

**Overview:**

Over the past two years, both the College and the Faculty Association have made some efforts to improve the repercussions of longstanding conflicts and disagreements with the strategic direction the College has embarked on in the last five or six years. While the Faculty Association would like to thank the Board for coming to the social we hosted last year and returning that initiative by hosting our Board this year, and we would also like to commend the College Administration for allowing faculty participation on a strategic directions committee; the faculty feel that we are left with no choice but to address the continued, and in many cases, increasing problems at CNC.

The CNC faculty are making this presentation today because we believe that the significance of the continuing budgetary and labour relations choices being made by the administration cannot go unmarked. Moreover, the College continues to turn to eliminating choices for students at the College in order to satisfy any budgetary problems, rather than considering the other options that faculty, students, operational staff, and community members and community groups have independently proposed.

Many of the current Board members are new since the Faculty Association's last appeal to the Board in 2008. As a consequence, our presentation will focus on a review of the central problems in their current manifestation, and offer alternative solutions to what faculty feel is both a narrow and a short-sighted direction for the college, as well as an untenable working environment for its educators.

The Faculty Association is well aware of the dilemmas that have been created for post-secondary institutions over the last decade, specifically, the growth of seats available and the buildings to house them without the funding necessary for institutions to deliver programs. Nonetheless, there are alternative choices that could have been made over the last decade and those alternatives continue today. Cutting faculty positions, courses, programs, and raising tuitions and service costs for students are not the only, nor the best or most reasonable solutions to this dilemma. Many other post-secondary institutions, faced with the same problems, have chosen to retain programs and the faculty complement as much as possible. Faculty and their programs should be the last things cutback at an educational institution, not the first. And there are alternatives to work against increasing tuitions and other costs for students as well. In North Central BC the need for new directions in economic development is paramount, and offering both fundamental and innovative programming at CNC is crucial to the potential recovery of the regional economy.

The Faculty Association has prioritized the issues it would like to present to you today so we begin with the continuing decision for solving any budgetary shortfalls by turning first and foremost to laying off faculty with the resultant cuts to course and program offerings at the College. This is not to undermine the importance of the other issues we will discuss, but to highlight the incongruous nature of the direction the College has chosen since the faculty layoffs and program cuts began in 2002.

### **I. Continued concern with the loss of programs foundational to a Community College:**

CNC still has a long way to go in growing back the comprehensive offerings of a decade ago. We have lost over 150 faculty positions since 2002, and this reflects itself in the loss of programs and courses that the College appears to have no interest in bringing back or maintaining, such as: the loss of all industrial technology programs except Forestry/Natural Resources, ( thus, Electronics Technology, Engineering Design technology (\*although there is a plan that has been developing over the last several years), Geographic Information Systems, Computer Information Systems , Wood Technology, Wood Manufacturing – the loss of the Hospitality program, the loss of most of the programs aimed at students with disabilities (Target/Jet), the loss of IBT (institutional-based training), the cancellation of the VALT (volunteer, adult literacy training program) - reductions in other developmental programs (College and Career Preparation) - Business and University Transfer reductions, including the elimination of a regular faculty appointment in Philosophy, History, Geography, and now Economics which threatens the approximately 70 transfer agreements with other post-secondary institutions. CNC has been able to provide a much wider range of university credit choices for students in our communities than those provided by UNBC. Witness the historical highs in student numbers in the UT areas and Business that developed after UNBC opened (peaking in 2000-01), prior to CNC deciding to start cutting UT as well as Business offerings. (See Chart 1-3 below)

Ultimately, the strength of the community college will remain its ability to provide for comprehensive programming, not only offering for training in a cross-section of occupational career paths, but more importantly, providing basic educational programs which allow students to fulfill all of their educational needs.

Unfortunately, over the last five or six years CNC has chosen an exclusive mandate to develop Trades and Health Sciences programs as well as to capitalize on monies that have been directed from Government toward Aboriginal education. While the faculty would agree that this growth is good for a number of reasons, we need to remind the College Board that it also has other obligations to its communities. As the Trades and Health focus in the current labour market starts to retreat, this college will be left with what else?

We would like you to take note that CNC is continuing to eliminate program diversity in its attempts to “capitalize” on short term needs in the labour market. The result continues to be a very diminished comprehensiveness in program offerings. In the meantime, students who would like to access the college for upgrading, retraining after layoff, or to pursue Business or University studies have been largely forgotten in the College plan. Unfortunately, this type of planning mirrors the short-term, cost – recovery planning of a private, for profit institution, i.e. Sprott-Shaw, or worse the “fly-by-night” colleges we hear so much about in the lower mainland. This is not the planning a Community College should be involved in; yet CNC has made this attitude its priority. The faculty at CNC would like to argue that the cost-recovery programs should not be the mainstay of a public institution that has been an integral part of our communities in North Central BC for over 40 years. Some examples follow:

1. **Asymmetrical Class Scheduling** has also hampered growth in all programs on which it has been imposed. Those students who choose to continue with their applications to CNC after they see that the scheduling of classes will create conflicts for scheduling part-time work, planning for child care, and/or trying to combine College courses with UNBC courses, etc. should be commended for their fortitude. However, asymmetrical timetables remain diametrically opposed to any logical strategy for recruiting or retaining students. Symmetrical scheduling worked when there were 1200 FTE students in University transfer courses alone. We have far fewer students in Business and UT, today.

During contract negotiations in December, the Faculty Association heard from the College that symmetrical schedules would mean more students and the college no longer has the classroom space necessary – thus a cost item for the college since it has turned many classroom spaces into administrative offices, dedicated classrooms, and non-teaching areas in the main building at the Prince George Campus. If having more students in the UT and Business areas is a fiscal concern for the college, we suggest that no renovations would be necessary in the near future. For example, the College could utilize classrooms in the Brink, Nicholson and new Trades building for late afternoon and evening courses if it chose to do so. These facilities are unoccupied after the 2:30 pm ending to Trades courses each day. As you might imagine, the Faculty Association has a concern over the idea that the Administration wants to inhibit the growth of students in the areas under the current asymmetrical scheduling mandate.

## II. Alternative solutions to the current and forthcoming budgets:

### 1. Resolving budgetary shortfalls by limiting administrative positions:

- a. In 2004, CNC decided to move from one Vice President to three Vice-Presidents and with this growth, one that the faculty have continued to argue is unnecessary, there has been a subsequent growth of administrative positions further down the organizational chart (i.e. Directors, Associate Directors, Associate Deans). While the faculty numbers have been dramatically eroded at CNC, administrative numbers have not just maintained themselves, but they have grown? Today, we count 49 administrative positions at a college that has been drastically downsized in relation to both faculty and programs. This as opposed to the 41 administrative positions the college reports for March, 2009, (Internal Scan, 2010). To use another comparison, and although we understand that post-secondary institutions have different needs; in 2008 (the most recent year we compared institutions under the PSEA umbrella), the CNC count was 47 which was the same number as Capilano University. In the same year, Fraser Valley University had 36 administrative positions.
- b. We would also like to take this opportunity to comment on the disproportionate salary increases for administrators in comparison to faculty at the College. Using the Human Resources Database and the Public Bodies Reports, the Faculty Association has been tracking salary changes at CNC since 1998 (**Appendix 1**). While we want to make clear that we understand that salary increases for administrators are necessary in order that the institution remain competitive in accessing the pool of qualified individuals, we want to raise the issue of the disproportionate increases in administrative salaries in relation to the faculty at CNC. One compelling statistic that has arisen from our data sources is that salaries for the senior administrators at CNC have risen by an average of 57.16% between 1998 and 2008-09, while faculty salaries have risen by an average of 18.65% over the same period.
- c. Since 2004, the Faculty Association has also addressed the Board about the growth of administrative areas in the College, areas that have seen increased budgets while the Board continued to make cuts to programs and faculty that mean direct cutbacks to choices for students. We are raising this issue once again. One example of our concern remains the “Institute for Learning and Teaching’, an administrative area that was developed to help meet the professional development needs of faculty and operational staff. While we would never presume to speak for operational staff, the faculty have their own professional development time included in their annual workloads, as well as a professional development fund, one

that has been in surplus over recent years. In the past, the work of the “Institute” was done through a 20% release for one faculty member in regard to services for faculty. And although the “Institute” appears to have added some technical assistance to faculty to its mandate, we draw your attention to this area because it should be considered secondary to direct services to students. In times of fiscal restraint, why the college would choose to increase monetary support to this area as well as providing for the exponential growth in the Human Resources and the Marketing is very confusing to the faculty at CNC.

### **III. Tuitions and Student Service Cost Increases:**

Two of the founding principles of the community college are access and affordability. Today, not only universities but community colleges are restricting access and focusing, instead, on a cost-recovery mantra that violates all of the constructs behind the development of the public colleges. Post-secondary education is also in a unique position among social programs in that college and university education is an economic driver and therefore never a drain on public funds. Since BC decided, in 2001, to become the province with the largest increases in student tuition and other costs for students related to student grants and loan monies; the Faculty Association, FPSE, and CAUT have worked with the CFS in lobbying for reductions to tuition, and the development of interest free student loans, among other initiatives.

For twenty five years, the Faculty Association has had policy on reducing tuitions and FPSE has had policy since the early 1990’s on eliminating tuition all together. The latter stance is linked to not only equity and access for all to post-secondary education; but the idea that fully-funded post-secondary education improves the economic viability of a nation. BC needs to be ashamed that it receives more revenue from student debt than it does from corporate taxes!

We have covered the central problems in regard to the reduction in programming and the other repercussions that have been the result of College planning over the past decade by attempting to highlight some specific problems that have direct fiscal repercussions. We would now like to tell the Board about other problems that continue to fuel frustrations and low morale among the faculty which have indirect fiscal repercussions.

#### **IV. Grievance and Arbitration Increases:**

Since 2004, there has been an extraordinary increase in both grievances and those grievances referred by the Faculty Association to arbitration. To date the College has decided to settle the majority of these arbitrations by settlement just prior to arbitration, and thus, admitting to the contract violations the Faculty Association had charged. As someone who has served, in various roles, on the Faculty Association Executive since 1994, I can count the number of grievances on one hand prior to 2004. During that ten year period there was only one arbitration, which was over the interpretation of whether early retirement takes place on the member's birth date or at the end of the college year. Since 2004, the Faculty Association has been forced into a position of having to launch a continuous array of grievances. The mandate of administration, beginning in 2004, seems to have become one where it will violate all significant provisions of the contract between the College Board and the Faculty Association in a concerted effort to "break the union". This goal seems to have dissipated somewhat following John Bowman's appointment as College President, yet our record is not good. For example: we keep referring to arbitration grievances on discipline without due process, layoff while disabled, the layoff process, regularization, seniority and technological change, failure to accommodate individuals with disabilities and attendant harassment issues, contracting out faculty work, violations to the hiring process for instructional administrators, as well as union leave, professional development for faculty, etc.

Currently, the Faculty Association has six grievances that are awaiting arbitration dates, six outstanding grievances where four are at Step 2 (the College President) and the other two are just moving from step one to step 2. This is unprecedented in the 35 year history of relations between the college and the faculty. Interestingly, four grievances referred to arbitration were settled prior to arbitration during the Fall, 2010. We ask the Board to consider why the College should be spending such extraordinary monies on legal costs for challenges that end with the college having to recognize that it must adhere to a contract signed by Board representatives?

#### **V. Contract Negotiations:**

The Faculty Association understands that there is a zero mandate from the province as well as the fact that institutional employers are being monitored by PSEA so that no cost item can be discussed at the local negotiations table. However, other post-secondary institutions are finding ways to deal with provisions in their collective agreements. At the same time, we have no idea why the local employer is being so mean-spirited. For example, why is this employer deciding to demand management rights, when it has been understood for decades that everything not restricted by the collective agreement are management rights. The union was finally left with no other choice but to leave the table when the college decided that it would not renew crucial

letters attached to the contract that have been there for many years. The Faculty Association is going to its membership on March 1 in order to decide upon next steps.

**Summary:**

The Faculty Association would like to end its report to the Board by commending the college for the work being carried out by Randall Heiht. Randall has attended a meeting of the FA Board and provided us with an overview of his plans as well as inviting faculty input and potentially, through a committee on student recruitment and retention, would include faculty for the first time in many years on consultation over student recruitment and retention. This is not a new idea, but definitely something the faculty would like to see the College to return to.

At the same time, the faculty will summarize our concerns by priority: we recommend alternatives other than continuing with program, course and faculty cuts. The FA is already dealing with 4-5 layoffs without the opportunity to present alternatives to the Board for this year. We recommend that the College Board consider administrative reductions before it cancels more courses and programs through faculty layoffs, and we recommend that the College Board consider the contradiction of the growth of the administration and administration services in the face of fiscal restraints.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Mastromatteo, President,

FACNC, FPSE, Local 3