

2009-2010 ACTION PLAN

Post-Secondary Education 2.0:

**Advancing Post-Secondary
Education in BC**



Federation of
Post-Secondary Educators
of BC

Post-Secondary Education 2.0: Advancing Post-Secondary Education in BC

Post-secondary education plays a critical role in the social and economic success of our province. It provides a platform for the knowledge creation and learner confidence that are essential contributors to building a modern and progressive province. It also creates a platform for greater social equality and more engaged citizenry.

However, those potentials will be missed unless there is leadership and the political will to make them a reality. In this regard, the role of the provincial government is critical. Without a provincial commitment, our public post-secondary system is unable to achieve its true potential.

Our May 2009 AGM follows on the heels of the 2009 provincial election. Ten months after our AGM our Federation will, along with close to 300,000 public sector workers, be focused on negotiating collective agreements to replace those that expire on March 31, 2010. As well, our organization will need to respond to a broad range of challenges facing post-secondary education, including the ongoing fight for better funding, the transition to new university status, and the growing affordability and access crisis that our students face every day.

Over the coming year FPSE will target its resources and staff on five major areas to ensure that our voice and input lead to better outcomes for our members and more progressive solutions for our institutions, communities and students. Those five areas include:

1. Mobilize the broadest level of support within our membership ranks and amongst our allies for our 2010 round of bargaining:

Collective bargaining is central to the work we do as a Federation. We know that the need to strengthen language, benefits and compensation within our collective agreements is great. We also know that post-secondary employers are looking for ways to limit the effectiveness of our agreements. Achieving success in the 2010 round of bargaining will require effective mobilization within the ranks of our membership, as well as a more co-ordinated approach to bargaining across the entire provincial public sector.

To mobilize the broadest level of support within our membership ranks and amongst our allies for our 2010 round of bargaining FPSE will:

- Work with the Public Sector Committee of the BC Federation of Labour to ensure that all affiliates involved in the 2010 round of public sector bargaining in BC develop a co-ordinated approach to bargaining that secures the best possible mandate for free collective bargaining in 2010.
- 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 meaningful equity policies and procedures.
- Work with the other College Pension Plan partners to address the lack of sufficient funding for inflation protection.

2. Expand our organizing efforts within the ranks of the unorganized:

Our success in collective bargaining also depends on our ability to expand the circle of union representation beyond our existing certifications. We have had some initial success in organizing the unorganized, but we need to build on that success and strengthen our outreach efforts to new members. FPSE's Organizing Committee has developed strategies to ensure that unionization becomes a viable outcome for faculty working in non-union institutions. Those efforts are also designed to reach out to faculty in public institutions where faculty work under the umbrella of a private enterprise or in continuing education departments.

To expand our organizing efforts within the ranks of the unorganized 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.

3. Provide advocacy and labour relations services to current members:

FPSE staff play a central role in providing key labour relations and advocacy support to our member locals. Through services like local bargaining support, grievance handling and the presentation of arbitrations, our Labour Relations Staff Representatives ensure that the benefits and protections detailed in our collective agreements translate into real gains for our members.

To provide advocacy and labour relations services to current members FPSE will:

- Work through the Grievance and Arbitration Review Committee and the Contract Administration Review Committee to identify critical areas of labour relations concern and more effective multi-local responses to those concerns.
- Continue to provide basic and advanced steward training to locals to ensure that local activists have a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities in advocating for their members.
- Provide regular updates on various labour relations and advocacy issues through the Issues Update that was launched last year.
- Collaborate with other unions at both the provincial and national level to expand the range of education and servicing that we currently provide to all our locals.
- Make effective and strategic use of the Policy Table negotiations to ensure that system-wide post-secondary issues are addressed in ways that have direct and positive benefit to the work of our members.

4. Build new capacities within our activist ranks:

Our Federation has recently launched the Learning Union@Work program which provides 14 courses and programs in Labour Relations and Advocacy. The purpose of this new program is to ensure that our activists have an opportunity to develop new skills that will strengthen their capacity to speak out for their members and their institution. The activists who successfully complete the program will receive a FPSE Labour Relations and Public Advocacy Certificate.

To build new capacities within our activist ranks FPSE will:

- Support the efforts of our locals to mobilize their members on critical post-secondary issues.
- Provide locals with workshops for their activists on courses outlined in the FPSE Labour Relations and Public Advocacy Certificate, as well as workshops on issues important and specific to individual locals.
- 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.

5. Increase public awareness of the importance of post-secondary education:

The provincial government's role as the primary funder and regulator of public post-secondary education means that one of the most effective ways to influence progressive policies and funding choices in our sector is to advance our case for these choices with government. Part of that effort means holding government accountable for the choices it makes, but it also includes mobilizing and educating the broader public on why progressive choices make the most sense. Over the next year, as we move into a new round of bargaining, the need to build that support with the public will increase.

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

- Coordinate with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the BC Federation of Labour to press both the federal and provincial governments for adequate funding of our public post-secondary institutions.
- 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.
- Working with allies in the Coalition for Public Education, collaborate 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.
- Fight to reinstate funding to colleges, institutes, and universities that will 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 our members' work at colleges, institutes and universities;
 - ensure the governance structure of the new universities serves the best interests of faculty, students, and their communities.