

FPSE Connect

Member newsletter of the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC | Fall 2017



OPENING THE DOOR: Education Minister Rob Fleming, Premier John Horgan, Advanced Education Minister Melanie Mark, and FPSE President George Davison at the ABE and ELL funding announcement in Victoria.

LABOUR DAY NOTE

Celebrating restored ABE and ELL funding, looking to the future

By George Davison,
President, and
Terri Van Steinburg,
Secretary-Treasurer



This Labour Day we celebrate our living labour history, stretching from print workers in Toronto, who organized for reasonable work hours 150 years ago, to postal workers who went on strike for maternity leave in 1985. The struggle to improve health and safety conditions and ensure an inclusive, welcoming workplace for all workers continues through the work of union members and activists today.

We're grateful to everyone who supported our Open The Doors campaign in the lead-up to the provincial election – thank you. The government has heard our voices: just weeks

after taking office they reinstated tuition-free Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learning (ELL) for adults, and lowered student loan interest rates to prime (on the way to eliminating student loan interest). The government plans to raise the minimum wage starting September 15 (increasing it to \$15/hour by 2021). These actions will make life more affordable for working people, and education more accessible for all.

These changes, and the promise of a government that will continue to listen to the concerns of labour, mark a new era in BC. We know firsthand the challenges our members, students, and families face – including the cost of post-secondary education – and we're looking forward to working with the new government to begin finding ways to decrease tuition costs, and fix the historic underfunding of our post-secondary education system.

BC's post-secondary system developed the problems it

now faces over many years, and, similarly, many of these problems will take time to fix. But, with our sustained efforts, and a new government with a demonstrated willingness to act, we look forward to making progress on these and other issues, including improving the trades training system, tackling affordability for students and student debt levels, addressing the casualization of precarious academic work, and fulfilling the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Follow us @FPSE on Twitter and Facebook to hear the latest news on how we're pushing forward our agenda for an improved post-secondary system in BC.

Fundamentally it's about the people making that commitment to return to school, to make their lives better, to make their quality of life better. It's about reducing barriers and making people's lives better. I'd like to give a special shout out as well to the BC Federation of Students and the Federation of Post Secondary Educators who advocated for this change.

Hon. Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training,

August 8, CBC Victoria

ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

FPSE condemns racial hatred

Recent events following a white supremacist rally at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville have demonstrated what so many people of colour in our communities experience every day. As educators, we condemn white supremacy, Nazism, racism, and all forms of racial hatred. We recognize that our classrooms and campuses are not immune from dangerous rhetoric and actions, and that we play a role in ensuring that hatred and bigotry have no place in our educational institutions. We will speak out against racism, hatred, and violence. We will listen and learn from our students and faculty about how we can make our places of work and learning safe, even when those conversations might be uncomfortable. We remain committed to the safety and security within and beyond the post-secondary system for everyone working, learning, and living in BC. Together, we can show that white supremacy and hatred have no place here. Read the full statement on our website at fpse.ca



FPSE HISTORY

A HISTORY OF ACTIVISM

In 1991, FPSE (then CIEA) produced and circulated 250,000 copies of an election pamphlet titled *"Today's education – Tomorrow's Opportunities: An Advanced Education and Training Agenda for British Columbians,"* marking the federation's first foray into electoral activism. Since then, FPSE's advocacy has expanded in print and online, and the federation takes an active role in advocating for post-secondary education during elections. Check out an excerpt from our first political pamphlet online at fpse.ca.



EVENTS

FPSE IN THE COMMUNITY

Our members have been busy participating in community events across BC this summer, including Pride celebrations. Local presidents and members have been meeting with Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training Melanie Mark during her tour of BC post-secondary institutions.

UPCOMING

- Sept 8** Speech from the Throne
- Sept 11** BC Budget Update
- Sept 21/22** FPSE Presidents' Council
- Sept 24** Walk for Reconciliation
- Oct 23-27** Fair Employment Week



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