

# TFEU President's Report : February 2012

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## Overview

We have accomplished many significant improvements in the key areas of "Less than Minimum" postings, improvements to Joint Accommodations, better access to benefits, contracting out, better language on several Letters of understanding and a good working arrangement with the employer to deliver "win-win" solutions time after time.

I am really pleased to say that we have made tremendous progress in many of these key areas through a collaborative yet very firm approach to our committees, joint working groups and liaison meetings. All of the Committees have been working flat out and the workload generally has been very high. I want to single out the Joint Job Evaluation Committee – JJEC – and the Joint Accommodations Committee for their dedicated work and practical approach to problem solving. The result has been large gains for our Members.

We have also been working hard on assisting members with Independent Medical Examinations; improving access to Long Term Disability through alternates to EI Sickness and handling some key grievances. We made a significant win on a recent grievance on Contracting Out.

The proposed Collective Agreement roll-over is another big ticket item that we will be voting on shortly.

## Breakthroughs

Recent breakthroughs include:

- **"No Less than Minimum"** The Committee has completed improvements to language and developed a more comprehensive agreement. Postings have now started under this improved method and we recently had the first successful hiring of a Member into a position that would have gone External otherwise.

- This is what we have been pushing for a long time and we have finally "broken through" in this key area. There is still a lot of work and there are bound to be exceptions but the new principle is to provide better support for internal staff. This is definitely working.
- **Contracting Out** has been formalized now with a form that must be provided to the Union and agreement reached before a contract can be signed. As a result of a grievance we brought inside the Appian Enhancement Project and will do with other contracts that may come up in the future. In addition to saving large amounts of money, this brings work to our Members.
- **Joint Accommodations** have been working well and we have seen several successes recently.
- **Job Evaluations are progressing well** and we have now identified the key areas for our Job Organization expert, Vicki Averill, to assist with the backlog. There seems to be more willingness for the Employer to work collaboratively with us. There have been some large "class" evaluations completed, especially in ISD and IT. Special thanks go to Dennis and Jeannine
- **Contract** : We will look at two primary options – whether to go to Collective Bargaining or whether we should sign a 2 year roll-over. We also have the option to just let the Contract roll over automatically for 1 year by not notifying Management of our intentions.
- **Organizational change / Tech change** : We now have a commitment from HR and Management to improve the Org Change and Tech Change provisions and bring them up to date. I will be creating a new Committee to manage this.
- **Long Term Disability (LTD) claims** – We had a very detailed presentation by the outgoing and new Plan Administrators – Chris Arcari and Ritchie Kendrick. The 2 external Rehab consultants – Eileen and Ruth – also attended. As a result we have a much clearer understanding of the LTD process. Christine Choinski – our hard working VP – is going to develop a Member brochure that guides us through the process of making an LTD Claim.

## **Liaison and Mediation**

This has been a very busy period supporting requests from Members, handling medical support issues, working with Management to obtain solutions and options and generally handling the day to day requirements.

There has been a much larger emphasis recently on obtaining training, winning more education and career progression and supporting initiatives that help Members collectively. We successfully obtained an Educational Leave and resolved several key issues without using the Grievance procedure.

Other examples include obtaining bonussing; dealing with work outside of the Job Description; extending probations to allow for a better evaluation; arranging Term position "swaps"; interpreting Collective Agreement articles with the Employer and many other similar situations. In virtually every situation we obtain the very best "deal" for our Member.

## **Grievances**

One grievance has now progressed to Arbitration; we hope to be able to get this scheduled soon. Others have either been resolved to our satisfaction or have not had any grounds for continuing. In this non-winnable category we usually see a request that has no hard data or documentation to support the case.

I have been obtaining a large number of legal opinions – always the most expensive item in our budget but necessary - related to Independent Medical Exams, sick leaves, long term disability or other key and complex needs.

## **Bargaining**

I have continued to be actively involved in the Coquitlam Teachers Association bargaining with our sub-local. The schedule has slipped considerably and it looks like it will be June or July before we have a Collective Agreement. . We continue to get lots of help and support from Jean Rands in this work. Our strategy for the other contracts, including the BCTF one, continues to be:

- A member survey – Charlie Naylor will lead this. *It is coming soon.*
- Grievances will be compiled – Christine Choinski. *This has now been completed.*
- We will develop Common Language – hopefully across all contracts – Jean Rands.
- Training on Negotiating skills and contract language will be arranged. *Completed*
- Benefits will be reviewed. *In progress – this will take more time.*

Charlie Naylor is the leader in this area and will communicate the survey and plan in the next few weeks.

We will probably not get into serious bargaining until late summer but lots of preparation work needs to be done in the meantime. Sub-local contracts may start earlier based on demand and local needs.

### **Sub-Locals**

I have been meeting with several sub-local staff and working on local grievances and issues. I also keep the sub-locals informed on major policy and other key items. We have 4 sub-locals: Coquitlam, Vancouver Elementary, Vancouver Secondary and Surrey. North Vancouver has also applied to be a sub-local.

Jean and I will be preparing a small handbook for sub-locals over the next few months.

### **BCTF Liaison Committee**

There has not been a meeting so far this year but one is planned for mid to late February. I will provide feedback to everyone on key items that arise from this high level committee.

## **Committees**

The Tech Change and Org Change and Article 16 committees will be started soon. Article 16 deals with long term sick employees and replacement postings. I have also asked management to initiate the technology working group in a new format and potentially some other joint committees.

Committee work is the lifeblood of TFEU and enables us to deliver services and support across a wide spectrum. You will regularly see me asking for volunteers and we have always had good responses.

Thank You, Peter Valbonesi

President, TFEU