



Policies and Principles for Bargaining in BC's Universities

Introduction

The structure and goals of our bargaining processes are informed by the policies and principles that FPSE establishes through debate and resolution within our membership. As we strive to improve our collective agreements at each new round of bargaining, we also need to review and strengthen those policies and principles and ensure their on-going relevance.

FPSE's policy manual reflects the longstanding view that collective bargaining plays a critical role in shaping our work and learning environment. In the early 1990s, for example, when degree granting status was extended to colleges and institutes and university-colleges became part of an expanded public post-secondary system, our Federation developed new policies to ensure that collective bargaining played a vital role. More recently, with the transformation of three university-colleges, one institute and one community college into special purpose teaching universities, there is renewed interest in developing a comprehensive policy framework within which collective bargaining will support improvements in work and learning conditions at BC's universities.

Existing FPSE bargaining policy goals and labour relations principles as outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of the Policy Manual should continue to apply to those locals dealing with institutional conversions to university status. That conversion has created pressures to change collective agreement provisions to a more individualistic model of employment.

However, the principle upon which university-related FPSE policies are based is of a collectivist, egalitarian, equitable university workplace model as opposed to a competitive, stratified model of employment. To these ends the following principles and policies are recommended to Presidents' Council.

Bargaining Principles for the University Workplace

As the establishment of university status has created pressures to change collective agreement provisions in ways that could reduce the homogeneity of members and therefore could weaken the community of interest amongst members, FPSE affirms that:

1. Collective bargaining provides an essential platform from which post-secondary educators have achieved significant improvements. The terms and conditions of work in our institutions, in turn, ensure that BC maintains high quality learning opportunities for post-secondary students.
2. University-related FPSE bargaining policies are based on a collectivist, egalitarian, and equitable university workplace model as opposed to a competitive, stratified model of employment.
3. Existing bargaining policy goals, labour relations principles and policies found in the FPSE Policy Manual continue to apply to those locals with bargaining certifications at institutions that have been granted university status.

Bargaining Policies for the University Workplace

Based on FPSE bargaining principles for the university workplace, this set of bargaining policy goals informs and guides bargaining in a university context:

1. Academic Freedom

Academic freedom provisions are broadly defined and available to all faculty commencing upon first employment.

2. Equity

Collective bargaining upholds the equal rights of all faculty and establishes measures that maintain structures of equitable compensation and treatment.

3. Protection of Existing Faculty

New collective agreement provisions do not result in the diminution of existing rights, benefits or protections of faculty members.

4. Pensions

Local collective agreements support the continued participation of all faculty in the College Pension Plan.

5. Faculty

Faculty are defined in Collective Agreements as Counselors, Librarians and all those who teach, evaluate students, develop curriculum, pursue scholarship or service activities, or are involved in academic or educational administration; such as Chair, Coordinator, Department Head or similar position.

6. Governance

Collective agreement provisions provide that all faculty have access to all aspects of institutional governance: the right to represent and to be represented. Additionally, Collective Agreements have primacy over Senate, Board or administrative policies or dictates.

7. Compensation

Collective Agreements maintain a single salary scale. This single scale, with as few steps as possible, allows all faculty to access all steps. As well, Collective Agreements ensure a single process of placement and progression on the scale and do not incorporate provisions for individual bonuses or merit pay provisions.

8. Rank

Collective Agreement compensation-related rights and benefits maintain a single category for all faculty. Any provision for varying job title is not connected to different pay rates.

9. Workload

Collective Agreement provisions ensure that all faculty are subject to faculty-controlled procedures for determining the allocation of work such as scholarly activity/research, teaching, and/or service. All components of the chosen workload are fully pro-rata for all faculty in all their professional roles. Collective Agreements limit overtime and provide specific caps on workload. In addition, all faculty have equitable access to whatever research monies or curriculum development monies are available.

10. Job Security**a. Temporary/Non-Regular/Sessional/Term Contract and Conversion**

Collective Agreements provide that temporary/non-regular/sessional/term contract employment is limited to a maximum of equivalents of two years of half-time work. Summative evaluation is subject to fair, transparent procedures, and subject to collective agreement processes and grievance provisions. Evaluations are conducted primarily by faculty members.

Given the absence of a negative summative evaluation, collective agreement provisions provide the seniority right of first refusal to available work during probationary periods. This is followed by automatic conversion of the person to a regular status of employment with requisite protection from layoff.

b. Regular/Continuing/Non-Probationary

Collective Agreements provide that this status either follows a successful completion of a posting/application process or a conversion process. Without cause, the process does not entail further summative review or evaluation. It provides continual seniority right of first refusal to available work up to full-time.

This status also provides full access to all provisions of the collective agreement. These provisions include full rights to layoff protection including seniority protection, notice, transfer, severance and recall.

c. Tenure

Collective Agreements that provide tenure and tenure-related provisions adopt them as inclusive concepts that conform to the following:

Tenure is:

- available to all faculty and faculty union members for all professional roles;
- available in a pro-rata fashion to all according to their time status (percentage of FTE workload);
- independent of compensation provisions;
- assigned through a peer-selection process;
- assigned to an individual and stays with the person, not the position.

d. Institutional Priorities

To include financial exigency and redundancy provisions that ensure that resources of an institution be focused on provision of educational services.

11. Bargaining Coordination

FPSE continues to establish informal and formal coordination of bargaining across locals involved in university bargaining. That coordination includes the provision of research and labour relations expertise designed to strengthen existing Collective Agreements and improve bargaining outcomes for those locals.