



Federation of  
**Post-Secondary Educators**  
of BC

**Sheldon Clare's Report  
to FPSE's March 2006 Bargaining Conference**



**Sheldon Clare  
Chair of the FPSE Bargaining  
Coordination & Review  
Committee**

**OVERVIEW**

**Today I would present to you a progress report on the activities of the Bargaining Contract Review Committee. I will report on our past work, present challenges and discuss our future goals and some of the problems that we are facing. We will have to find the solutions to those problems collectively.**

**You will recall that this conference arose from a motion presented by the NVIT representative to examine our bargaining situation.**

**There have been concerns expressed by many of us about how the last round of bargaining unfolded and ended. These concerns include issues around process, strategy and tactics, desired outcomes, and our internal relationships, as well as our relationship with our British Columbia Government Employees Union allies.**

**With an aim of better understanding what went wrong and what we can do better next time, the BCRC has been working to learn from the past round with the aim of making the next round more successful. BCRC met in September and had a thorough and frank discussion about the last round. Local representatives talked about what worked and what did not. Certainly, the last round had some successes, and I do not want to take away from those achievements.**

**Based on that effort and subsequent discussions, we found that we have some differences amongst ourselves as to what we want to see happen in this round. With our diverse views in mind, the BCRC formed a**

small sub-committee, which was tasked to develop a discussion paper and recommendations for the next round of bargaining. The sub-committee consisted of Sheldon Clare as BCRC Chair; Jeff McKeil, staff representative; George Davison, 1st Vice President; Dominique Roelants, MFA; Bev Onischak (SCFA); and Lynn Carter (LFA).

The committee met and created an outline and general content for the paper, Jeff and George built a draft, and it underwent several revisions including submission to the larger BCRC, President's Council, back to the BCRC, and now to this Bargaining Conference.

#### **PRESENT**

What we are all doing now is gathering information about the larger bargaining situation. It is a sad fact that some of us are still engaged in finishing the bargaining process from the last round.

In the military, there is a maxim that no good plan survives enemy contact, and that is certainly true with what has been happening in the past few months. One gets the sense of being in an earthquake zone (certainly in the lower mainland we are!). The ground is continually shifting beneath our feet. Other speakers have provided some information about that situation, so I do not need to discuss it now. Suffice it to say that this government bargains very strongly and we should not underestimate their ability to be successful in dividing us to achieve their fiscal and political goals.

#### **THE CHALLENGES WE FACE:**

First, to overcome those matters that divide us internally. We have some differences that have led us apart in some areas. We had better all bargain together from a position of strength, or we will find ourselves bargaining apart in a position of weakness.

Second, we need to determine the nature of our relationship with the BCGEU. There are strong divisions among us based on our bargaining history about what that relationship should be. We need to sort this

situation out soon so that we can move into a cohesive strategy for the next round. This issue is one that keeps coming up and has contributed to our internal divisions.

Third, we need to be proactive, as well as reactive, to the changing bargaining climate. The billion-dollar bonus and template bargaining are clever distractions designed to divide us and focus our attention on the government's agenda, rather than upon our own.

#### **WHAT IS OUR WORK FOR THE FUTURE?**

Generally, we must prepare for the fall bargaining council and thus the next round of bargaining. We must meet these challenges head on and use our diversity as our strength, not as a divisive weakness. We must protect and build upon our common agreement. We must develop limited common issues to take forward in a united way. Finally, we need to prepare for a vigorous round with some serious work on and with the aim of obtaining money to resolve our local issues.

I wish to thank the members of my committee for their hard work and efforts on behalf of all us. That is my report. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

**Sheldon Clare**  
**Chair, Bargaining Coordination Review Committee**