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President's Report

December 12, 2014

Tony Kirschner from Davies Park, the company that is organizing the search for a new Camosun president, arranged a telephone appointment with me to gain my sense of what faculty members are looking for in a college president

In preparation, I drew up and presented to Tony the following list of desirable qualities for a president as expressed in statements by faculty members at the September general meeting (minus a quorum), in town hall meetings, and within the Executive.

I hope the committee will find a person who is not necessarily looking for a job as president who can show evidence of the following:

Personal Qualities

- Intelligence with the ability to think creatively and to see the lay of the land with both an eagle's and a mouse's eye;
- the ability to establish compromise among competing factions
- kindness
- confidence on a foundation of humility
- the ability to delegate and diffuse responsibility broadly
- success in learning his/her way through new jobs
- commitment to education as an engine of social justice
- commitment to Camosun as an institution of comprehensive education
- ability to write and speak clearly and truthfully with no gobbledegook
- willingness to speak truth to power
- an understanding of how to contribute to healthy labour management relations
- the ability to think through complex problems and make difficult decisions
- willingness to challenge orthodoxy without valuing change for the sake of change
- recognition for the need of the importance of internal as well as external presence
- a strong sense of community and a commitment to diversity
- the ability to develop constructive relationships with internal and external constituencies and with the Ministry;
- commitment to consultation and a keen interest in other people and in



- good ideas, whatever their source
- commitment to visibility, including time with students
- willingness to teach a class now and then
- willingness to take risks
- willingness to admit and forgive mistakes
- commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and community
- Recognition that the position is president of the college, not president of the administration
- An understanding of and respect for the core educational role of the college
- A belief in the importance of the college being regarded as a force for good in the community.
- Knowledge and understanding of the BC Post – Secondary Education system and Camosun’s place within it.

Resume

- experience as a teacher
- evidence of accomplishments more important than degrees

Process (for those on short list)

- public appearances (individual presentation; maybe a panel discussion)
- meeting with CCFA executive

A Sad Farewell to VCC ESL Instructors



Today is a difficult day for all of us at Vancouver Community College. We are saddened to be saying goodbye to many talented, committed and passionate English as a Second Language

instructors. We share a sense of anger at this government that is short-changing British Columbia's skilled immigrants, and demonstrating a lack of vision for the province's future.

Our ESL Matters campaign - a first for your Faculty Association - has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of people across the province, and our rallies, advocacy, and student stories have put us on the agenda in Victoria. Together, we raised our voices, and together we made an impact.

Despite last week's disappointing news, we continue to push this government. Earlier today, two VCC students -

Tony Kirschner indicted that this list is consistent with what he is hearing wherever he turns. If you think we missed something important, please let me know. The channel of communication with Mr. Kirschner remains open. Also, Nancy Sly, the faculty representative on the Board and a member of the selection committee for the president, is open to suggestions.

December 15, 2014

I attended a quickly organized meeting in Vancouver of the presidents of FPSE locals which are considering forming a common table with their employers in order to negotiate compensation and other matters covered by the Common Agreement (pages 71 – 134 of your collective agreement). The meeting was successful in building consensus about the contents of a protocol statement to establish the parameters and processes for bargaining.

The start date for provincial bargaining has not yet been determined, but this apparent agreement amongst FPSE locals is a big step to getting started. Bargaining of local issues may occur in parallel with or after common table bargaining is completed. The CCFA Negotiating Committee meets this week for discussion of possible bargaining schedules.

December 18

I want to thank everyone who offered me good wishes and support as I became your president, and I wish everyone wonderful holiday .

Morez and Sara - visited Premier Christy Clark's Cabinet Office downtown Vancouver and hand-delivered more than 4,000 postcards demanding the restoration of ESL program funding.

We are not giving up.

On a personal note, it has been so inspiring to watch students and faculty come together in this fight, side by side, and show British Columbia that we're stronger together. I have watched instructors work to save ESL at VCC, support their colleagues, and show a sense of resolve that motivates us each and every day.

Thank you.

In solidarity,

Karen Shortt
President - VCCFA

Report from Ottawa

Debbie Gascoyne, Chair CMC

This past weekend (December 12-14), I attended, on your behalf, the annual workshop for Senior Grievance Officers, put on by the CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers).

This year's topic was "Grievance Handling." The discussion was wide-ranging, though the overall intention was to work towards building a sense of best practices. CAUT is considering developing some kind of template for its members, and this workshop was a first step towards that. We discussed what works, what doesn't work, and other aspects of the experience of grievance handling. It's always so interesting to hear from others, to learn about shared experiences, but also to get ideas that you might not have thought of.

Jeff McKeil, formerly of FPSE, gave a most insightful presentation comparing negotiating and grievance handling, and the need in both to be consistent and professional, to act within the jurisdiction and goals of the organization, and to provide engaged advocacy. There was a panel on confidentiality, and one on equity. The latter was interesting in one way – they spoke, for example, of the hidden discrimination that can exist in concepts like seniority – but did not suggest specifics about how

to remedy it. Other panels returned to structures of grievance handling – who does it, what are the processes in the collective agreement. We talked about member-to-member conflict and the new laws around "respectful workplace" and how those intersected with our work. The CAUT lawyer reported on recent arbitrations, and how those could help or hinder cases in areas like human rights (recent arbitrations around "family status" have made promising gains towards the need to accommodate for child care).

This workshop was timely, as our Executive is working towards revising the bylaws, and one important aspect of that for the Contract Management Committee is developing terms of reference. I will be reporting back to the Committee what I have learned about best practices, and hope that we will be able to put many of these ideas into place.



Why Do I Love Me (a personal story)

Brent Wassermann, DRC

"Oh, hello! There you are! I've been searching for you. Have...you been hiding?"

The young boy, cowering, turns sheepishly to face me. Eyes red and moist from crying. "I've been here all along. You...you just didn't see me".

Silence.

Finally, I reply, "It's been hard".

"It's been hard on me too", the boy says quickly.

More silence.

He then tells me I've been avoiding him. Ashamed of him. that I gave up too easily in trying to find him.

"Of course that's not true. I love you...I would never forsake you..."

I try to reach out to him. He withdraws. My words. Simple words. Words without actions. Words without meaning.

"Why?", the boy finally asks. "Why do you love me? How can you, after all these years, come to me finally, and claim you love me?"

"I do!" is all I offer back.

"Why..."

What should be an easy answer seems impossible. I look down, stammering. Ashamed that I can't spontaneously tell this boy, this beautiful, broken child the reasons why I love him.

"I...I just know that I do. I do love you. It's just..."

"Why?" he interrupts.

"Because you're special!" I offer. I've been hearing those words all of my life. Immediately, upon saying those words they felt as empty to him as they always have to me my entire life.

"Why?" he persists.

I avoid eye contact. "I've been ashamed." I blurt out. The words escaping from me before I fully realize their meaning.

The boy, now more interested in my answer repeats, "Why?"

Again.

"I've been ashamed, I think, for a long time. I had so many hopes, so many dreams...I've been lost...for a very long time...I neglected you. Forgot about you, even. I was lost. Alone..."

"But, you left me here. I too was alone. And now you return, claiming that you love me..."

And once more he pushes me..."Why!"

"Does it not count that I am here now? Does it not count that I want you to be happy? Does it not count that I know you are suffering and I want to help you?" I reply.

"You cannot have it both ways. You cannot leave and then return. You cannot hurt me and then want to help. You cannot offer love in the midst of shame..."

I know all of these things are true.

"WHY DO YOU LOVE ME?" the boy exclaims.

"I love you because we are the same! Even though I am not perfect, that I have sinned, and I was lost for a very long time...I love you because I know you. I, more than anyone else, knows your suffering, your sacrifice, how hard its been... for...both of us. I love you because even though we are not perfect you are still brilliant. Divine. Beautiful!"

"How am I beautiful, then?" the boy asks, "...they always said I was ugly".

And then I knew.

"That's the journey. Our gift! Our destiny. To carry this shame and hold on to it means I have been following the wrong path, listening to the wrong voices. There is grace and beauty in you not because of the absence of shame, or because you are perfect. You are beautiful because of your shame...because of your scars..."

I am weeping.

The boy looks on, curious.

"They don't see it. Maybe not easily...not at first. But, every day you carry the same cross, the same burden. For everyone to see. Some will scorn you. Some will mock you. Some will be afraid. I betrayed you, betrayed us by believing them. For too long I saw you, saw us, the way they saw us. I became weak, and shallow...but we all carry something. We are all imperfect. I love you because, despite your shame, and your scars, you move forward, carrying your burdens...I love you because even though your cross is heavy, you persevere!"

The words were difficult to find. Heavy.

Quietly, the boy takes my hand. We make eye contact.

"I love you right back" he says.

Living with disfigurements has affected every relationship in my life, starting with my relationship with myself. This story was written, in part, to examine this relationship I have with myself, my identity, and self-concept. I believe we all carry something. We are all imperfect. I offer this as my own way of discovering and honouring my unique struggles, and the journey I am on.

Last week, I had a chat with Corrine Michel. Corrine has been at Camosun about ten years, coming to us from Victoria High School. She works in and from Eyë? Sqâ'lewen, the Centre for Indigenous Education and Community Connections, as the college's Indigenization Coordinator. In this role, Corrine is responsible for coordinating the integration of Indigenous worldviews—knowing, being, and doing—into the college's functioning across four areas: curriculum development and delivery, employee education, services for students, and policy and strategic planning.

Corrine's work has many facets. Thus far, the most visible work has taken place in the area of employee education. In this context, Corrine makes presentations to students, to leadership teams, and to curriculum committees, takes part in program renewal processes, has served on the College Curriculum Committee and Education Council, plays a role in college ceremonies, and coordinates and delivers TTW (TELTIN TTE WILNEW) courses under the aegis of the Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning.

Perhaps you have taken the TTW course or know someone who has. Perhaps it is on your list of things to investigate. I can certainly recommend it. I have done it myself and found it enlightening and moving not only in its content, but also in its structure. In TTW, learning and sharing takes place in circle. The circle provides a safe space in which participants can share feelings, thoughts, and questions about the material covered in readings and videos. And participating in circle becomes a way not only to gain understanding of the worldviews of Aboriginal students and colleagues, but also to practice respectful listening. Corrine stresses that her work and the worldviews of Aboriginal peoples are "centred on relationship" and that this approach makes room for all the feelings that may arise for people—shame, fear, doubt, gratitude, inspiration, hope—in the context of looking at the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. The primary goal of indigenization is to make the college a more welcoming place for Aboriginal students and workers, but for me and for many who have taken TTW, another welcome result is an invigorating broadening of perspective.

Besides the benefits of learning some facts and hearing the perspectives of others, I have found that the structure of TTW makes for a kind of freedom from system-roles that is rarely experienced at work. Participants come from all areas of the college, and TTW is one of the few situations I've been in when I felt the various silos that form in institutionalized settings (departments, disciplines, job descriptions, pay scales) begin to break down. This makes space for the full humanity of each person in the room. As a result, connections are made and strengthened.

Corrine stresses that this experience isn't always easy, and neither is her role. She says, "It takes time to build relationships, to connect people with each other and with resources," but she believes it's time well spent. When I ask her what challenges she faces in her job, she speaks of the responsibility she feels for the vulnerability of others and her desire to honour that vulnerability. Of course, there's also the practical side of things: she could use more resources—Corrine could be two people and still be very busy. In addition, she knows there's a lot more work to do in the area of policy and strategic planning, a difficult place to make changes, institutions being what they are.

Challenges or not, Corrine believes in and practices gratitude for what she does. I ask her what the best part of her job is, and she says "I get to engage with people across the whole institution, and that's why I can say Camosun rocks!" She pauses, and then adds, "Ultimately, it's about having a positive impact on students and the people they work with." I can testify to that effect. I have taken what I have learned in TTW and in my work on the college's Indigenization Committee into my classrooms and into my other interactions with people at work and elsewhere. TTW has been a profound experience for me, and perhaps it has been for you too. Corrine says that "it's all about readiness." If you haven't yet been able to explore this area, then when you're ready, I hope you will consider it. I believe you will find it as positive and affirming as I have and that the Camosun Community is strengthened by the work Corrine is doing.



Corrine and her dog Finnegan are a certified dog therapy team with Sain John's Ambulance

For exercise I swim back and forth in a pool for 30 – 45 minutes. To an onlooker the whole enterprise might seem quite boring, this monotonous traversing of an enclosed space, and it is occasionally boring, but not for long. Thoughts take over, often unexpected thoughts that seem to bubble up from the water. These beguiling thoughts usually don't arrive until creaky repetitive everyday mental mutterings have had time to dissolve in the pool where random cogitations of thousands of swimmers merge in the swirls and splashes of the water, giving rise to new combinations.

Recently this question floated into my mind, perhaps through my ear: what if I were imprisoned in Camosun College; if Camosun were my entire world (with I hope, day passes to the pool.)? On the next westward length, I thought that would be pretty grim: my whole world limited to a few square kilometres, and of course there's truth to that. I wouldn't want to be prisoned anywhere. When I turned eastward though, I began to realize what a rich and mentally stimulating incarceration that could be. Assuming all the other Camosun employees were under the same sentence, I'd be able to tap into so much knowledge and understanding. There we would all be –just ourselves, no internet. Historians could help me grasp the root causes of our confinement. Political scientists could organize resistance, at least theoretically, while mathematicians could calculate the odds of success and astronomers could comfort us, or not, by stressing our cosmic insignificance. Philosophers would offer the inmates lots to think and debate about.

It gets better. Trained nurses would be on hand to advise on matters of health, and we'd even have some help with dentistry. Engineers could design and help to build whatever needed to be built and maybe surreptitiously design tunnels of escape should anyone actually want to leave. Poets and writers would weave sagas for entertainment and insight into the universal truth that all lives are an interplay between freedom and captivity. In good time the language teachers amongst us would help create a multi-lingual community. Mechanics, carpenters and electricians would make and fix things. With the help of scientists, we could design experiments and learn things entirely new, and librarians could keep all our new learning organized. We would need counselors and would not have far to look.

Resources for recreation would not be lacking. Our prison would have gymnasia, sports fields, all kinds of equipment and lots of requisite whistles. Hypothetical dormitories could be our barracks. Of course, there would be the question of where to sleep and with whom, but that would work itself out over time. There would even be enough land for the prison to grow its own food.

Most important, how rich the conversations could be with so many people who know so much about so many different things having each other to talk to. We could all learn so much.

Well, that's not so different from now, is it? We're not prisoners, but we live huge swaths of our lives in proximity to each other on the grounds of the college. I wonder how many of us leap at the chance to benefit from and contribute to each other's knowledge and insights.

That's just something I was thinking about while I was swimming.

CCFA PD

The new guidelines and forms are now available [here](#).

A reminder that the deadline for Long Term Funding Applications is January 29, 2015 at noon.

Click [here](#) for information on upcoming PD opportunities offered through CETL.

Call for Submissions

Please consider submitting an article to the Confluence - email [Erin Waugh](#) or [Mark Kunen](#) with your feedback article, or your idea for an article. Don't forget that we want to hear about your SD project, your vacation, or really anything you'd like to share with your colleagues.