



## **FPSE WHSEC Representative Annual Report 2022/2023 Submitted by Amber Hieb**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your representative to the Federation of Post Secondary Educators Workplace Health, Safety, and Environment Committee (FPSE WHSEC) for the 2022/2023 year. It was my first term working in any role for our Association, and overall, it was a positive and encouraging experience.

I also extend a big thank you to Robin Boxwell for his work representing VIUFA on Vancouver Island University's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (VIU JOHSC). Robin is thoughtful about the experience of everyone who works, learns, or visits our campuses, and I am grateful for the questions and solutions he brought to our monthly committee meetings in support of creating and maintaining workplace safety.

In my role as the FPSE WHSEC representative, I worked on behalf of VIUFA on two separate committees. I have identified highlights from each committee below.

**FPSE WHSEC:** This committee, made up of representatives from 20 participating locals throughout British Columbia, met twice during the year.

- ***October 21/22, 2022 – Via Zoom***
  - Headed up by a new committee chair, WHSEC members shared pressing concerns and workplace safety issues facing their locals. From these concerns, four key issues were identified and formed the focus of the committee's work for the term:
    - help members use their JOHS committee to ensure regulatory compliance.
    - support locals to focus on mental health and burnout.
    - support locals to ensure better harassment and bullying prevention and reporting through their JOHS committee.
    - support locals in their requests for key air quality information.
  
- ***January 27/28, 2023 – FPSE Headquarters in Vancouver***
  - This in-person meeting provided an opportunity for active committee work. To this end, the committee:
    - revised the Terms of Reference Responsibilities list to better reflect the actual scope of work achievable by the committee.
    - developed an action plan to:

- create an Occupational Health & Safety handout for distribution at the FPSE AGM to raise awareness and increase understanding about the role of the JOHS committee.
- build a new reporting template for WHSEC representatives to complete before bi-annual meetings for the collection and more meaningful use of local's health and safety data.
- use the committee's annual FPSE budget allocation to provide an occupational health and safety related workshop at the FPSE AGM.

**VIU JOHSC:** This committee, made up of representatives from VIUFA, CUPE, BCGEU, VIUSU, administration, and VIU Health & Safety Officers, met each month. Items of interest discussed and reported out include:

- ***Operating under the Communicable Diseases Plan***
  - VIU campuses transitioned from COVID-19 protocols to the Communicable Diseases Plan. This plan includes a safe work procedure that requires anyone who is actively symptomatic with illness to refrain from attending on campus.
  - Wearing masks in the classroom continues to be optional; however, administration affirmed that faculty can require those attending their office to wear a mask, and masks were added as a recommended personal measure on the *VIU COVID-19: Updates and Information* webpage.
- ***Safety Boards on Campus***
  - 24 safety bulletin boards were installed in high use areas around campus. These boards provide a platform for the dissemination of important and timely occupational health & safety information, including agendas and meeting minutes from VIU's JOHSC.
- ***VIU Employee Safety Training Matrix***
  - Work continues on the development of an institutional safety training matrix. The matrix will clearly identify which specific safety training, including frequency, is required for various roles within the institution, providing a better overall picture for Human Resources and the Health & Safety Office.
- ***Additional Ice Melt Bins Installed***
  - Slip and falls on icy terrain continue to be a large source of injury on campus during the winter months. 3 new self-serve ice melt bins were added to address slippery conditions during snow or cold weather events

on campus. The ice melt is for general use by those who see icy areas on campus, and the additional bins can be found:

- outside the Welcome Centre (B300)
- at the entrance to IT, behind the Library (B305)
- the north-east entrance to the Health & Science Centre (B210)

- ***New Incident Reporting System***

- VIU is moving away from a “paper” or Word-document-based incident reporting system, and adopting new custom-made software, likely ready for training and launch beginning in June 2023.
- The new software will streamline data input, allowing for consistent collection of data about safety-related incidents, and more meaningful interpretation and analysis of that data (e.g., the identification of incident trends or “hot spots”).
- Under the new reporting system, employees will self-report safety incidents with an easy-to-use on-line interface that requires employee log in. An automatic notification of the incident will then be sent to supervisors, and a report will be generated to WorkSafe BC automatically.

- ***New Safety Data Sheet Database***

- VIU now has a subscription with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) for the provision of chemical safety datasheets and other occupational health & safety legislation and regulations.
- The database collection is available through a link on VIU’s Health & Safety Services webpage for use by anyone with VIU log in credentials.

I would be pleased to answer any questions about the items raised in this report, or address any other concerns, and can be reached by email to [Amber.Hieb@viu.ca](mailto:Amber.Hieb@viu.ca) or [safety@viufa.ca](mailto:safety@viufa.ca).

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve our Faculty Association.