motion.
- Rule** Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable. Mover must have voted with prevailing side. Majority vote required. Table, close debate motions apply. If motion succeeds, original motion comes back, is re-debated and voted on again.

TO RESCIND

- Goal** To annul a main motion.
- Rule** Needs to be moved and seconded. Debatable. Two-thirds vote required. Rarely used, and not in order if a motion to reconsider would have the same effect.

Consensus-based decision making

The following section on consensus based decision-making is written by James Madden of London, Ontario, who graciously permits their work to be reproduced with citation to the author (j.madden@sympatico.ca).

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR CONSENSUS-BASED DECISION MAKING (©2017 James Madden)

What is consensus-based decision making?

Consensus-based decision making is based on a *deliberate process of consensus building*, whereby members of a group actively participate in finding a decision together that all members can feel comfortable with. A consensus decision does not necessarily reflect complete unanimity. However, decisions reached by consensus do reflect the thoughts and feelings of the *group as a whole*¹, rather

¹ What makes a coherent group different than a mere collection of individuals? Complexity theory suggests that when individuals come together for a common purpose, under favorable conditions a qualitative “phase shift” may occur. The whole becomes greater than the sum of parts. This phenomenon is called “emergence.” A collection of individuals becomes a community, as problems are solved, work is accomplished, relationships deepen, common values are affirmed, trust builds, traditions develop, and a story is told. Community members are willing to set aside certain vested interests based on a more encompassing set of values or interests, without sacrificing their core values or individuality. This is neither “collectivism” (in which individuals unthinkingly surrender themselves) nor “individualism” (in which self-interest always remains the overriding consideration).

than just the majority. Effective consensus-building results in decisions that have been thoughtfully deliberated, incorporate diverse experience and views, and may produce the best possible decision given the configuration of interests that have come together for a given purpose.

The advantage of consensus-based decisions as compared with majority rule voting is that it avoids a fundamental problem often associated with voting. Voting may unintentionally result in a split or division in a group, a satisfied majority and disgruntled minority, a sense of winners and losers. Moreover, in the interest of efficiency, there may be a propensity to rush to a vote without full deliberation when opinion seems to be going in a certain direction. The consensus-building process is based on thoughtful, respectful, fulsome deliberation and an intention to find the best possible decision that suits the group as a whole.

Consensus decision making is based on the premise that everyone’s voice is worth hearing and that all concerns that come from a place of integrity are valid. If a proposal is deeply troubling to even one person, that concern is respected; if it is ignored, the group is likely to make a mistake. Various practical procedures and optional stances that group members can employ in navigating the sometimes unsettled waters of consensus-building are discussed in this document.

A group committed to consensus may utilize other forms of decision making (e.g., executive decision, majority rule) when appropriate; however, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for items of strategic importance, related to core values, or around which there is a common perception that “the stakes are high.”

What consensus-building is not

Having worked as a Community Developer in various settings for more than 35 years, I have been part of many groups, teams, and organizations that have nominally adopted “consensus” as their decision-making procedure. Very often when a group decides to use a consensus model, there is little or no discussion of what that means, and little knowledge about how to conduct an effective consensus-building process. What tends to happen in such cases is that the voices of the most assertive individuals or those with the most power (informal or formal) dominate and shape the discussion, often with many voices unheard, and without careful deliberation or full consideration of alternatives. This is especially likely when organizations have full agendas and feel pressure to move quickly to get things done. After brief discussion, a decision is proposed by the chair or other powerful member, who, after glancing around the room asks, “Do we have consensus then?” Showing little receptivity and giving scant time for alternatives to be voiced, “consensus” is quickly declared. At the other end of the

continuum are groups that, though seeking to follow the true spirit of consensus, are rudderless and seem to get bogged down in endless conversation loops, rehashing the same material over and over, with little sense of progress or movement to a fruitful decision. This primer seeks to assist groups to avoid these of kinds of pseudo-consensus traps, and to practice more effective consensus-based decision making.

When to use the consensus model

Making decisions by consensus may be more or less appropriate depending in part on what’s at stake with a given decision.

A full consensus-building process may be most appropriate for:

- Strategic² decisions
- High stakes decisions
- Decisions for which a strong, united front is important

A full consensus-building approach may be unnecessary or less appropriate for:

- Operational or tactical³ decisions
- Decisions which have relatively minor impact and affect relatively few

² Strategic: of great importance within an integrated whole or to a planned effect.

³ Tactical: of or relating to small-scale actions serving a larger purpose; made or carried out with only a limited or immediate end in view.

Necessary conditions

Certain fundamental conditions need to be met in order to conduct an effective consensus-building process, including:

- Agreement on core values
- Willingness of members to both express interests as well as assume a “disinterested”⁴ stance
- Willingness to make it work – belief in the value of consensus-building
- Active listening
- Sufficient time
- Patience
- Trust
- Succinct expression of views and concerns
- Skilled facilitation
- Conducive setting – properly bounded

A group intending to employ consensus-based decision making would do well to carefully consider the extent to which it can meet these conditions. Most formal groups go through foundational exercises when forming, such as developing vision and mission statements, and undertaking exercises to build trust. There are many resources readily available to assess a group’s readiness along these lines, and to assist groups with such processes. When consensus-building breaks down, it usually points to an absence or shortage in one or more of these conditions. Further comment with respect to some of these conditions is offered throughout this guide.

Making decisions by consensus can be challenging. It asks participants to be mindful and bring their best intentions to the process. When a group begins to work together in this way it may feel awkward at first and take time to develop a group culture conducive to the process. When it works well, it is a very

satisfying and energizing process. As group members begin to experience the difference it can make in terms of creativity, quality, commitment to and enthusiasm for decisions and planned actions, it builds the confidence and strength of the group.

The importance of creating a conducive setting

I have on occasion quipped after an unsatisfying meeting that community development training programs should include a required course solely devoted to how to arrange chairs for a meeting. The point is to highlight the importance of careful attention to conditions that are conducive to good group process. Just the impact of the type of room and seating arrangement on group dynamics are often overlooked and underestimated. Seating should be arranged so that all participants can make good eye contact and readily hear one another. It is amazing to me how much this one factor affects meeting process. Long, narrow boardroom tables are not conducive. Like good hosts at a dinner party, meeting conveners should welcome and encourage participants to connect informally as they begin to gather. Refreshments help. If participants aren’t well known to one another, name tags are important, and newcomers should be introduced and warmly welcomed. Extraneous distractions should be minimized so the group can focus. Almost like a formal ceremony, the facilitator should signal a clear opening to the meeting, which includes welcome and introductions, an overview of the purpose/agenda, and in early stages at least, a reminder about process guidelines. The idea is to deliberately create a “container” of dedicated time, space, and purpose, devoted to evoking the emergent process of consensus building.

⁴ Disinterested: Free from selfish motive or interest: unbiased (See also comment in footnote ¹).

Developing participation guidelines

Developing participation guidelines is a very useful exercise for any group to undertake when forming itself. When a group collaboratively develops guidelines for how it wishes to conduct itself, intentionality and commitment to the group's efforts increases. Here's a suggestion for how to conduct such a process. Pose the following two scenarios, asking each group member to jot down their ideas individually.

1. Think of a group you have participated in, that you found to be especially dysfunctional or unproductive. What were the factors that you think contributed to the dysfunction?
2. Think of a group you have participated in, that you found to be especially effective, productive, and satisfying to be part of. What were the factors that you think contributed to its success?

Facilitate a group discussion, seeking to build consensus around a set of participation guidelines. Revisit these guidelines regularly, especially when the group is about to undertake a challenging consensus-building process.

I have distilled the following participation guidelines from many years of experience.

In order for the group process to be:

- Enjoyable
- Constructive
- Productive
- Cooperative
- High Quality

Each member agrees to:

- Take responsibility for helping group achieve a positive outcome.
- Listen very carefully to what others are saying.
- Monitor his/her level of participation (neither dominate nor withhold).
- Be aware of the purpose, stay on topic.
- Engage with, build on, respond to the ideas of others.
- Express disagreement or concerns constructively and with respect.
- Be aware of how both verbal and non-verbal signals impact group dynamics.
- Avoid side conversations when we are conducting business in the group as a whole.
- Be fully present, for example avoid unnecessary use of smart phones.

Procedures for consensus decision making

Consensus-building does not follow a recipe. It is not a mechanical process – there is no algorithm to guide it. It is a quintessentially dialogical, emergent human process that incorporates thought, feeling, knowledge, imagination, and lived experience. Nonetheless, it is a process that can be undertaken deliberately, mindfully, and whose broad contours can be mapped and navigated as follows.

1. *An issue will emerge*, in a meeting, from an agenda item, from a general discussion, or from a member. First, the people connected with the issue explain it. The facilitator ensures that the issue is stated in clear and positive terms.

2. *Those present discuss the issue.* The facilitator ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak and that the discussion stays focused on the issue at hand. (See Comments on Facilitation section.) Members express their thoughts and feelings honestly and succinctly; rather than repeating what has already been well-expressed, a member can simply indicate agreement with others.
3. *A common answer to the issue may emerge* during discussion with a self-evident decision presenting itself. The decision is stated in positive terms and the facilitator canvasses each member to see whether all questions and concerns have been satisfied to the point that all can agree. If so, consensus has been reached and is noted in the minutes (together with an indication of who will take what actions and when, if appropriate).
4. *If consensus is not reached, a round may be initiated* by the facilitator. In a round, each member in turn has an equal amount of time to comment on the issue, without interruption and without comments from the others (although questions may be asked for clarification only, when the person is finished).⁵ When the round is over, the facilitator summarizes what was said and clarifies the current status of the issue.
5. Individual differences may have merged during the round into a common answer. If so, *the facilitator canvasses the group* for agreement and the consensus is noted in the minutes.
6. If consensus is still not achieved, a second round may be undertaken.
7. If consensus is still not achieved, the group has to decide:
 - a. Whether progress is being made and further rounds may result in consensus, or;
 - b. Whether one or more of the necessary conditions for consensus are not currently being met and if so whether an adjustment can be made to accommodate, or;
 - c. If there is some fundamental split in the group, such as a divergence among some members around core values. The matter under contention would likely point to the value(s) in need of clarification.

The power of the round

A “round” (as described in the Procedures section) is a simple and amazingly powerful technique that, when utilized at an appropriate moment, can help open-up and move along a discussion that has bogged down, or seems to be bouncing around between just a few of the more assertive members of the group. It is especially useful for bringing into the discussion the perspectives of more introverted group members. Whereas more extraverted individuals develop their ideas and get energized by “thinking out loud,” introverts work their ideas through on the inside. Their thorough internal processing often results in more fully formed, richly nuanced perspectives. Introverts tend to need to have some space deliberately opened up for their views to be expressed in the group discussion. More introverted participants can be encouraged to assert themselves and extraverted members reminded to contain themselves as part of the general process guidelines, but it is also

⁵ In larger groups (e.g., more than 12 to 15), members need to be particularly disciplined and attentive to good group process. Members need to be as economical as possible in their comments, while still expressing what is essential in their view. Members are encouraged to simply indicate agreement if another member expresses well their view, or briefly qualify a viewpoint previously expressed. If issues arise that seem to require more deliberation, one option is to table the item, and charge a working group to go away and further deliberate and bring options back to the larger group.

incumbent upon the facilitator to be attentive to this dynamic. This is not to disparage extraverts. Both energies are needed, but without deliberate attention to this dynamic, extraverts tend to dominant, and introverts' contributions are often lost. I have found that deliberately slowing things down and making space for quieter voices by using a "round" has introduced the new idea or creative element that breaks the logjam, synthesizes divergent threads of the discussion, and reconciles apparent contradictions.

Optional stances members can take

A critical ingredient for success in consensus decision making is the conscious intention of members to participate in a spirit of consensus building. This process is greatly facilitated when members keep in mind and deliberately express themselves in terms of the following optional stances.

Expression of concern: Rather than taking a hard-and-fast negative position, members express their concerns and the reasons for them. This allows room for proposals to be modified to meet the concerns.

Reservations: After fulsome deliberation, one or more members may find a concern has not been satisfactorily addressed, but that they consider that concern relatively minor. The member(s) would then indicate that they have reservations. They might say "I still have some unresolved concerns; I have reservations but I can live with it."

Non-support or standing aside: This stance allows a member to be clear that they do not agree with or support the proposed decision, without leaving or blocking the group from proceeding. The member might say, "I personally don't support this, but I won't stop others from doing it." The member

explicitly states that they are standing aside and this is noted in the minutes. If two or more members stand aside, perhaps additional work is required to conceive a more mutual solution.

Blocking or withdrawing from the group: Blocking means "I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. I perceive it to be in contradiction of our core values and/or unethical or immoral." Blocking can only be used very rarely without threatening the viability of the group. It should be a last resort. For blocking to be a viable option, an individual taking such a stand must be very clear, operating from deep conviction, and enjoy the trust and respect of the group. An individual may decide they do not feel justified in blocking the group, but neither can they continue to be a member based on the direction the group has taken.

If consensus breaks down: If several people express non-support, stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. Some groups decide to take "blocking" as an optional stance off the table, and instead opt for a steep super-majority decision rule, such as two-thirds or three-quarters majority, in the event the consensus process seems to have become intractable. Some practitioners of consensus-building argue that to allow this option negates the spirit of consensus. In some situations (e.g., a group or team operating within a hierarchical organizational structure), failure to achieve consensus may result in the decision-making authority defaulting to a "higher authority." Either way, the group needs to decide what they will do if it is unable to achieve consensus. It must be emphasized however, that if the necessary conditions are met, and procedures described in this guide are followed, the prospects for success are very good!

Comments on facilitation

The role of facilitator is very important in consensus-based decision making. Facilitation is a learned skill that can be cultivated with practice, though some people seem to have a knack for it. Personal characteristics of good facilitators may include: experienced with group process, strong intuition, sensitivity and empathy, ability to summarize and synthesize elements of the discussion in clear and succinct terms, humour, and appropriate assertiveness.

The group may have among its membership, and choose to call on to serve the group, someone who is a highly skilled facilitator. If a number of members are skilled facilitators, or if the group wants to assist members to cultivate facilitation skills, it may want to experiment with co-facilitation or rotating the role.

The Role of Facilitator:

- Create a safe and conducive environment for group process – physical space, opening the meeting, providing context, setting tone, establishing participation guidelines.
- Use the agenda to frame discussion points, manage time and help group achieve the meeting's objectives.
- Facilitate the process without unduly influencing the content of the discussion.
- Moderate the discussion as necessary with the “right touch” to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to participate:
- Use a “lighter touch” in earlier or emerging phases of a discussion
- Use more assertive interventions as discussion gets more energetic
- Track and periodically articulate the terms of the discussion as it evolves, seeking validation from the group that the issue is being framed accurately.

- Notice and articulate for the group at opportune moments, points of convergence and divergence in the ongoing group deliberation.
- Stay aware of and remind the group if necessary about consensus procedures, optional stances members may take, and participation guidelines.
- Make appropriate use of the “round” or other instant feedback techniques⁶ as a means of getting a reading on the developing sense of the group.
- Keep the meeting focused and moving at an appropriate pace:
 - Use intuition, pay attention to the energy associated with a discussion point.
 - Make group aware of time, check in to determine whether to continue on a point, table it for later discussion, or move on.
- Reinforce and support both “expression of concerns” and efforts by members to accommodate concerns through propositions that incorporate and synthesize divergent threads.
- Articulate and test for elements of consensus as it begins to emerge.
- If necessary, conduct one or more “rounds,” reminding members to speak economically while encouraging them to express all views relevant and essential to the decision.
- At the decision point, summarize the discussion, formulate the consensus statement in positive terms, and test for consensus.

⁶ For example, ask participants to indicate how they are leaning on a question using by show of hands for pro, con, or noncommittal; thumbs up/down; “clicker” polling technology, etc.

- If the facilitator feels too emotionally involved in a particular discussion and has difficulty remaining neutral, they should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item. (Any group member may suggest that the facilitator consider yielding the chair for a particular discussion or decision point if the facilitator is perceived to be too personally invested in the outcome.)

Learning the skill of facilitating consensus building

Probably the best way of becoming a skilled facilitator of consensus building is to attentively observe the process being conducted by an already experienced and skilled practitioner, while vividly imagining oneself in the role. And then, practice, practice, practice. Early in my career I had the good fortune of observing several skilled consensus builders. The most memorable instance was at the North American Bioregional Congress, which was held in the Grand Traverse Bay area of Michigan in August 1986. A group of about 80 ecological activists from across North American met daily over the course of a week to deliberate and come to consensus on a set of principles and actions to advance the Bioregional movement. Our facilitator was Caroline Estes, who had learned consensus building over the course of 25 years as a practicing Quaker and social activist. In an article published about that time that is still available on-line (<http://www.context.org/iclib/ic07/estes/>), Caroline describes the origins and history of the practice, including a long history and ongoing tradition within indigenous communities. Another excellent practical guide to assist in learning consensus building can be found on the website of the Wiccan social activist Starhawk (<http://starhawk.org/short-consensus-summary/>).

Conclusion

In this guide I have tried to offer practical suggestions as well as some more philosophical reflections on the process of consensus-based decision making, based on 35 years experience as a Community Developer.

Whereas a full, formal, consensus-based decision making process is not always necessary or appropriate, the spirit underlying consensus building can be brought by any individual to any group process. In my experience, these attitudes, skills, and stances applied in virtually any setting tends to help a group move in a more creative, inclusive, and healthful direction.



Our ways of being & knowing*

Overall

- Traditional way Anungwakwala; coming together in 1 way, 1 spirit (1 mind, 1 heart – local language)
- Protocol observation
 - Begin with prayers/ceremony
 - Invite elders/witnesses
 - Honour knowledge and wisdom
 - Recognize community scholars/wise ones
- Model our work
- 3 C's Connected | Contribute | Celebrate
- Be mindful of the balance of Indigenous people/settlers on committee
 - Balance roles
- Acknowledge our role as protectors
- Radical critique is needed of system
- Respect ideas
- Reach consensus/understand why not all need to agree
- Use circle for discussion (in appropriate direction on specific territory – counter-clockwise on Coast Salish territory)
- Make space for stories
- We are meant to be here/together
- Recognize ancestors of this place
- What does academic freedom mean in our context?
 - Collegiality – what does that look like?

Meetings

- Be prepared at beginning
 - Show up, be present
- Be comfortable with both urgency and being laid back
- Pay attention to the task at hand
- Self-care – food/drink
- Recognize that time is of the essence – use time effectively
- Create experiential learning opportunities
- Recommend a budget for public gift-giving/ceremonial sundries/protocol and gifts/swag (FPSE)
- Expect liaison to facilitate committee work
- Agenda is a plan, but prioritize the group's decision
 - Consider need for structure.
 - More time for process (rather than predetermined items)
- Listen/absorb what is being said:
 - Have chance to speak but can pass
- Take “something” back to locals
- Regular and scheduled breaks to be observed
- End on time/be mindful:
 - Closing circle

* Schedule I of the Decolonization, Reconciliation and



Working with each other

- Do things together
- Full participation for what we say
- Discuss disagreements in respectful ways
- Develop trust as part of process
- Be inclusive
- Use critical thinking skills
- Do not avoid conflict/differences of opinion (respectful discussion)
- Don't interrupt; avoid the word "should"
- Take ideas of strengthening our approach with/to locals
- Reciprocity of shared human dignity (Respect human agency) Ubuntu
- Intellectual and personal humility
- Be careful of what we say and do
- Learn to listen and listen to learn
- Recognize that we represent multiple nations and thinkers
- Create a safe space to speak what's on your mind
- Be responsible for energy we bring
- Hear each other out
- Be fiercely respectful of our ways of life
- Apologize if others are offended by our comments
- Some use terms interchangeably, i.e., legal connotations. Some are offended, some are not
- Basic teaching is to be welcoming
- *Good people can honestly differ*

Learn labour

Certificate program

Our Labour Relations and Public Policy Advocacy Certificate(LRPPA) provides comprehensive labour relations and advocacy skills development. The program draws on the expertise and skills of union activists in a collegial, interactive style to build your capacity to speak out for faculty. The certificate requires three core courses and three electives.

Core courses

1. Steward Training, Basic
2. Collective Bargaining, Basic
3. Job Action, Basic

All courses

Steward training

Two levels: basic and advanced. Provides practical advice on the role of a steward – leader, educator, communicator and representative – and in the investigation, preparation and representation of grievances.

Effective meetings

Plan and conduct effective, efficient executive, committee and membership meetings. Topics include meetings as an organizing tool, planning the meeting, the agenda, getting people to attend, and the role of the chair.

Disability management

Gives faculty representatives, activists and committee members the latest information on disability management issues and trends.

Working with the media

Media relations form a critical part of local communications work. This course will help locals work effectively with media on issues in your community.

Effective political action

Learn the basic steps of a political campaign – influence an election, secure bargaining objectives, or challenge an institution's policy or initiative. Learn the basic elements in developing any campaign and how those strategies and tactics can be used to achieve better outcomes at a local level.

Effective union executive

Designed to help local executive members develop effective decision-making procedures that build member involvement at a local level. Topics include goal setting, legal authority, fiduciary duty, and conflict of interest.

Layoffs

A review of legal rights and strategies to defend against layoffs and cope with those you could not stop. Topics include strategies and alternatives to layoffs; layoff by seniority; layoff notices; bumping rights; severance pay; recall rights; employee counseling; and more.

Governance

A guide to faculty representatives who serve on institutional boards, education councils and senates. Review important duties and responsibilities and encourage new members to participate in these functions.

Collective bargaining

Offered at two levels: basic and advanced.
A review of the bargaining process and strategies for success at the bargaining table.

Collegial authority

Reviews emerging issues faced by department heads or departmental committee members. The course explores how faculty can exercise their “collegial authority” with due care and balance their responsibilities in ways that avoid conflict.

Job action

Offered at two levels: basic and advanced.
Reviews legal and strategic issues when preparing for job action.

Leadership

Effective local leadership plays a critical role in member advocacy. This course reviews leadership elements necessary to advocate effectively for your membership.

Member-to-member conflict

Workplace tensions can lead to serious labour relations problems. Learn how to deal with conflicts and increase understanding and effective communication between members.

Advocacy

Our skills as advocates can make an enormous difference in the outcomes we secure for members. This course focuses on skill building to ensure better local advocacy.

How do I sign up?

Access our education program in one of the following ways:

Locals

We provide on-site workshops upon request. Our most popular workshops are Steward Training, Collective Bargaining, and Effective Union Executives. Ask your local executive about scheduling a workshop.

Committees

We offer workshops and development events for our standing committees. If you’re on a committee, ask your chair about scheduling a workshop.

Spring conference

Workshops and educational opportunities are offered at our spring conference. The conference (in non-bargaining years) focuses on developing the skills and knowledge of our membership and activists. Ask your local executive about attending.

At our AGM

A range of workshops are offered to AGM delegates. Topics include trends in post-secondary education, human rights, workplace safety, violence in the workplace, and government policy.

At our office

Sometimes, we hold Saturday workshops. Watch for notices for any upcoming events. Register, space is limited.

Resources

FPSE Websites

fpse.ca

history.fipse.ca

Presidents' Council

<https://www.fipse.ca/about/governance/presidents-council>

Executive Committee

<https://www.fipse.ca/about/governance/executive-committee>

Policy and Procedures Manual

<https://www.fipse.ca/about/governance/policies-procedures>

FPSE Committees

<https://www.fipse.ca/committees>

Social media

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Youtube](#)

[FPSE podcast on podomatic](#)

[FPSE podcast on iTunes](#)



Abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education	CASC	Climate Action Standing Committee
ABCCPPR	Association of BC College Pension Plan Retirees	CAUT	Canadian Association of University Teachers
ACIFA	Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association	CCFA 12	CAMOSUN COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 12
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada	CCL	Canadian Council of Learning
AWU 11	ACADEMIC WORKERS' UNION FPSE Local 11 (Coast Mountain College CMTN)	CFA 01	CAPILANO UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 01
BCC	BARGAINING CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE	CCOHS	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
BCCAT	BC Council on Admissions and Transfer	CCPA	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
BCCP	BC College Presidents	CEU	Compensation Employees' Union
BCFED	BC Federation of Labour	CFS	Canadian Federation of Students
BCGEU	BC Government and Services Employees' Union	CICAN	Colleges and Institutes Canada formerly Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)
BCI	BC Investment Management Corporation	CIRB	Canadian Industrial Relations Board
BCITFSA	BC Institute of Technology Faculty and Staff Association	CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
BCNU	BC Nurses' Union	COCAL	Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor
BCPSCA	BC Post-Secondary Counsellors' Association	CORFA 06	COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 06
BCRTA	BC Retired Teachers' Association	CUFA BC	Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC
BCTF	BC Teachers' Federation	CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees
CABRO	Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office	CUPW	Canadian Union of Postal Workers
CAF	Canadian Apprenticeship Forum	DCFA 04	DOUGLAS COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 04
CARC	CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION REVIEW COMMITTEE	DMRC	DISABILITY MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE

DRISC	DECOLONIZATION, RECONCILIATION AND INDIGENIZATION STANDING COMMITTEE	HSA	SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE Health Sciences Association
ECUFA 22	EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 22	IAA	Inflation Adjustment Account
ELT	English Language Training	ISF	INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND
ELL	English Language Learning	JADRC	JOINT ADMINISTRATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE
EPC	EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE	JCBA	JOINT COMMITTEE ON BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
ESB	Employment Standards Branch	KFA 05	KWANTLEN FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 05
ETEA 21	EDUCATION AND TRAINING EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 21	LFA 14	LANGARA FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 14
FACNC 03	FACULTY ASSOCIATION OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW CALEDONIA FPSE Local 03	LRB	Labour Relations Board
FECQ	Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec	LRC	Labour Relations Code
FTT	FPSE TEMPLATE TABLE	MAVED	Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
GARC	GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION REVIEW COMMITTEE	MoveUP	Movement of United Professionals
HEU	Hospital Employees' Union	NICFA 16	NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 16
HRISC	HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL	NRFC	NON-REGULAR FACULTY COMMITTEE



NVITEA 19	NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 19	PTIB	Private Training Institutions Branch
NUCAUT	National Union of the Canadian Association of University Teachers	RUCBC	Research Universities' Council of BC
OCFA 09	OKANAGAN COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 09	QUFU 24	QUEST UNIVERSITY FACULTY UNION FPSE Local 24
PAC	PENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE	SCFA 10	SELKIRK COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 10
PC	PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL	SFUFA	Simon Fraser University Faculty Association
PEA	Professional Employees' Association	TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
PPWC	Public and Private Workers of Canada formerly Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada	TRUFA 02	THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 02
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada	TRUOLFA 17	THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY OPEN LEARNING FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 17
PSDC	PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	UBCFA	University of BC Faculty Association
PSPC	PRIVATE SECTOR POLICY COMMITTEE	UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers' International Union
PSEA	Post-Secondary Employers' Association	UFVFA 07	UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 07
PSEC	Public Sector Employers' Council	USW	United Steelworkers Union
PSIPS	Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System	VCCFA 15	VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 15
		VIUFA 08	VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION FPSE Local 08
		WGEC	WOMEN & GENDER EQUITY COMMITTEE
		WHMIS	Workplace Hazardous Material Information System
		WHSEC	WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE



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