



CCFA Report to Camosun Board of Governors

9 November 2020

In our last Board report, dated 10 June 2020, I painted a picture of a college in crisis. Camosun had enacted a sudden, wholesale shift to remote educational delivery. The provincial government deemed our work essential, yet offered no help for us perform it under extraordinarily demanding conditions. Now we are in the thick of it. Teaching loads are heavy, with no time allocated for concurrent online course development. Faculty members have been doing uncompensated overtime for months, sacrificing evenings, weekends and hard-earned vacation to keep up. And we are isolated in an alien learning landscape, just as our students are isolated from their own systems of support and needing more from us than ever before.

The cracks are starting to show. The CCFA is fielding a growing number of pleas for assistance, as requests for workload relief are denied, and faculty contemplate unpaid leaves of absence or retirement in order to cope. We don't know how many others are quietly suffering, perhaps risking their health. We do know this risk to faculty is also a risk to student success.

When I last wrote to you, I asked for help. It was disappointing not to receive a response. Although the Board's place may be 'above the fray' of College operations, not acknowledging such a major issue contributes to a widespread feeling of being stranded. Our impression now is that the College intends to wait this out, doing the necessary damage control until the great shift online is, to some standard, complete. The damage may be considerable.

For our part, the CCFA has a duty to protect our members' collectively bargained rights. Therefore, after numerous conversations in which administration's constraints were made apparent, we filed workload grievances for the Winter and Spring/Summer terms of 2020, on behalf of all affected faculty. We are also working with the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators and a range of post-secondary unions on other approaches to bring attention and relief to our sector.

The workload grievances form a regrettable new chapter in a story of deteriorating labour relations. Last fall, I submitted a grievance table for your information, and you will see an update below. I believe the numbers speak for themselves. Please remember that each case represents one or more Camosun community members in distress. These are trying times, and we see the strain on everyone, including our administrators. However, we feel that CCFA labour relations have slid to a bad place, making the present crisis worse. Serious work is needed to restore mutual understanding of our collective agreement and a sense of mutual responsibility to uphold it.

CCFA Labour Relations Snapshot: Active Grievances		
<i>Step</i>	<i>12 Nov. 2019</i>	<i>30 Oct. 2020</i>
1	1	9
2	4	3
3	4	2
Arbitration	9	14
Abeyance	3	3
TOTAL	21	31

On a positive note, let me relay that I am among the lucky few who was approved to do some in-person instruction this fall. I have been taking my Environmental Technology students into the field to learn about landscape processes, and being out there together has been a breath of fresh air, literally and figuratively. Everyone involved with the Safe Start process deserves credit for their hard work to make face-to-face instruction possible in plague times, albeit in limited fashion. I hope we can find a way to safely do more of it.

Thanks as ever for your service to Camosun, particularly in this difficult time. I would be glad to connect with you about this report, or other matters. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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