

newsletter

MARCH 2003

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THE 2003/2004 EXECUTIVE

Lizz Lindsay
PRESIDENT (04)

Frank Cosco
VICE-PRESIDENT (04)

Perry Taylor
TREASURER (03)

Colleen van Winkel
SECRETARY (03)

Ingrid Kolsteren
CHIEF STEWARD (04)

George Rudolph (03)

Settimio Sicoli (03)

Thomas McLeod (04)

Brenda Appleton (04)

Cheryl Draper (04)

Vinit Khosla (04)

News

College has no financial problem in 2002/03 or 2003/04, it has surpluses and no deficit

More News

The College is trying to convince us the sky is falling after that

News from the Board

Having a business plan to prepare for the sky falling takes priority over current education and training.

News from Administration

Let's use the cuts to fund our Strategic Plan

News from the VCCFA

98% vote Non-Confidence in Board and President

Special General Meeting

Thursday, March 20

3:30 pm ~ Croatian Cultural Centre

OPINION

LIZZ LINDSAY - VCCFA PRESIDENT

We thank the members of the LFA for their generous donation and message of solidarity

Welcome New Members

FIRST I'D LIKE to extend a warm welcome to all the new members who have joined our faculty this year. We hope that your time at VCC will be rewarding and we look forward to meeting you at the new employees orientation. Please feel free to call us on any issue. New employees often find valuable information at Stewards Drop-In sessions. Our Union office is located a block from the City Centre campus at Suite 401, 402 West Pender Street. We are open from 9:00 to 4:30, Monday to Friday.

Welcome New Executive Members

WE ARE DELIGHTED to welcome back two "new" Executive members who joined us in January. Vinit Khosla and Cheryl Draper have filled our two vacant positions. We value the years of wisdom and experience that they bring with them.

Langara Faculty Association Donation

AT OUR GENERAL Meeting in February, the LFA President, Larry Warren presented the VCCFA with a cheque for \$5,000.00 to help us with our fight back. We thank the members of the LFA for this generous donation and message of solidarity.

Cuts Again...

THIS IS THE second year of unprecedented attacks to VCC as we know it. Another almost sixty members are slated for layoffs this summer and nine more programs may be lost.

We were shocked to discover that the College actually has a surplus this year and can afford to offer our funded FTEs, pay off the deficit, put money into capitol items and keep our faculty. Our members expressed their outrage and delivered a strong 98% vote of non-confidence at a Special Meeting on February 25.

We have urged the College President, College Board Chair and College Board to reconsider, rescind the notices and wait until the firm funding figures are out next March. They have told us that they are not prepared to speak up for VCC, that they don't think that speaking out will be effective.

Our members have told us that they need a College President, College Board Chair and College Board who are prepared to advocate for this College and the fine work it has done in the Community for over 30 years.

We need strong, outspoken and fearless leaders committed to this College and its place in the community it serves. We need our leaders to be able to share a clear vision and a passionate message that inspires trust and confidence. We feel that

they have failed us.

The Eight Factors

In the February newsletter we offered eight answers to the question, "Why is no other large urban college facing such a level of cuts?"

- 1) Overextension in the years leading up to 2001.
- 2) Non funding of increased costs
- 3) Projected decreases in funding in 03-04 and 04-05
- 4) Less Flexible Instructional Delivery Options
- 5) Block Funding
- 6) VCC's Administrative Strategic Plan
- 7) VCC's "get it over with" Approach
- 8) The Nature of our Students?

In the last month, since the release of VCC's financial statements for 2002-03 and draft budget for 2003-04 it has become clear that while all remain contributing factors, factors number 7 and number 8 are clearly most important right now with number 6 becoming the sole beneficiary.

#7 should be restated as:

VCC's "get it over with--we've got a business to run" approach

No one on the Board, including in face-to-face meetings with the Board Chair and the President, has contradicted the VCCFA's contention that the college does have a surplus in this fiscal year just ending and will have one in the next fiscal starting in April.

The only logic to VCC's actions is if you viewed VCC as a private business that had to maintain surpluses and had unknown difficulties coming in its next fiscal.

So, as a good business person/owner, you make an estimate of the worst-case difficulties and find a significant surplus in your current operation to help you cope. Good plan for a business.

In education you're not making widgets, you are using the public's money to provide education. However, since the VCC Board received money already for providing training this year and that's the only easy money they have, they simply say, "Okay, We are not going to provide this training. We need the money for something bad that might happen next year. No classes after the summer. Get those layoffs notices out asap."

Fine. The problem with this strategy is that it confuses a public good--education, with a business strategy--be prudent. Society wants and pays for this training, not the college. Only after scrupulous examination with public input should a college decide that a program should no longer be offered.

If there is a problem paying for it next year than society, through its government should deal with it when the extent of the problem becomes clear. It can decide that it's valuable enough to solve the problem and allow the education to continue. It can decide that it doesn't want to pay for it anymore and allow the program to go.

With the College's current strategy, next year there will be no problem to deal with. The courses and classes that could have been offered this year won't survive the summer. Who will know if they could have been offered next year? **VCC has taken it upon themselves to hoard society's money and decide with no real public**

process that currently affordable training shall stop.

By so doing it is saying that it knows the future. It's cutting off the chance of any alternative sources of revenue or cost-cutting to be developed over the year and it's cutting off the chance of VCC benefiting from changes in the government's approach. For example, the government may decide to keep funding at the 2001-02 level for a further year.

The VCCFA is left with saying that it's no wonder the Board and President didn't "speak up and go public" about government under-funding. With the drastic tuitions increases there is enough funding for 2002/03 or for 2003/04. For the time being at least, our Board and President are the primary source of the problem.

That is why the VCCFA has lost confidence in them.

#8 The nature of our students?

It's probably time to remove the question mark.. If our analysis of the Board and President's actions is correct or mostly correct, can you imagine any other Board or President at a more "mainstream" post-secondary institution getting away with this strategy if they tried it there.

Imagine the headlines:

One thousand of Langara's students will have no class in September.

Three thousand of UBC's students cut off this summer.

Twenty-four hundred BCIT students protest the loss of their classes

That's what's happening at VCC. About 1500 of our students aren't going to be here in September.

Imagine the interviews with those Presidents, Linda Holmes, Martha Piper or Tony Knowles (or their public relations people).

Q: Why the cuts?

A: We're worried about next year. We're sure government funding is going down next year and costs are going up you know.

Q: Has the government told you it's going down?

A: Well they have a three year rolling projection.

Q: Didn't funding stay up this year?

A: Yes, but, you know, can't be too careful...

Q: Why did you decide to cut the programming you did?

A: We had to cut somewhere...

Q: So you can't afford to run them for the rest of the year?

A: Yes, we could, but by cutting them, we're building a surplus.

Q: A surplus?

A: Well we need to be able to respond to new opportunities

Q: What about these current students and the ones who want these classes.

A: Well, we feel bad about that. It hasn't been easy.

If something like this happened at Langara, UBC, or BCIT, the uproar would be very, very noisy. Even the grand old Vancouver Sun might be moved to make a call, imagine.

Sadly, the fact that such a radical strategy can even see the light of day at VCC is a comment upon the place of the affected students in our society.

#6 The Administrative Strategic Plan, the beneficiary

If VCC does maintain these cuts and surpluses the only beneficiary will be those programs favoured by the Administrative Strategic Plan.

Nothing was ever said when the Plan was fast-tracked last year that it would be implemented so quickly or that it would be implemented through devouring other programs. Had that been clear do you think its passage would have been so easy?

By the way, it's not clear that Victoria will reward VCC for saving surpluses. What if VCC is penalized for deliberately not delivering 940 student FTEs while every other college's funding is maintained?

EDUCATION COUNCIL MEETINGS

FROM THE BACK of the room it appears that Administration wanted to proceed with as little involvement from the Council as possible. As an educational plan they presented the program profile document which simply lists numbers of student FTE beside program or department or division names. Obviously there were stories of major cuts and complete eliminations behind those numbers.

The Council is charged with giving advice to the Board on the educational impact of the plan. It had very little to go on. In the past whenever cuts were proposed, Administrators had to speak to criteria as to their rationale for the change. At the February 4th meeting, Council members insisted on another meeting on the 18th where they could hear from programs affected and also more fully from administrators. On the 18th they formed a subcommittee charged with synthesizing what had been heard into an advice statement.

Most commented that the committee: Aphrodite Harris, Cheryl Jibodh, Heather Chan, Terry Mills, Michele McLeod, and student Tyler Offer had done a good job in a short period of time.

This motion was considered at the March 4th meeting.

The educational advice to the College Board from Education Council is to do everything possible to save Vancouver Community College's unique programs whose elimination or reduction would be an irrevocable loss to the educational enterprise within VCC and the community at large.

The three Deans present: Marta Gardiner, Barbara Ash, and Jackie Sandy and the faculty rep from the Health Division, Ginny Cathcart voted against the motion. The nine other reps from faculty, staff and students voted for it.

From their comments, it's hard to understand why those voting against it did so. They for the most part did not speak directly to the motion. Dean Gardiner said it was not giving advice about the programs that are staying. Deans Ash and Sandy commented mostly about some factual errors in the accompanying report (which the committee will correct). And the Health rep mentioned the Strategic Plan, presumably she viewed this motion as being against the Strategic Plan.

Committee members Harris and Jibodh spoke clearly to the point that it was not the role of Education Council to get into the financial aspects of the issue, but to focus on the educational impact of the substantial changes contained within the "plan," namely that the termination or reduction of the generally healthy programs that are contained in the administrations "plan" would be an "irrevocable loss" and that the Board should do everything it can to save these programs.

One would think that board members and administrators who were making cuts for purely financial reasons and were fighting to prevent them would welcome such a motion as evidence of the rightness of their cause. By voting against it, these administrators show that they don't want that support, they don't want to join with educators in lobbying against them. Why not?

Well, perhaps because the cuts aren't being made for purely financial reasons. Perhaps they are being made in part to support the new directions of the college.

NEWS/COLLEGE BOARD MEETING

January and February Board Meetings

We have two Board meetings and two Board forums to report on

JANUARY 28TH

IN TWO WEEKS over a thousand postcards calling upon the Board to "speak out and go public" about the threats to VCC had been signed and collected. They were all over the walls and balloons from our earlier demonstration that day, a fine display.

1) Enquiries (this was the last Board meeting where enquiries were to be allowed) Several faculty and students spoke to the Board at the beginning of the agenda. After starting 10 minutes late, the Chair offered 30 minutes. Even though there were 9 speakers, it only took about 20 minutes.

Lucas Schuller, Music Student, asked the Board members how they could sleep at night after raising fees a minimum of 82%. He asked them to think about the community not representing the government.

Vinit Khosla, ESL Instructor, asked the Board why they hadn't spoken out. He commented that they had only made passive statements which wasn't good enough.

Daniel Wong, student, mentioned the loss of library hours and asked if it was reasonable to raise fees and cut services at the same time.

Stuart Scholefield, ESL Coordinator, circulated a note from one of his students who feared losing his spot at the college due to class closures and the loss of financial support for his disability. He asked where the student is going to go and what he is going to do.

A student in advanced ESL asked how he was going to be able to pay for his and his wife's classes given the 98% increase in ESL. How could he become part of Canada? The government invited his family to Canada, all he could get were low-paying jobs which didn't provide enough for these increases.

Christa Peters, Student Unions, asked if the College was involved in any lobby to put tuition fees onto ABE students

Lizz Lindsay, VCCFA, asked when the Board was going to get back to the Association on its earlier motion which called up the President and appointed Board members to "speak up and go public" on the under funding issue.

Betty-Ann Buss, ESL instructor, spoke on behalf of lower level ESL classes which she feared had been slated for cuts. She spoke of the importance of keeping these classes so that students in them would have the opportunity to move through to upper levels and other programs more efficiently.

Students fear losing their classes and the loss of financial support.

An instructor in Combined Skills/ESL asked if the Board had thought of the tremendous efficiency represented by Combined Skills classes. She asked if the Board and Administration had made this economic argument to the Ministry and

others concerned.

These are reported on at some length because later that same evening the Board did away with this part of the meeting as a standing part of its agenda. They do not seem able to deal with this little bit of an outlet for access and comment. We did a media release on the issue soon afterwards and a story was published in the Vancouver Courier.

2) Tuition Fees

The second round of major fee increases in less than a year were approved. The single across the board increase was 30% this time. That means the lowest increase when the two are compounded is 82%, in ESL it is 98%. Other differential fees--essentially establishing private schools within VCC--were even greater.

In all there were three motions increasing tuition fees. A roll-call vote was taken with the same result (6-2) for each motion:

FOR

Appointed Members: **Karen Dickson, Mark Stock, Robert Tarnowski, Cam Watt, Sung Van**

Elected Member: **Dennis Cumming (staff)**

AGAINST

Appointed Members: **None**

Elected Members: **Susan Wood (students), Norm Dooley (faculty)**

The KEC Student Rep on the Board, Susan Wood, pointed out that the 82% basic increase imposed upon the students within one year would be the rough equivalent of more than 13 years of annual increases of 5%, that's how drastic this is. It's going to have an impact on students' ability to take courses. She asked that the Board ask the Ministry to reinstate the tuition freeze.

Gordon Barefoot, Board Chair, did admit to some frustration that the government is asking them to do its dirty work but it's "a job that's got to be done." The request from the student rep was not acted upon.

3 The Board Governance Committee

(or how access to public board meeting discussion and agendas has been shut down)

The governance committee, chaired by Karen Dickson, brought forward a draft policy which was adopted by the Board. It amounts to a radical change to how board meetings are to be conducted.

For years, everyone was offered the convenience of making an enquiry of the Board at the beginning of the agenda. There was no obligation for the Board or Administration to answer immediately, a note could be taken and an answer given later. For years each of the Board's subcommittees operated through open meetings as much as possible. This format provided a more informal way for the faculty, staff and student unions to see documents like the budget in development, to ask questions and to engage in some discussion with Board members and Administrators. And for years there was a fairly rigorous process for actually getting an item on the Board meeting agenda. This process did not actually result in many items getting on the agenda since the person or group wanting the item had to present to a subcommittee and often the request was managed in such a

way as to limit access.

Apparently all of this is too much for our current Board to handle. Their new policy

...

- ♣ eliminates the Enquiries part of the agenda. Only the employee groups can make enquiries during their part of the agenda which comes towards the end, usually over an hour after the meeting begins.
- ♣ eliminates the public part of committee meetings. For instance, at a crucial time for this college, we have been told that the Finance Committee's next meeting on March 18th is in-camera, so we'd have to wait to the full Board meeting to see what they have come up with.
- ♣ makes getting an item on the agenda even more restrictive

It's interesting that the Committee's first draft of its policy was too extreme for the majority of Board members. It said, "The purpose of the meeting is to conduct the business of the Board, and it is not a forum in which the members of the public have a right to participate or to be heard." It was amended to remove the portion after "...the business of the Board."

A nod the new policy makes to public participation is to have people contact the Executive Assistant to the Board, if the Board Chair then allows that a future presentation can be made then those wishing to make it have to provide advance written copies of presentations. From time to time the Board may decide to have a public forum as they did this past week on budget issues.

4) Library Hours

Education Council Chair, Ted Hougham, presented a motion from the Council advising the Board that "we are concerned about the loss of library hours and the impact on programs and students due to budgetary constraints. We urge you to restore library services to the optimum to support student learning." It's not clear what action the Board has taken, if any.

5) Speak Out, Go Public

Board Chair Barefoot responded by saying they haven't been silent, that they have been speaking behind the scenes. He didn't think speaking in public would be helpful. He said they aren't sleeping well over what they feel they have to do, that they are not callous and are concerned about the dislocation.

6) VCCFA Report

We welcomed the chance to speak to the Board directly at the forums they were setting up. We spoke strongly against the closing of public access to the Board's work, pointing out that it was not "their work" as had been often mentioned in the discussion, but the work of the college, a public college and therefore the default position should be public participation and access with in-camera sessions only when necessary.

FEBRUARY 27TH MEETING

1) Congratulations to Peter Hopkinson

The happiest news of the night was the announcement that Peter Hopkinson, College Foundations--Science Department, has won the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Teaching Excellence Award for 2002-03. Peter will receive his award at the ACCC annual meeting to be held in Vancouver in May and jointly hosted by VCC. (Peter also slaves away for the VCCFA PD Funds Committee at KEC.) Good work over many years.

2) Protest

There was a quiet dignified protest at the back of the hall as instructors and students held up signs protesting the cuts to programming, the tuition increases and some that just said "98".

3) New Appointed Members

Cameron Watt had declined reappointment to the Board and through its process--no constituency group was invited to recommend any names--the government has appointed Lisa Coltart in his place. She was at the meeting but nothing was said about her background. A seventh appointed member, Fiona Taylor, has been added but her appointment was not mentioned at the meeting. We found it at the "Board Resourcing and Development Office" website.

Ms Coltart is the VP, Finance and Treasurer at General Hydrogen. She is a Chartered Accountant and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from SFU.

Ms Taylor is the VP, Customer Services at Peace Software. She was with Anderson Consulting (now Accenture) for ten years. She holds an MBA from UBC.

The continuing appointed Board members are Karen Dickson, a partner with Miller Thompson in their Corporate and Commercial practice group.

Mark Stock is listed as Human Resources Coordinator for Crystal Decisions

Sung Van is the owner of Sung Van Studios Ltd, a graphic design firm

Linda Nutter (Vice-Chair) is a professional freelance writer

Robert Tarnowski is a Director and School Board Chair of King's Temple Missionary Society

Gordon Barefoot (Chair) is a VP at BC Gas

4) Budget for 2003-04

The Budget draft as has been previously circulated was presented for information. The plan is to vote on it at the next meeting in March. Trish Pekeles, Chief Financial Officer, confirmed that she is still expecting a \$500,000 surplus for the year ending this month.

As previously circulated, the draft budget shows a projected surplus for 2003-04 of \$313,344, the unencumbered "severance costs" line of \$376,000 (no real severance cost has been identified), paying off of the \$2,347, 517 deficit from 2001-02, and the \$600,000 transfer to the capital fund.

The Board Chair confirmed that there may be modifications to the budget before it is passed, that the President had been in discussion with Ministry officials and that some small modifications were possible. He and the President had met the Minister on February 25th and elaborated the issues previously raised about the inequities of VCC's funding and the need for long-term viability.

He noted that he had responded directly to the VCCFA's February 21st letter to Shirley Bond. In his letter to her the Chair "reworked" the FA's alternative to project a "\$4 million" dollar problem in 2004-05 if we continued with our current

path. (The VCCFA has not accepted that projection, we cannot understand how he came up with his numbers and are awaiting a clearer explanation.)

Dale Dorn said he had little to add except that the Minister does "get" VCC and knows what it's about and it's value. He has worked hard with Ministry officials and to the "extent that we can will make adjustments to the budget."

5) Shift from Balancing to creating Surpluses

The Board Chair made a point of emphasizing that the past practice of directing any contract or ancillary services profits to helping balance the budget and putting on as much training as possible was not to be continued. In the future such surpluses would be invested in the development of the Schools. The Board would be holding a retreat to discuss the matter. (We wonder if the surpluses created by the current cuts are also going to go this way as well.)

6) Faculty Association Report

Lizz gave a report to the Board and walked to the Board table to hand-deliver the President and each Board member a letter conveying the results of our non-confidence vote and setting out what they could do to restore confidence
Some excerpts from her remarks:

--on the College's plan to create surpluses....

"...this is making plans this year to solve anticipated problems next year based on information from last year."

--on the Strategic Plan

"We are being cannibalized to pay for a strategic plan that was delivered from above and, under the guise of fiscal restraint, are going in a new direction that we feel is very risky.

A wiser implementation of the strat plan would be to move at a slower pace, making changes to programs as folks retire and as resources permit."

Lizz Lindsay: "We're being cannibalized to pay for a strategic plan.

PUBLICITY AND ACTION COMMITTEE

The committee has been busy in the last month

Highlights:

- ◆ MASSIVE DEMOS on February 13th at night at KEC, at noon at City Centre
- ◆ MEETINGS WITH Departments to prepare for Council and Board Forums
- ◆ REPORT TO General Meeting of February 13th
- ◆ MEDIA COVERAGE of the Board's closing down of public access
- ◆ MEETING WITH City Councillors
- ◆ PREPARING ALTERNATIVE Budget for Minister Bond
- ◆ THE NON-CONFIDENCE Vote, February 25th
- ◆ MEDIA COVERAGE of the non-confidence vote
- ◆ PRESENTATION TO the Board on February 27th.
- ◆ COLLECTION OF Letters to MLAs and Shirley Bond
- ◆ UPCOMING MEETING with Jim Soles, Assistant Deputy Minister

FEATURE STORY

Biggest Meeting in Years votes Non-Confidence

In a well publicized meeting, Tuesday, February 25th, where anyone on either side of the issue was made aware of the secret ballot vote on the single issue of non-confidence, 138 of 141 voters supported the motion.

THE VCCFA EXECUTIVE offered its rationale for supporting the motion based on two main points:

- 1) The Board, Board Chair, and President had said many times that they would not go public and speak out. Motions from meetings on January 22nd and February 13th had called upon them to speak out and defend our programming. The Executive said it was clear the resolutions have not been satisfied.
- 2) The College's Budget figures for 2002-03 and 2003-04 showed clearly that the cuts were not necessary, that in fact the college would have surpluses. The Executive reported on the many meetings that had been held with the President and Board Chair and circulated copies of its letter to Shirley Bond detailing the surpluses and suggesting an alternate budget. Your department should have a copy and further copies are available from the office.

in Millions of Dollars, rounded

College's Proposal				The VCCFA Alternative		
	02/03	03/04		02/03	03/04	
Revenue	79.74	82.36		79.74	82.36	
Costs	78.97	78.73	Includes \$1.2 m sev 02/03	77.77	81.39	Remove sev in 02/03 Add costs in 03/04
+/-	0.768	3.634		1.965	0.970	
"sev costs"	0.596	0.376	Extra contingencies	—	—	
excess	0.172	3.261		2.292	0.970	Includes \$328 K for 2/03 as college estimated
deficit		(2.348)		(2.348)	(0.054)	
capital		(0.600)			(0.600)	
cum. excess		0.313		(0.054)	0.315	
FTEs	7772	6907		7772	7848	+941 03/04

THE EXECUTIVE ADDED that the College's proposal is cutting off any chance of alternatives working. President Lizz Lindsay personally delivered letters of non-confidence and suggestions for restoring confidence to each Board member, the President and Board

Chair at the Board meeting on February 27th. There has been no reaction to date. It's becoming more clear that this Board and President probably do not want any alternative to work this year, that they want these surpluses.

In order to update members and to discuss our options, the Executive has set a Special Membership Meeting for 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 20th, at the Croatian Cultural Centre.

STEWARDS

REPORT FROM THE STEWARDS

Or What are Stewards Doing?

LAYOFFS/RECALL

MOST OF OUR time is spent on working with our members on some stage of the layoff process, answering the varied questions and issues that come up. And there are many. We are meeting with departments and members to offer information about rights to transfer, recall, notice, severance entitlement, hiring areas, scheduling and of course support. Unfortunately we are becoming experienced dealing with layoffs.

In the meantime there has been some shifting. Two of the layoffs in Business and Computer Studies have been withdrawn. In another area two layoffs were withdrawn; however they were replaced by other layoffs in the same department as the College changed its decision about which program to cut. We anticipate that things will continue to move and shift over the next while.

About 35 number of actual layoff notices have gone out this year and members are starting to look carefully at transfer and recall options. Although some of the layoffs have been delayed, with over 2 dozen on advance notice, the College has told us they will be going out later. People laid off in this round are receiving approximately 6 months notice, The Employment Standards Act calls for an extra 8 weeks notice when there is a group termination. Most will take effect this July. We are hearing from the folks from last round. Some are taking severance—over 35 are on recall.

VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE INCENTIVE

THESE LAYOFFS ARE extremely difficult for all, especially for those instructors personally impacted. The layoffs, reduction and program closures have spawned numerous other issues. One of them under article 6.4.2 is the Voluntary Departure Incentive. This is where a senior instructor can choose to leave the College and receive 95% of her/his severance up to a maximum of \$40,000. We have met with the College to get more clarification and flexibility in the timing. The deadline to apply is March 15. *There is a question and answer session planned Monday, March 10 at the KEC Union Office from 12 to 1 & 2 to 3, or call the Union office.*

OTHER ISSUES

Of course other things are not stagnant. We have had a couple of meetings with the College to discuss our maternity right provisions. These include concerns about recall, layoffs, pd accrual etc. We are continuing discussion with the College.

Our ongoing work includes representing the union on selection committees, conducting IRA elections, assisting members with accommodation or return to work and benefit issues. Majority of our issues are resolved at pre grievance or at the informal stage.

Here is a sampling of some issues we have worked on: jury duty, benefits, leaves, scheduling, interpersonal difficulties, rights of term instructors and the new 6 month seniority provision. Remember, that term instructors who have 6 months of contract work since January 2002 have the right to reappointment (Article 4.4).

CURRENT STATUS OF GRIEVANCES

CURRENTLY WE HAVE 2 grievances at stage 1. Both of these involve instructors' rights

to severance and/or voluntary departure incentive.

There's one at 2nd stage coming out of a harassment investigation and two grievances both around the issue of PD and scheduling (one in International Ed and the other in ELS and CPE) which are going to arbitration. We are having difficulty getting the College to commit to arbitration dates for the International Ed grievance.

DROP INS

WE HAVE THREE scheduled this month. These are open drop in sessions, so please drop by with your questions. Or if you like, we can come to your department.

Thursday, March 6, 12 to 1:30 at the downtown Union office

Tuesday, March 11, 12 to 1:30 at the KEC Union Office

Thursday, March 13, 1 to 2 at International Ed

We hope to see you at the Drop Ins, or please call us if you have any questions or issues.

VCCFA STEWARDS

**Ingrid Kolsteren
(Chief Steward)**

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Holly Cole	CC	443-8437	hcole@vcc.ca
Moreah Hamend	CC	443-8523	mhamend@vcc.ca
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Janet Zlotnik			jzlotnik@vcc.ca
Wayne McNiven	CC	443-8438	wmcniven@vcc.ca
Wayne Avery	CC	443-8449	wwavery@vcc.ca

VCCFA ... IT'S ABOUT YOU

Lizz Lindsay

Appreciation Dinner

EARLY FEBRUARY WE held our annual appreciation dinner at the Up and Down Restaurant. This celebration was well attended by those members who have served the Union on one of the various VCCFA, College or CIEA committees. Linda Sperling, our CIEA staff representative and Dileep Athaide, CIEA Secretary Treasurer attended as well.

On-Line Learning Debate

THE VCCFA AND CID Department co-sponsored a well-attended debate on On-Line Learning. Our own Walter Behnke and Doug Mauger spoke in support, joined by Bryan Fair from BCIT. The Faculty speaking against included Robert Brett from BCIT and Crawford Killian from Cap College. Several faculty had an opportunity to share their experiences and Des Dougan provided an update of where we are with technology at VCC. Thanks to members Norm Dooley and Lorna Downie for organizing if for us.

CIEA Spring Conference

Most VCCFA reps on the standing committees of CIEA enjoyed the annual Spring Conference on February 22nd. CIEA brought in an interesting array of speakers on several issues, including David Noble on the commoditization of instruction.

Our Fight

IT WOULD BE easy to lose heart in these difficult times. Now, more than ever, we need to stand together and share our VCC story. We need to remind people of the contribution that our good work and programs have meant to our many graduates and the community. We need to work hard to maintain the social and economic benefit of all of the programs at VCC.

Our fight with the ministry is for equitable funding. Treat us as badly as you have treated others, not worse. Our struggle with the Board is to convince them that moving cautiously has merit. We are not a business. We don't need to have profits. Our mandate is to teach students. Let's not amputate our limbs until the diagnosis is complete.

In friendship and solidarity,
lizz

Special General Meeting

Thursday, March 20th

3:30 pm

Croatian Cultural Centre

Auditorium II

Newsletter Editors:

Frank Cosco
and
Audrey Bourke
for the
VCCFA Executive

VCCFA welcomes your input. Send your letter, comments and pictures to the editor.

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