

2010-2011 ACTION PLAN

Raising Your Voice: Making Post-Secondary Education Work



Federation of
Post-Secondary Educators
of BC

Raising Your Voice: Making Post-Secondary Education Work

Post-secondary educators are making a difference every day for thousands of students in communities all across BC. Through their research, through their skill as educators, counsellors, librarians, and staff, through their outreach in their communities with employers, workers and community organizations, our members are helping to transform our province.

The work we do as post-secondary educators is compromised when funding falls too short of need, when access and affordability become too onerous for our students or when regulations become too lax and damage BC's reputation both here and abroad.

Our May 2010 Annual General Meeting provides an important opportunity for delegates to not only debate and discuss the direction that our Federation will take over the next twelve months but also detail an Action Plan that identifies priorities for our Executive, our Presidents' Council and our member locals. We know that the renewal of our collective agreements continues to be a major priority. We also know that holding governments accountable for the funding that our institutions need to serve their students must remain a high priority within our Federation. To achieve these and other important priorities, FPSE must target its resources as much as possible.

Over the coming year FPSE will concentrate its staff and organizational capacity on the following five areas to ensure that our voice and input lead to better outcomes for our members, our students, our institutions and the communities in which we live and work. Those five areas include:

- 1. Work with allies and member locals to secure the renewal of our collective agreements:**

Our collective agreements are the centerpiece of our work as a Federation. We know that there are compelling needs within every local to secure new agreements that strengthen contract language, benefits and compensation in ways that protect and benefit our members. We also know that post-secondary employers are looking for ways to limit the effectiveness of our agreements. Achieving success in this current 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 achieve the renewal of our collective agreements FPSE will:

- Work with the Public Sector Committee of the BC Federation of Labour to ensure that all affiliates involved in public sector bargaining in BC maintain a coordinated approach that secures the best possible outcomes and reinforces the value of free collective bargaining across all parts of the public sector.
- Use the Policy Table process to advance our call for better funding within the post-secondary education system, greater collaboration amongst public post-secondary institutions and greater use of those institutions for the delivery of publicly funded training programs.
- Lobby MLAs and MPs for proper funding of public post-secondary education 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 and the restoration of health and welfare benefits.
- Work to support bargaining cooperation and coordination between and amongst locals and groups of locals.

2. 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 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 better funding and policy changes to 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 increase 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 among BC's public post-secondary institutions.
- 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.

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 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 local faculty associations at the newly designated universities who are forced to respond to changes in their institutions governance structure, changes that may undermine true collegial governance and shift the balance of decision making towards unfair control by senior administrators.
- Support the work 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. Expand our organizing efforts within the ranks of the unorganized and our outreach to allies in the post-secondary community:

Our success in collective bargaining also depends on our ability not only to expand the circle of union representation beyond our existing certifications, but also increase our outreach efforts to allies in the post-secondary community. 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. FPSE has also developed expertise and credibility within the ranks of post-secondary education allies who find our experience and knowledge critical to their success as advocates.

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.

To expand our outreach efforts with post-secondary allies FPSE will:

- Collaborate as much as possible with post-secondary allies who share our values and goals for progressive change within our institutions.
- Share, where appropriate, the knowledge, experience and expertise that we have developed on issues of labour relations and public advocacy.
- Work to ensure that our post-secondary allies contribute to the broader goals of progressive change within their institutions and their communities.