



Pinchi Lake, from the summit of Pinchi Mountain (2011). Photo: Paul Sanborn

“STRONGER TOGETHER”



Message from the President

Stephen Rader
Professor, Chemistry
President UNBC-FA

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to another teaching year, with all the excitement and challenges that entails. As you probably know, your Association will enter into bargaining with the employer – UNBC’s Board of Governors – beginning

sometime next semester. We will be rolling out a variety of initiatives over the course of the fall semester to prepare for bargaining, including newsletters with explanations of the process and issues, surveys to get your thoughts about priorities, town hall meetings, and so on. This issue is devoted to the topic of solidarity, the cornerstone of organized labour.

Coincidentally, the issue of labour solidarity is currently playing out right in our midst: our friends and colleagues who work in the cafeteria and other food services at UNBC have been bargaining for an .80 per hour raise for 15 months. Their employer, Chartwells, had no problem raising the cost of sandwiches by a couple of bucks, but somehow an 80-cent raise for their poverty-line workers is more than they can manage. Meanwhile, UNBC administrators garner awards for UNBC's being a "model employer."

While it is technically true that Chartwells is the employer in this case, it is equally true that when the administration puts out a Request for Proposals for the food contract, they can easily include language about job security and a living wage – as indeed has happened at Simon Fraser. As a letter in this issue points out, ethical employers ensure that all workers on campus receive comparable wages for similar work.

As a small local, UNBC's cafeteria workers are not in a strong bargaining position, but we and the students can help them achieve fairer wages through solidarity. This can be as simple as wearing a Local 40 pin or informing students or colleagues about the issues the cafeteria workers face. Or it can be as vexing, stressful, but ultimately empowering as joining them on their picket lines. The important thing to remember is that in 2015 when we were on strike, all the unions in PG came to join us on the line and show their support. We owe them all a debt of gratitude, and the best way to pay it back is to be there for our brothers and sisters in other campus unions when they need our help.

Stepping back for a minute, it is important to remember that not so long ago, around the time that my grandparents were born, workers were still being beaten, imprisoned, and shot simply for asking for a reasonable share of company earnings. Years of fighting for things like weekends, paid holidays, and limited work weeks demonstrated that the only leverage workers have for improving their working conditions is to withhold their labour, and the only time that works is when workers join together to ensure that the workplace shuts down.

Whatever work you do, from welding pipes to teaching students, the only thing you can legally do to put pressure on your employer is to refuse to work by participating in a legally sanctioned strike. This workers' right is so important that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that it is guaranteed by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This issue contains a number of articles relating to healthy workplaces and labour solidarity. Annie Booth attended a course on psychologically healthy workplaces, which she summarizes for us. We welcome all of our new colleagues, as well as Christa Florell, the Faculty Association's new Professional Services Officer. Paul Sanborn has gamely taken on the role of Acting VP of the FA during Matt Reid's well-deserved sabbatical, and he provides an overview of the Action committee and its role in preparing for bargaining. And we have a few thoughts on solidarity from around the interwebs (as my kids like to say).



As always, I owe a huge debt to Jacqueline Holler, who chairs the newsletter committee, which ensures that we get this out on schedule and under budget, and every one of you who helps out and supports your Faculty Association in various ways. If there are any FA-related topics on which you would like to write, or if you have photos you would like to share in our newsletter, please contact me or Donna.



The UNBC-FA Executive held a day-long retreat at the Aleza Lake Research Centre on 22 June 2018. This distraction-free environment provided an ideal venue for the discussion of bargaining, grievance handling, staffing, and other FA business. Photo: Catherine Nolin

UNBC FA Executive Committee

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019

<i>President:</i>	Stephen Rader
<i>A/Vice President:</i>	Paul Sanborn
<i>Past President:</i>	Jacqueline Holler
<i>Secretary:</i>	Paul Siakaluk
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Sylvia Barton
<i>Grievance Officer:</i>	Catherine Nolin
<i>Executive Director:</i>	Donna Sindaco
<i>Members at-large:</i>	
<i>Faculty rep</i>	Art Fredeen
<i>Faculty rep</i>	Kristen Guest
<i>Faculty rep</i>	Paul Siakaluk
<i>Librarian rep</i>	Trina Fyfe
<i>SLI rep</i>	Jenia Blair
<i>Term rep</i>	Monica Mattfeld
<i>Regional rep</i>	Bruce Bidgood



Building Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplaces

Annie Booth

Professor, Environmental Arts

Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee Rep

This article presents a brief summary of what I learned at a course on Building Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplaces. If you wish for the detailed report, contact annie.booth@unbc.ca for a copy.

There are good reasons to improve psychological health at a workplace. In BC,



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- 14% of people suffer from a self-identified mental disability, especially depression and anxiety.
 - 2/3 of Canadians cope with moderate to high stress levels and 40% of workers report stress-related health issues. They are 30% more likely to have accidents.
 - 40% of worker turnover is attributed to stress.

The Workers Compensation Act requires the employer to provide a healthy and safe work environment, including some aspects of psychological health through the prevention of bullying and harassment. As workers, we have responsibilities too: we are responsible for each other's health and safety. If you observe an unsafe or harmful situation, including harassment and bullying, you must at least report it as soon as possible to a supervisor or the employer, who must investigate and correct the situation immediately. No bystanders!

Another critical piece is the legal responsibility of supervisors. A supervisor is anyone giving direction to or overseeing another paid worker; this includes faculty program chairs, researchers overseeing paid research assistants, and professors working with teaching assistants. You must "ensure the health and safety of all workers" under your direct supervision. Supervisors have a "duty to care" and can be charged criminally for negligence.

Last, you have a right to refuse unsafe work conditions. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 3.12, workers have a right to refuse unsafe working conditions without reprisals until after an investigation has been conducted. This includes psychologically unsafe situations that involve bullying or harassment. The procedure is (in brief): You must not carry out or cause to be carried out any work process if you have reasonable cause to believe that doing so creates

an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person. You must immediately report the unsafe condition to your supervisor or employer. They must immediately investigate and ensure that any unsafe condition is immediately remedied, or if they think the report is not valid, tell you directly. If you don't agree, you can continue to refuse the work. The supervisor or employer must then investigate in your presence AND in the presence of either a worker member of the joint occupational health & safety committee, OR a representative of your union. If this does not resolve the issue both the supervisor/employer and the worker must immediately notify a WCB officer, who must investigate without undue delay. You cannot be subjected to discriminatory action because you refused unsafe work.

An investigation might not support your claim, but that investigation must first occur under the Act. All supervisors at UNBC should be aware of this legal obligation.

There is a lot more to understand about your rights and responsibilities. Check out my report OR WorkSafe BC's excellent resources: <https://www.worksafebc.com>. OR contact your representatives on UNBC's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee <https://www.unbc.ca/safety/health-safety>

Joint Occupational Health & Safety FA Reps:

Annie Booth

Christa Florell

Chelsea Pelletier

Chris Jackson

Alina Constantin

Maik Gehloff



*The Faculty Association is pleased to announce the recent hiring of **Ms. Christa Florell** as our Professional Services Officer. Christa brings to the Association an extensive administrative and professional background, with specialization in workplace safety and health.*



**Please join the Faculty Association in
welcoming our newest members:**

Anika Brookhart

Senior Lab Instructor, Nursing (Terrace)

Dr. Leandro Freylejer

Assistant Professor, Economics

Chengbo Fu

Lecturer, Business

Antonio Muñoz Gomez

Librarian

Patricia Johnston

Assistant Professor, Social Work (Langara)



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David Layton

Librarian

Dr. Natalie Linklater

Senior Lab Instructor, Engineering

Natascha Lukawitski

Lecturer, Business

Dr. Joseph Shea

Assistant Professor, Geography

Gretchen Vogelsang

Lecturer, Education

Dr. Andy Wan

Assistant Professor, Mathematics

Dr. Christine Ho Younghusband

Assistant Professor, Education

Dr. Jianhui Zhou

Assistant Professor, Wood Engineering

To find out more about our new members and their research interests, visit our website at: www.unbcfa.ca



The UNBC-FA Action Committee: Purpose and Functions

Paul Sanborn

*Associate Professor, Ecosystem Science
A/Vice-President, UNBC-FA*

For any union, without the necessary plans and preparations in place, the right to strike is really just a theoretical one. Moreover, as the *CAUT Strike Manual* (2009) reminds us,

“Well organized strike preparation can be the best prevention of a strike. Employers are more likely to try for a settlement if they are convinced that the association is prepared and determined to strike if necessary.”

In our union, these preparations are the responsibility of the Action Committee, which is chaired by the Vice-President, and consists of the Treasurer and three additional members appointed by the Executive Committee. Its role is to prepare



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a job action plan, to coordinate and plan all aspects of job action, including organizing and liaison with subcommittees, and to make recommendations to the Executive Committee on job action policies and procedures. In addition, the Action Committee maintains our connections with the larger labour movement by ensuring that we're represented at local labour councils, the BC Federation of Labour, and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Well in advance of any job action, the Action Committee establishes a series of subcommittees which are responsible for specific activities essential for a successful strike:

- Picket Committee
- Finance Committee
- Strike Services Committee
- Social Events Committee
- Communications Committee
- FA Strike Adjudication Committee

UNBC-FA Action Committee:

Paul Sanborn (Chair)

Sylvia Barton

Bruce Bidgood

Kristen Guest

Dawn Hemingway

The functions of some of these subcommittees are pretty obvious from their names – for example, ensuring that morale is kept high by having parties and other fun events is the role of the Social Events Committee. The FA Strike Adjudication Committee is probably less familiar to our members, but its role is just as crucial – deciding on special situations affecting members that arise during job action, such as approval to attend conferences or allowing reduced picketing schedules for part-time instructors.

Activating and populating these essential subcommittees will require substantial engagement from the membership in the months ahead, so you'll be hearing from us!



Solidarity and Strength: Or, "Why You Should Not Cross a Picket Line" (excerpt)

Jack Bourassa, Regional Executive Vice-President, PSAC North

NOTE: To read the full article, please see the [website of the Labour Federation of the Northwest Territories](#).

...The problem with crossing a picket line, whether you're a coworker or simply a bystander in the strike, is that you undermine the work of everyone who is fighting for change.

If you're an employee that chooses to cross the line and work while others forgo their wages and withdraw their labour, you have, whether you like it or not, damaged your coworkers' ability to negotiate with the employer.

Being part of a trade union is about solidarity and collective action. If there is a democratic mandate for a strike, even those who voted against it should support the strike. It's a unified movement, and only by standing together can you achieve positive change.



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What I'd Tell My Younger Self about Crossing a Picket Line (excerpt)

Elise A. Kikis

Assistant Professor, Biology

University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee

NOTE: This article originally appeared in *Science* as "The Cost of a Career."

"Are you really going to cross the picket line?" my mother asked. She had called after reading that the clerical union workers were on strike, and she could hear in the background the tell-tale honking horns and ringing bells of the picket line. "Yes," I responded. Despite her impassioned pleas, I was not going to boycott my first day of graduate school. A few weeks later, I said no when asked to join the graduate student union. Why would I, a paid student, need union representation? If only I had known then what I know now, 16 years later, this is what I would have told myself...

The road to a secure academic position will feel like a hazing ritual. You will be in the tenuous early stages of your career for 20 years. But yours is not a sob story. It is one of luck and privilege. You don't have a family to support, but you do have one that will lend a helping hand when you have the courage to ask for it. Not everyone is so lucky—not all the students whom you will eventually mentor, not your future colleagues in permanent adjunct limbo, and not those university employees on the picket line.

Thus, I ask you this: First, don't cross that picket line today. Instead, stand up for the people who make your university run. You will soon depend on them. Second, join the graduate student union. You are wrong to think that making graduate school more financially accessible is someone else's problem. Paying your union dues is one small way to help. Finally, when the time comes, do everything in your power to lessen the financial hurdles that students and early career scholars face. Doing science is difficult enough. Your students don't need to be hazed just because you were.



Stronger Together: How Students Helped Cafeteria Workers Win Fair Pay at Harvard University

Stephen Rader

Professor, Chemistry

President, UNBC-FA

The current struggle of UNBC's cafeteria workers to obtain fair wages and job security has played out at numerous institutions across North America. At Harvard University, the Unite Here and Service Employees locals teamed up with students to force the Administration to examine the issue of labour exploitation at an institution that proudly proclaimed itself a model employer. The former President of Unite Here describes in a recent letter to the *New York Times* the labour



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solidarity, and ultimately a 22-day strike, that led to decent wages. As he says, "When workers have a voice, institutions can do great things."



Marta Bonilla (left) now makes more than \$25 an hour, allowing her and her husband to own their own home, save for retirement, and live comfortably. See "[It Pays to Work at Harvard](#)" (*New York Times*, 8 September 2018)

Read the full letter:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/opinion/letters/unions-pay-harvard.html>

Faculty Association Office



The Faculty Association Offices are located in
Rooms 3084-3089 Charles J. McCaffray Hall

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Donna Sindaco, Executive Director
donna.sindaco@unbc.ca, 250-960-5816

Christa Florell, Professional Services Officer
christa.florell@unbc.ca, 250-960-5313

visit our newly updated website: www.unbcfa.ca

Upcoming events

FALL AGM

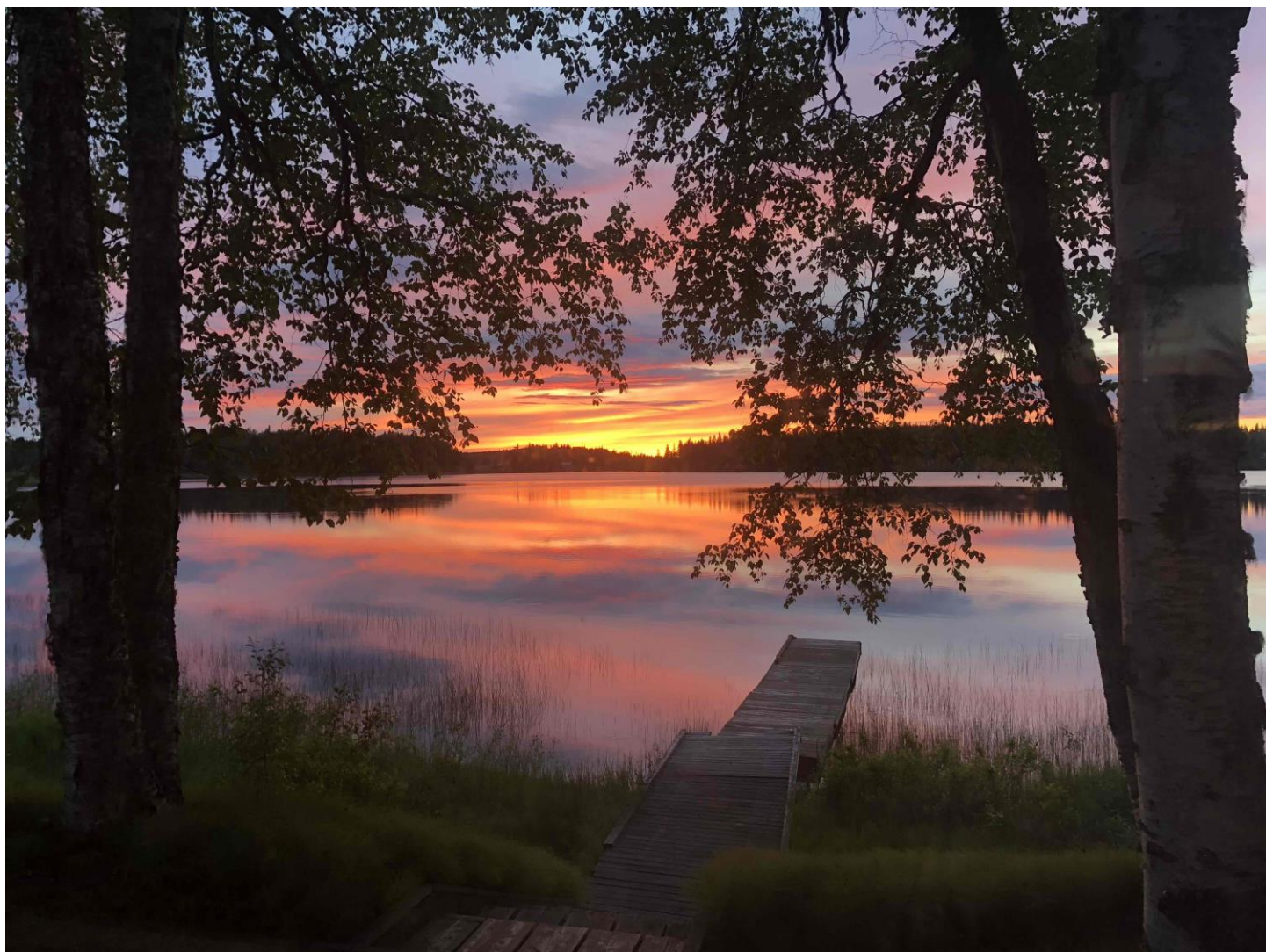
October 15th 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
5-123 Gathering Place

Retirement Planning Session

November 7th 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Faculty Lounge



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Nukko Lake (July 2018). Photo: Sylvia Barton

