



Regular Faculty Handbook

2023

April 3, 2024

The Vancouver Island University Faculty Association (“VIUFA”)

VIUFA was originally known as the Malaspina Faculty Association and has been representing Faculty members since 1974. Faculty members employed as professors, instructors, counselors, faculty advisors, librarians, technicians and elders are automatically full members of VIUFA¹ (those teaching vocational courses are represented by the BCGEU).

As the legal bargaining agent, VIUFA has a traditional trade union mandate: to improve the remuneration and working conditions of its members and to protect their collective rights.

VIUFA is also a professional association. We work to maintain and improve the quality of education at Vancouver Island University and to maintain the rights of you – the individual – to exercise independent judgment in the planning and execution of your responsibilities at VIU.

We are also members of a provincial organization, the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of British Columbia (“FPSE”), which represents the concerns of most faculty members in BC colleges, institutes and the new special purpose teaching universities.

When you received your contract you should have been given an “Application for VIUFA Membership” by the employer. If you have not already done so, please fill it out and send it to us so we have a way to contact you outside of employer-owned communication technologies should the need arise.

Get in touch

The VIUFA office is located in Room 108 of Building 460. The mailing address is: **Vancouver Island University Faculty Association, 900 Fifth Street, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5S5**

You can reach the VIUFA office by telephone **(250.740.6339)**, or by email to viufa@viu.ca. You can also find us on **Facebook** (Vancouver Island University Faculty Association) and **Mastodon** (<https://social.viufa.ca/@info>).



The physical Union office is located on the first floor of Building 460, in Room 108.

Our Office Manager, **Laura Buechler**, can be reached at staff@viufa.ca.

Our Labour Relations Advisor, **Neil McLeod**, can be reached at staffrep@viufa.ca.

¹ Associated union dues will be deducted from pay. Individuals who do not wish to be a member for religious or political reasons may resign their memberships. By law, membership dues will continue to be deducted as even those employees who are not members of VIUFA are

governed by the Collective Agreement and thus benefit from the rights negotiated by VIUFA for members.

Get informed

VIUFA's website is at: www.viufa.ca. It has the most up-to-date information about:

- The Collective Agreement
- News Updates
- VIUFA Constitution and Bylaws
- The VIUFA Newsletter

Each year, there are at least two General Meetings scheduled between August 15 and December 31 and between January 1 and April 30, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April. The important business of the union is conducted at these meetings and your voice is integral to providing direction for VIUFA. Special meetings on matters requiring the immediate attention of the members may be called.

Plan to attend General Meetings, and speak to Executive members regularly to stay informed.

Get involved

VIUFA is your union. We rely on the involvement of members to function, and we welcome your contributions. The involvement of the membership is essential to our success. If you are interested in becoming active in the union, talk with any member of the Executive, or contact the VIUFA office.



"Thanks to my work with VIUFA, I have built relationships and contributed to the direction of the university. As Chair of the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee, I have enhanced my event coordination and communication skills in order to share initiatives with diverse groups

on campus. I really enjoy working with the representatives at other Federation of Post Secondary Educators locals, as together we increase awareness of social justice issues in communities across the province. I appreciate the expertise on the VIUFA executive, and am grateful for the diversity of the membership with whom I have had the pleasure to meet, learn, and progress."

- *Eliza Gardiner, Chair of the VIUFA Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee, 2009-2017*

Your Union Executive

The Executive is the decision-making body for the Association between Annual General Meetings. The Executive makes and implements operational decisions on a week-by-week basis. Apart from speaking out at General Meetings, you can contact members of the Executive so that he or she can address your concern or raise your issue.

The Executive includes the Officers of the Association and a number of additional members. The Officers of the Association are:

1. President;
2. Vice-President;
3. Secretary-Treasurer;
4. Chief Personnel Steward; and
5. Chair of the Contract Negotiating Committee.

The additional Executive positions are:

6. Associate Bargainer;
7. Chair of the Professional & Scholarly Development Committee
8. Chair of the Human Rights & International Solidarity Committee;
9. Chair of the Women's and Gender Equity Committee;
10. Chair of the University Budget Analysis Committee;
11. Chair of the Decolonization, Reconciliation, & Indigenization Standing Committee;
12. Federation of Post-Secondary Educators Pension Advisory Committee Representative;
13. FPSE Workplace Health, Safety & Environment Committee Representative;
14. FPSE Academic Governance Committee Representative;
15. FPSE Disability Management and Rehabilitation Committee Representative;
16. Non-Instructional Faculty Representative;
17. Non-Regular Faculty Representative; and
18. Member at Large.

Each VIUFA standing committee has a clearly defined role. The committees deal with bargaining, contract administration, human rights, non-regularized faculty issues, gender equity, academic governance, university budget analysis, occupational health and safety, decolonization and reconciliation, and scholarly and professional development. Detailed descriptions of the roles of each Executive member are provided in VIUFA's Terms of Reference (available on the VIUFA website).



Election Process

The Executive is elected annually, typically in April, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). If you'd like to stand for election, prior to the AGM talk to a member of the Executive to see what the time commitment will be. Then have a union member nominate you and fill out the nomination form. Nominations may also be made and accepted from the floor of the AGM. Nominees usually give a short speech. If the number of nominees equals the positions open, election is by acclamation, otherwise ballots are cast.

Current Executive (May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024)

Officers of the Executive	Name	Local
President	Gara Pruesse	2337
Vice-President	Dana McFarland	6332
Secretary-Treasurer	Johnny Blakeborough	2265
Chief Personnel Steward	Clay Armstrong	2421
Chair, Contract Negotiating	Jane Wodlinger	6361
Additional Executive Members		
Associate Bargainer	Bonita Davidson	2626
Chair, Professional & Scholarly Development	Sasha Koerbler	2502
Chair, Human Rights & International Solidarity	Vicki Nygaard	2086
Chair, Women and Gender Equity	Eliza Gardiner	6386
Chair, University Budget Analysis	Jean Blackburn	
Chair, Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Indigenization Committee	Georgina Martin	2763
FPSE Pension Advisory Representative	Scott Priestman	2264
FPSE Workplace Health, Safety & Environment Representative	Amber Hieb	2517
FPSE Academic Governance Representative	Katharine Rollwagen	2800
FPSE Disability Management & Rehabilitation Representative	Anna Atkinson	250-327-2247
Non-Instructional Faculty Representative	Jamie Wood	2170
Non-Regular Faculty Representative	(vacant)	nrf@viufa.ca
Member at Large	Stacy Cuzzocrea	2340

The employer owns the VIU email system and could read email sent from your viu.ca address. While this has never happened at VIU, we have heard about it happening at other BC Post-Secondary Institutions. As such, you may choose to send email from your private email account when inquiring with the VIUFA Office (staffrep@viufa.ca).



Shop Stewards

The function of the Shop Stewards at VIUFA is to administer the Collective Agreement. In other words, if a situation arises where a provision of the Collective Agreement is violated, then our committee will move to stop that action and seek an appropriate remedy. Remedies may be sought through formal grievances and arbitrations, but typically a dispute resolution begins by engaging in informal discussions with administrators.

If you have a complaint or an inquiry regarding your conditions of employment, please feel free to contact a shop steward (even if an administrator has told you that you have no grounds for a complaint). The steward you talk to will bring your complaint to the Chief Steward and possibly to the Stewards Committee. If a violation of the Collective Agreement is identified and if informal discussions do not bring about a resolution, then a grievance will be launched.

The first step of the grievance is a meeting between a representative of Human Resources, the appropriate Dean or Director, and the stewards involved in that case (usually two). If a resolution is not reached, another meeting is held (usually with the same people as above), and a representative of the Senior Administration of VIU. Again, if no resolution is reached, we may take the grievance to arbitration where the decision made by the arbitrator is binding. The decision to go to arbitration is made by the Chief Personnel Steward. In many cases, the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of B.C. will provide legal assistance.

Once the new Collective Agreement has been printed and distributed to faculty, we encourage members to read it over and become familiar with the language.

If a situation arises that does not seem to be covered by the Collective Agreement, again feel free to contact a Shop Steward. Some work conditions fall under the umbrella of past practice. While we cannot always grieve violations of past practice, we have been successful in advocating for our members.

Current Shop Stewards

Armstrong, Clay	Chief Personnel Steward	2421
Suski, Laura	Social Sciences	2177
Arkos, Greg	Science & Technology	2207
Collette, Deborah	Health & Human Services	2728
Davidson, Bonita	Education	2626
Latulippe, Johan	Management	2564
McFarland, Dana	Library	6332
Soprovich, Zora	tiwšemawtx ^w Campus	604-485-8056
Stremming, Al	Information Technology	2547
Torkko, Deborah	Arts & Humanities	2127
(vacant)	Cowichan Campus	

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE)

FPSE represents the faculty at twenty-one public universities, colleges, institutes and other post-secondary institutions in BC. In exchange for a portion of the dues collected from our members, FPSE assists with:

- A collective voice to present the views of BC’s educators on provincial policies to politicians, Ministry officials, the public and the media.
- Collection, analysis and distribution of information on educational policy, labour relations, pension legislation, human rights law, and equality issues.
- Advice on all aspects of union work and training for your union officers and shop stewards.
- Legal counsel to represent members in arbitrations and other legal actions.
- A defence fund to support members engaged in strikes, lockouts, or honouring picket lines.
- Standing Committees with representatives from each local working to identify and address issues of concern within their mandates. These committees currently include:

Education Policy	Professional & Scholarly Development
Non-Regular Faculty	Pension Advisory
Status of Women	Human Rights & International Solidarity
Disability Management	Workplace Health, Safety & Environment
Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Indigenization	

- Connecting with the BC Teachers Federation, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and other educational organizations.
- Conducting two province-wide conferences each year, providing educational and networking opportunities for member locals.

Through our membership in FPSE, VIUFA also has a number of other affiliations:

- BC Federation of Labour (BC Fed);
- Canadian Labour Congress (CLC);
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT); and
- National Union of CAUT (NUCAUT).

Members with a question or concern about FPSE should contact a member of their local Executive first. If you are not sure which Executive member to contact, call the VIUFA office.

Can I negotiate my initial salary placement?

The Collective Agreement stipulates that new faculty shall be placed on the salary grid in accordance with the “Initial Salary Placement Forms”, which reference certain minimum and maximum levels (that will convert to Steps on the scale).

The section below explains how a faculty member may contest his or her placement in terms of the stated criteria – which is through a formal appeal process. However, it is not uncommon for some faculty to negotiate for a salary placement higher than what might have been the result of a strict application of the “Form” – based on particular qualifications, departmental considerations, market conditions, whatever; and those negotiations may take place at any time through the hiring process. Outside of the formal processes of the Human Resources office, what may happen is that the faculty member will get their Dean or Chief Administrator “on-side”, who will then make the case to the Provost (or to the respective Vice-President) for a deviation from the ordinary placement protocol.

So new faculty should be aware of the opportunity for this type of negotiation.

Note that technicians in Information Technology have a unique system of “positional pay” which has its own system of salary placement.

Can I appeal my initial salary placement?

Yes. The starting salaries of new faculty are based on formal qualifications and years of relevant experience. Initial salary placement is determined upon appointment, and will be the base for all future salary increases.



Placement above the minimum levels is determined by a number of factors set out in your Collective Agreement (e.g. see Article 11.4.1.7). Essentially, negotiations for placement above the minimum levels will focus on how to count experience and qualifications and, conceivably, on how to consider fairly your work experience outside universities (e.g., secondary school teaching, government employment, private sector employment).

Any appeal of initial salary placements must be made within **90 days** of commencing employment at the University, or within **60 days** of receiving the placement form, whichever is later. To appeal your placement, contact VIUFA for assistance.

How am I evaluated?

New regular faculty members receive an initial two-year appointment and are on probation during this period. During the probationary period, two evaluations may occur:

- Formative Evaluation (no later than the end of the first year)
- Summative Evaluation (by the end of the probationary period)

The key difference between these two is that Formative Evaluations are designed to provide new faculty with advice on how to improve, whereas Summative Evaluations may provide the basis for whether a faculty is deemed to have successfully completed the probationary period.

VIUFA members have the right to know the criteria upon which they will be evaluated and are encouraged to obtain this information from the appropriate Senior Administrator. Non-instructional faculty should seek the above information from the appropriate Senior Administrator.

Evaluations for instructional faculty may include any of the following:

- Online student course surveys;
- classroom observations (subject to agreed-upon times);
- interviews with students;
- review of course materials; and
- discussions with the Department Chair.

If you receive an unsatisfactory evaluation, or feel that your evaluation is inaccurate in any way, contact a Shop Steward or call the VIUFA office.

Members may inform their evaluation by engaging in voluntary self-evaluation using a toolkit of materials which can be accessed by searching for “Faculty Self Directed Evaluation” on the VIU website.

Faculty members may wish to engage CIEL in assisting with curriculum design and teaching/learning methods.

VIUFA can put you in contact with someone in your area who can outline the procedure your area follows regarding student questionnaires and classroom visits. It is advisable early in the term to solicit informal feedback from your students and colleagues so that you may be made aware of issues and address them before the formal process begins.

Contact us for assistance if you feel problems exist in your evaluative process, or if you would like assistance in navigating your probationary period successfully.

What benefits do I qualify for?

Regular Faculty Members with a workload of at least 50% are eligible for Extended Health Care benefits (including Vision Care and Emergency Travel Assistance), and a Dental Plan. Details of these benefits are provided at Articles 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 of your Collective Agreement.

Regular Faculty Members are also eligible for Disability Benefits, outlined at Article 13.4, and are enrolled in the College Pension Plan.

What professional development opportunities are available to me?

Regular Faculty who are working a full workload are entitled to a minimum of \$1,200 per year for professional development activities. Regular Faculty working less than a full workload are entitled to a pro rata amount proportional to their workload. Unexpended PD funds can be carried over provided the balance does not exceed \$3,000, transferred to a faculty member’s research account, or taken as a cash payment of 75% of the amount.

Expenses that may be eligible for reimbursement include:

- Membership fees in professional organizations and learned societies;
- Books, periodicals, journals and other materials directly associated with the faculty member's duties and responsibilities;
- Registration or other fees for conferences, courses, workshops and similar activities; and
- Travel expenses related to attending meetings, conferences and courses.
- Computer purchases once every three years.

A number of Assisted PD Leaves are also available to regular faculty members. Please see Article 12.4 of the Collective Agreement for the details of these assisted leaves. Regular non-instructional faculty members are also entitled to a minimum of two weeks to engage in professional development activities, subject to no requirement for replacement. This benefit is pro-rated for those non-instructional faculty members who do not hold full time postings. Non-instructional members can also bank PD time or borrow PD time from future years provided the total banked time does not exceed six weeks.

Regular faculty members are also entitled to Tuition Fee waivers for some University credit courses and some community education courses. Consult the VIU Human Resources website for more information.

Former Chair of the VIUFA Professional & Scholarly Development Committee, Kathleen Reed, developed a comprehensive chart of internal funding opportunities for Association members, which can be found on the VIUFA website under the heading *Spring 2016 Pro-D Opportunities for VIUFA Members*.

Do I report to my Departmental Chair?

No. Duties of the Chair differ between departments but do not include management of faculty. However, your Chair may influence your teaching evaluations, which courses you are assigned, and whether you may undertake directed studies courses or leaves. Departmental Chairs are also involved in Departmental staffing decisions and curriculum development.

How is my workload determined?

Generally, an Instructor's or Professor's workload is determined by the Chair of their department, in consultation with other faculty in the department. The workload, responsibilities and duties of non-instructional faculty are determined by the appropriate Chair, Director, Regional Campus Principal or Dean, in consultation with that faculty member.

The Collective Agreement also places some limits on workloads. Instructional workloads are limited to a maximum of sixteen teaching hours a week, averaged over two semesters. The maximum number of regular lecture classes is eight. Instructional faculty with an assignment equivalent to seven sections which includes one or more upper level courses are entitled to a release from the eighth section.

Several factors must be considered in determining faculty instructional workloads, including but not limited to: number of separate course preparations; type of course; number of students; number of contact hours with students; number and type of assignments; pedagogy and delivery (on-line, face-to-face, team teaching, shared teaching, etc.); program requirements; scholarly activity; nature and extent of non-instructional assignment. Faculty and departments are in the best position to recommend optimal workloads, and so faculty and departments, in consultation with their Dean, shall work towards acceptable overall workloads, taking into consideration the factors outlined above for instructional assignments, as well as scholarly activity and service.

The Collective Agreement requires workloads to be fair. This includes, for example, the prep time each departmental member is required to devote to the courses they have been assigned, relative to the prep time required of other departmental members. If you think there is an unbalanced workload in your department, contact a shop steward or the VIUFA office.

A number of limits to timetabling are also set out in the Collective Agreement. These include for the provision of travel time where a Professor is teaching at more than one campus, and the opportunity to request not to teach more than one evening class. If you have concerns about how your schedule is designed, review Article 10.4.1.1. of the Collective Agreement to ensure it is within the limits set out.

Non-instructional faculty workloads are expected to average 35 hours per week, although the Collective Agreement permits some variability during the academic year to accommodate peak periods.

The Collective Agreement can be confusing – how do I understand it?

If you are unsure about how the Collective Agreement applies in a particular situation, do not hesitate to contact the Chief Personnel Steward (Colleen Price) or the Labour Relations Advisor (Neil McLeod). Both can be reached through the VIUFA office.

We're your advocate



If something doesn't seem right, or if you just don't know whether one of your rights is being violated, contact us sooner rather than later. We can accompany you to meetings or provide a second opinion on that correspondence before you send it. In most cases, you'll be most protected the sooner you contact your advocate.