

## **Steward Report, Vancouver Island University Faculty Association, April 2022**

### **Introduction**

This report can only begin with a message of thanks to our former Chief Personnel Steward, Colleen Price, who helped bring me to the role and supported me in transition. Thanks also to President Chris Jaeger and the broader VIUFA Executive for their kind support through my first year. As well, thanks Labour Relations Advisor, Neil McLeod for his guidance. Neil joins me in thanking our Area Stewards, too, who have worked closely with us on a number of challenging files. And thanks to Laura Buechler, VIUFA's Office Manager, for keeping us all together.

### **Summary of Activity**

Without any doubt, our ongoing experience with Covid-19 has been the biggest labour relations story of the year. We have worked closely with the employer to navigate the VIU return to campus plan, remote work opportunities (i.e. flexible work framework), student and faculty accommodation requests, and a number of other related matters that flow from Covid-19.

Since April 2021, we have responded to more than 150 VIUFA member queries. Some of these contacts have been routine, but most have required close examination of the Collective Agreement and following investigation into the specific contexts and / or remedies sought for each the circumstance. Many queries have required sustained action and are ongoing. My experience with the Employer has been positive. I have found contacts with Senior Admin, Human Resources, Deans and Managers to be professional, respectful, and collaborative. Where we have not been in agreement about interpreting the Agreement, or the facts of a situation or how we might respond to them, institutional processes have been mostly effective.

In addition to the Steward casework, I have continued to attend a range of VIUFA meetings this year including: Labour Management Committee, Covid-19 Updates, VIUFA Executive, VIUFA Table Officers, VIUFA Assisted Leave, VIUFA Class Size LM Sub-Committee, and the FPSE Contract Administration Review Committee.

As of this morning—April 25, 2022—we have approximately thirty (30) active files, and a range of related labour relations matters that we continue to monitor as we now work closely with our Chief Bargainer in preparation for contract negotiation. Some of the general patterns in our casework are represented in the enumerated categories below.

1. Grievances: 1 carried now by FPSE and 1 recently resolved through successful mediation
2. Regularization + LTC Data Review: Ongoing examination of Regularization entitlements and how LTCs are used across disciplines, or what arguments are given for and against
3. Student Conduct: Monitoring ongoing hire in Office of Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights, with an interest in how student concerns are processed through this office
4. Academic Administrators: Monitoring classification of Management positions as either Academic or Non-Academic Administrators, following entitlements to VIUFA representation on hiring committees, and the matter of Retreat Rights
5. Vacation for Instructional, Non-Instructional, and Hybrid Appointments
6. Class Size and Workload Equity, as per outcomes of the last Collective Agreement

Again, please let me thank your Personnel Stewards Committee: Gillian Anderson, Greg Arkos, Deborah Colette, Bonnie Davidson, Dana McFarland, Zora Soprovich, Al Stremming, Deborah Torkko, Johan Latulippe, David Woodward, and Sheila Boyce. They all work exceptionally hard on your behalf and keep up-to-date so that they can answer your questions and concerns. We hope for more opportunities to meet with and provide PD for the Area Stewards next year.

We are always happy to connect with you to answer any concerns you may have about how the Collective Agreement is working in your area, so please don't hesitate to reach out.

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In Solidarity,

Clay Armstrong  
Chief Personnel Steward  
Vancouver Island Faculty Association