

newsletter

JANUARY 2003

Why VCC?

At a series of CIEA meetings on Friday and Saturday, the 17th and 18th we learned that no other college suffered the degree of cuts we did in 2002-03 and no other college is contemplating major cuts in 2003-04. (Although we did hear that two more agencies will be eliminated--the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology and the Centre for Education Information) In fact, Chief Stewards were concerned with the issue of too much overtime happening in the system.

If there was nothing wrong with our programs, is it enough to blame our program mix? Was their importance made clear enough to the Ministry? Were appropriate risks taken by our President and Board Chair? Have they failed us our students and our programs?

Coming Attractions

Special General Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 3:30 pm
The Biltmore (12th & Kingsway)

College Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 6:00 pm
Room 240, City Centre Campus

College Forums

Wednesday, February 5, 3:30 pm
Room 112, City Centre Campus

Wednesday, February 12, 3:00 pm
Room 5025, King Edward Campus

No War in Iraq January 18th March for Peace

The VCCFA Executive passed a motion supporting and endorsing the International Day of Action against the War on Iraq.

Instructors were invited to gather under the VCCFA banner.

Thanks to instructor John Gilmore for informing us of the details.

Tuition Fees up 30% for 03-04

The Vancouver Sun reported on Tuesday that the College will propose an across-the-board 30% raise in fees effective April.

Of course this is on top of the 40%, 50% and greater raises last year. By the way, how come we get such announcements through the press?

The VCCFA will have an action motion at the Wednesday, Jan 22 special meeting at the Biltmore.

Thanks

The VCCFA, especially our exemplary stewards, has been receiving more than the usual number of thank you messages over the last few weeks, for which we are very appreciative.

Our Community Action Committee received an award from the YWCA for its continued support of our YW Daycare Programs. The award was presented to the Committee at our AGM. Good work.

No Concessions

As Lizz reported to the December annual General Meeting, the College had asked us the speculative question of whether the union would consider talking about concessions.

There was no offer made, just the enquiry.

The Union Executive considered the question at its last December meeting and unanimously instructed Lizz to say "No," which she has done.

Crisis in Funding

Did you know that VCC is in the black or at least close to being balanced right now?

According to the last Quarterly Report (Oct 02) and based on its operation in 2002-03, VCC has been running a small surplus.

So, why all the grief?

The \$5.8M problem the College is talking about is probably derived from estimating income for the 2004-05 fiscal year and calculating how much instruction that will buy. The College then decided to get close to that level of instruction as soon as possible, and that means within this fiscal year. Such a large cut this year will cost quite a bit in severance in addition to the shortfalls that would have occurred in 03-04 anyway. So, we get two years worth of cuts in one year.

In addition, the college is carrying forward the smallish deficit of \$600 K from 01-02; and added to that was about \$1.6 M in severance costs from last year's cuts.

But Shirley Bond says "I gave VCC more money this year."

That is so close to being true. In fact, the non-ITAC base grant was \$381K more (0.8%), \$43.06M vs. \$42.68M. But that ignores her cutting the other government grants that VCC had been getting up to last January. Anyway let's call it close enough.

That's not the problem Shirley...

And she should know it. The problem is year 2 and 3 of her funding regime. In year 2 (2003-04) VCC's base grant will go down \$728K and in year 3 (04-05) it'll go down another \$1.218M. From 2001 to 2005, funding will be down 3.7% while projected costs will continue to rise.

What could the College do?

The Liberals' reductions over three years hit VCC at a very vulnerable time. VCC 's good work and good intentions meant it was extremely overextended, at about 106% of its base budget. When the Liberals first cut last year there was little fat to trim so layoffs came (most terms and about 60 layoffs or reductions in faculty). Now with an unfair level of funding cuts in year two and three (see last newsletter) and with fewer programming options, VCC has fewer tools with which to cope. The leadership of the College had to challenge the government. The President has to insist that the **real** uniqueness of VCC has to mean a different approach. There is little evidence that this has been done. In fact, through its focus on the Strategic Plan, administration has consciously chosen to remake the College so that it will become more like other colleges. It also seems to be acting a bit hastily. Minister Bond was right in saying that she hasn't issued the new funding letter for 03-04, which usually comes out in March. There is still a possibility of an adjustment in funding, why the rush?

So.....?

A short-term possibility is for the Ministry to recognize that if VCC goes

ahead with these cuts, no one else will take the lost students up at an affordable level. We will be asking for the Minister to intervene before this proposed budget is passed. We will be asking the President and the Board to delay passage of the budget.

Library Hours

So you're at night student, paying significantly higher fees than your older sister did just a couple of years ago and guess what, the library you need (this is a college, right?) isn't even open, not even a half hour before your class.

What's with that?

Indeed,
Although Education Council had been informed in December by Library rep Aphrodite Harris that there would be a major cut in hours, no one put the item on the January agenda.

Cheryl Jibodh, ESL Division Rep, had it added to the agenda at the meeting. She spoke eloquently to needs of students, some 1000 at KEC, who already juggle complicated family schedules just in order to come to school at night, who now are being denied access.

It was kind of sad to see VP Moira Henderson and Library Director Lila Heilbrunn, who had pushed this change through without any consultation, throw up their hands at what else could be done except deny some other group of students access. In the end they asked for some input. And, some wondered whether EdCo should be talking about it at all, but who else?

The VCCFA still wonders why any cuts were necessary. We're in the last quarter of the fiscal year and the college is doing okay this year and running at a Board-approved level of activity, isn't there enough money somewhere to at least get through the year and if not, why not? How come night service was okay for nine months and not twelve?

It was great to see student rep Tyler Offer persist in his efforts to craft a motion for all these educators and in the end it was unanimously passed as advice to the Board. Something like, "Education Council is concerned about the loss of library hours and its impact on students and urged the Board to restore an appropriate level of service."

At one point Cheryl quoted from the current Strategic Plan:
"We know that we face a new market of 'student consumers'--discriminating customers who know their options and are not afraid to seek out good value, high quality and excellent service. We know that we face a new, broader context of competition for those students."

Indeed.

Distributed Learning

Although reluctant to take a strong stance in December when Aphrodite Harris raised the issue, in January Education Council at least agreed that there should be a relationship with the Distributed Learning Committee and some regular reporting and discussion of on-line courses. That's a start.

VCCFA Actions/Responses

The Publicity and Action Committee

PAC met late in December and early in January knowing there would probably be another round of cuts announced. It's preparing for a number of actions on a number of different fronts all with a goal of raising awareness of the devastating effects of the Liberals' funding regime and calling upon the government to intervene before these cuts are implemented. We will be sharing some of those strategies at the General Meeting (Wednesday, January 22, 3:30 pm at the Biltmore) and calling for volunteers and upon members for their ideas.

Media

As is their custom the College put out a media release announcing the cuts as soon as they could and without much warning. That was the afternoon of January 8th. We responded on Thursday with a joint press statement issued with the combined student federations. Ben Williams and Lizz Lindsay did a quick press conference on Thursday afternoon which was well reported by CBC Radio. The news was widely picked up, for example on CKNW it aired on the 6 pm news as about the third story and it was the first story after the hockey game. Shirley Bond responded a bit Friday morning, showing she wasn't clear what the problem was and we put out another release on her comments. Then the news broke about an elected official driving under the influence in Maui.

Special Meeting, January 22, 3:30 pm Biltmore

We will have some resolutions for members' consideration that call for action by VCC President and Board Chair and another that calls for action by Minister Bond.

VCCFA SCHOLARSHIPS

The Executive thanks those members who provided input at the last couple of meetings in 2002.

The \$1000 Scholarship will be initiated in 2003.

The target date is for applicants who wish to study at a public post-secondary institution anywhere in Canada and who would need it for the September, 2003 term.

Applicants must be the spouse or child of a VCCFA member.

The Executive will be soon forming a subcommittee to look after the process and welcome expressions of interest from members who may wish to serve on the committee.

Contact the VCCFA office.

IS VCC ADMINISTRATION BIGGER THAN IT WAS ?

The VCCFA asked if CUPE staff and College Administration were going to be affected by the cuts. The answer, yes and no. Yes for CUPE, about 11 or 12 positions. No for administration, except perhaps by attrition as they retire. Oh....

That got us to thinking, just how big is senior administration and how much do they make. Here's some data from the College. Senior administration is defined here as those whose top steps are at or above faculty steps. Each class of administrators has its own salary scale with each having only five or six steps from top to bottom. We don't know where individuals are on their scales but a comparison of top steps is fair since it does not take administrators long to get there, especially if they don't start at the bottom step.

Number of Administrative Positions with Top Step Salaries comparable to or above the top step of faculty

	Dec 97	Apr 00	Apr 01	Apr 02-Jan 03
President	1	1	1	1
VPs	3	2	4	3
Deans	3	3	6	5
Directors	9	9	10	10
Others #	7	12	11	10.5
Total	23	27	32	29.5 *

* This reduced number is a result of some vacancies which haven't been filled.

This is a group at Pay Grade 5 that include a variety of positions: Associate Registrar, Human Rights Coordinator, most Managers and the senior Program Coordinator in CE. The Director of Marketing and Communication is the sole position at Pay Grade 6 (top step now \$76,023) but was also included in this group to simplify the comparisons.

Top of Administrative Salary Steps compared to faculty top step

Number in parentheses refers to the number of the administrative pay grade

	Dec 97	Apr 00	Apr 01*	Apr 02	Oct 02
% up from '97					
President	117200	120000	159400	159400	159400
36					
V-Presidents	97941 (8)	99441 (8)	101430 (9)	116464 (9)	121955 (9)
24.5					
Deans	87229 (6)	88947 (6)	82221 (7)	99513 (7)	104205 (7)

19.4	Directors	79019 (5)	80599 (5)	82221 (7)	99513 (7)	104205 (7)
31.8	Others	60547 (4)	61758 (4)	62993 (5)	69073 (5)	72330 (5)
19.5	Faculty	61900	65200	66504	71000	71000 #
14.7						

*In April 01, the administration was restructured. Most of the former Deans became VPs and the VP position moved to a newly created Pay Grade 9. A new category, Pay Grade 7, was created to include both Directors and newly appointed Deans. Pay Grade 4 became 5. One former manager's job has been given a larger portfolio and reclassified as a Director, which has therefore resulted in a 72% increase in potential pay from \$60.5 K to \$104.2 K.

Faculty top step will increase to \$73,257 on April 1, 2003, an 18.3% increase over 1997.

The Answer

It looks quite clear. Even with a bit of attrition, senior administrators are more numerous than they were five years ago and making quite a bit more. Some more graphs and charts come to mind but we cannot get everything into this issue, watch for them.

Layoffs

The layoff situation over the past year and looking ahead into 2003 is the worst of any college in the province has ever suffered. Our team of stewards (many of whom are also on layoff) have developed an unfortunate expertise.

For 2002

Ingrid Kolsteren has summarized the numbers by saying at least 50 terms have been affected, then another 60 regular instructors were on notice for termination or reduction. The status of those 60 has been hard to keep track of. Some have had notice, then had it withdrawn and then gone back on notice. Some have transferred to another area where they meet the hiring criteria. Some were fully recalled, but then had a new notice (at least this gives them a new calculation of severance). Others got advanced notice only late in the year. Others had notice but because of switching to cost-recovery or having a retirement in their area have been able to hang on. And in many areas the College has taken advantage of retirements and then not hired replacements.

In sum about 45 are not working now. Most of those have stayed on the recall list. Seven have taken their severance already, one left voluntarily and received the severance that would have gone to a junior instructor.

Some of the Programs and Positions Lost:

**Business Education Preparation
First Nations Advisor
Counselling (5 positions)
IEPA
Institutional Aide/ESL
Library (2 positions)
Media Services
Retail Meats**

Many losses in the ESL and AAA Divisions

For 2003

Members have received about 60 Advanced Notices in January, which means in a month the College can issue Notice of Termination or Reduction. Because there are more than 50, the Employment Standards Act provides for two extra months of notice. That means the earliest someone could be laid off from this group is early July. The ESL Division and the AAA Division are both being reduced by one-third. Again, retirements are not being replaced.

Summary of Notices in Ten Areas:

(ESL cuts may lead to departmental reorganization, the 9 other areas are being eliminated completely) You have heard the figure of 970 student FTE cuts, that's probably at least 1500 students since many students come part-time.

**ABE Youth
Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST)
Building Service Worker
Business and Computer Studies, College Foundations
Career Awareness Program within the CACE department (ASE)
Employment and Education Access for Women
(started by Betsy MacDonald)
ESL Division (40 notices, across the division by seniority)
Institutional Aide
Graphic Communications and Production Technology (aka
Printing)
Travel Agent**

Ingrid and the Stewards have already held 3 Drop-In Info Sessions and more will be called soon.

The BC Government and Its Friends on Education

Three Government Initiatives that perhaps make someone proud to be a British Columbian but probably will make you mad, sad or glad you're about to retire.

>Trades Training: How Consultation Works in the New Era

>Progress Board sees into the Future

>Accountability Framework admits that the measure of affordability will be not whether a student can afford something but how much profit they are creating for banks through their student loans

These types of government/think tank reports usually bore normal, intelligent people to tears and these are no different. Nevertheless, because of the strange times we live in it's best to know as much as possible about what the government and its friends might be thinking, so have a look.

Trades Training

This is important for VCC, some 1100 student FTEs in several departments have been funded through ITAC the (Industry, Training and Apprenticeship Commission). After killing the well-functioning ITAC a year ago, the government set up a Transition Group which has spent its time meeting literally behind closed doors. Just before Christmas they released a "discussion" paper. It's almost a complete give away to business. Only business is to be represented on any future Commission. ITAC was balanced with business, union, government, and education (i.e., us) representatives administering a \$70m budget. Training is to be dumbed-down with narrower ranges of skill requirements. How will trainers cope with multiple-entry level groups of students? Private trainers will have easier access. And so on and so on ...

Their idea of "discussion" is funny if it wasn't so sad. The Minister was to hold "hearings" in January and February. One was announced at VCC for last Wednesday, about a week ahead of time. We tried to get invitations, for 4 of our trades instructors. No reply. Then we hear on Monday that it's switched to BCIT (perhaps our press coverage scared them off). Then Wednesday noon we hear it's cancelled, then Wed at three it's back on. We go there to mill about with about 60 other trades people from unions, no entry allowed. By the way, the Minister wasn't there, she sent her Deputy.

What a farce! You'd think that these business people would be embarrassed, even their good ideas get discredited in such an undemocratic process. Can you imagine what would happen if the previous government had kept business out of such "consultations" and had treated them so cavalierly ? This is an important example of who gets heard in this province.

Anyway, the "discussion" paper is available at a Ministry website:
www.aved.gov.bc.ca/industrytraining

The Progress Board

This is a think-tank like group of "who knows what type of" business people and Martha "\$350,000 and rising " Piper.

They talked to themselves or somebody, it certainly wasn't the VCCFA or CIEA, about education in BC and came up with "Learning to Win--Ready, Set, Go " their pre-Christmas gift to the people of BC. It's a funny kind of report. Repeats a lot of stuff that's been said that you hear in the air: "removing barriers to individual access," "today's jobs require higher levels of education," and "more emphasis should be placed on career, co-op and apprenticeship programs."

Fine, but then it recommendations don't talk about how anything is to be paid for. On the post-secondary side it wants "expanded capacity" by "expanding the mandate of an existing university to Kelowna," increase international students by 50% in 7 years," "rationalize College administration--beginning in the Greater Vancouver area," and "increase capacity of trades and technical training by reallocating research and capital infrastructure of BCIT to Kelowna and Prince George." And really, that's about it.

One can imagine the Presidents of VCC, Langara, Douglas, and Capilano losing some sleep about rationalization but overall these recommendations are pretty shallow and it is not even clear that the government will take them seriously. They seem to answer lobbies they must have received from UBC and BCIT and not even thought about the deeper problems of generational renewal of faculty and the gradual development of a class and debt based system of access.

This one's available through a link on the Board's homepage:
www.bcprogressboard.com

An Accountability Framework

This is the last pre-Christmas gift (the Minister must have had a deadline for getting all her assignments in). It talks about the possible key performance

indicators the government may use for the Post-Secondary system and bears more careful review. Again, the whole thing is sad since we all know there are not adequate resources to meet the two "strategic goals for the system" especially for people who may want to be "students" but cannot.

The goals are:

- 1) A top notch post-secondary system--To provide students with an accessible, affordable, high quality, and relevant post-secondary education
- 2) Economic and Social Development--To provide students with the skills (sic) knowledge for the workforce and the economy, and to respond to critical shortages in the labour market

On Affordability: When looking for how they are going to measure how "affordable" education is for students one finds that they propose two measures:

"percent of graduates with debt"

"the ratio of average debt to average income after graduation"

Oh, and the baseline for this measure will be 2002-03 when fees started to rise huge amounts. This is really a sad comment on what the next generation of students will have to look forward to.

This one is available through a link on the Ministry's website:
www.gov.bc.ca/aved

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