



NWTU

UNION NEWS

April 2019

President's Message

Eric Young

If you're like me, now that Spring Break is over, and the end of the school year draws ever closer, you're probably feeling both excited and a little stressed all at the same time. However, for me this year things are different than last. This year my list includes local bargaining, spring staffing, contract compliance, class/school organization for next year, while continuing to focus on addressing individual member questions and concerns.

This past Spring Break, I was one of nine delegates to this year's BCTF Annual General Meeting in Victoria. I'd like to personally thank them all for giving up time over their break to represent the NWTU in addressing the business of our federation. Like most AGMs, many things get covered, including debating Executive Committee recommendations and local resolutions, setting the fee, and electing our BCTF leadership. This year Teri Mooring from Quesnel B.C. was elected to be our new BCTF President. Along with Teri, Clint Johnston from Chilliwack was elected as First Vice-President, and Carole Gordon from Kelowna, was elected as Second Vice-President. Along with the three table officers, delegates also elected six of nine members-at-large on a two-year terms. Together, they form our BCTF Executive Committee, tasked with the job of leading our over forty thousand members.

Over the past few years, the BCTF has take steps to learn more about our membership. Inspired by this, the NWTU would like to conduct a membership engagement review next year. We want our membership to get to know its Union, and visa versa. There's a lot of planning to be done, so stay tuned for future updates.

I'd like to end by mentioning that at our Winter General Meeting, our by-laws were amended to provide more ways to conduct elections. This year will look a little different, so please take a look on page 2 in this news letter.

Important Dates

April 9 - NWTU executive meeting – NWTU Office

April 18 – Contract Management Meeting – School Board Office

April 19 – Good Friday

April 22 – Easter Monday

April 26 – Bargaining Team meeting, NWTU Office

April 29 – Pro-D Day

Want to be up to date on local bargaining and other union issues? Subscribe to our NWTU EMAIL LIST with your personal email!

Click on the link
<http://bit.ly/2BDcKGi>



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Everything You Need to Know about NWTU Elections 2019

Elections this year will be held a little differently. There will be a special general nomination meeting on **May 7 in the NWSS Library** to determine the candidates. Anyone wishing to run, should email nwtuadmin@telus.net no later than May 6, 2019 by 3:00 pm, or attend the May 7, 2019 meeting to declare in person.

Nominations will be closed at the May 7 meeting, and anyone running unopposed will be acclaimed.

If the position of president is opposed, then a paper ballot vote will be held at each site and voting will be completed by May 16. The unsuccessful candidate will be able to run for First Vice President or Second Vice President at the May 21 Annual General Meeting.

All positions not acclaimed at the May 7 nomination meeting will be voted on at the May 21 AGM.

IMPORTANT DATES:

MAY 6 – ALL POTENTIAL CANDIDATES SHOULD HAVE THEIR EMAILED CURRICULUM VITAE FORM IN TO [NWTUADMIN@TELUS.NET](mailto:nwtuadmin@telus.net)

MAY 7 – SPECIAL NOMINATION MEETING, NWSS LIBRARY. LAST CHANCE FOR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES TO SELF DECALARE.

MAY 21 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – NWSS LIBRARY

Table Officer Positions to be Elected

1. President
2. First Vice-President
3. Second Vice-President
4. Bargaining Chairperson
5. Treasurer
6. Recording Secretary
7. Professional Development Chairperson
8. Aboriginal Education Chairperson
9. Health and Safety Chairperson
10. Social Justice Chairperson
11. New Teachers and Teachers Teaching on Call Chairperson
12. First Local Representative to the B.C.T.F.
13. Second Local Representative to the B.C.T.F.

Non-Executive Positions to be Elected

- Political Action Contact
- Local Elections Contact
- New Westminster and District Labor Council Rep
- 5 Members-at-Large for the Bargaining Advisory Committee

Please complete the Curriculum Vitae form and return to nwtuadmin@telus.net by May 6 to be included in the agenda for the May 7 nomination meeting.



Inspired by Learnings at the Women's Institute

The purpose of the BCTF Women's Institute is for women to get together from all over the province to share experiences, build community, and learn new leadership skills. I was genuinely excited to attend this year's 2nd edition, *Bread and Roses, Gathering Strength, Gaining Ground*, as a delegate at large. I applied to go because I saw it as a logical step both for the work I want to do as union activist, and for myself as a feminist. I wanted to exchange stories and connect with women in a space where we could have honest conversations. I wanted to continue to learn and be inspired. And I was.

I was inspired by Audrey Siegl, an activist from the unceded lands of the Musqueam, who in spite of the tragedies she has faced in life, continues to find the strength to fight the battles that are important to her, and connects with others through humour, sincerity, and in song.

I was inspired by Judy Darcy, who was there as part of our "Living Library." She taught me that when women climb up to the top, they have an important decision to make: are they going to kick down the ladder so no one can follow them up, or are they going to leave the ladder down and starting kicking open doors for others?

I was inspired by the women of colour in my panel discussion. They told their stories of past and current challenges. There were tears, but they shed them in front of a group of more than 100 women, and so they were tears, both of sadness and courage.

I also learned. In a workshop on *Intersectionality: Lessons from Social Justice Activism* given by Cicely Belle Blain, I realized that when we talk about "tolerating" differences, we end up dismissing and erasing. But when we acknowledge and celebrate differences, we become welcoming and inclusive. I learned that because our privileges can make us ignorant to others' experiences, we need to listen to others' stories. I learned that when we have privilege -- whatever it is -- we need to use it to lift others up, and help them get what they need. Because if we truly believe that equity is about giving people what they need, then we should do it.

The Women's Institute was an opportunity for me to continue reflecting on how we include people; what we can do to help reduce barriers to engagement for our members; what kinds of targeted initiatives might work; and how we can make room for all sorts of leadership. I'm a big believer in conversations and listening to a diversity of voices, and I'm bringing back what I've learned knowing that those are the conversations we have started to have here in the NWTU.

In solidarity,

Neesha Blajberg

BCTF Women's Institute

The second annual BCTF Women's Institute was held at a beautiful hotel in Richmond, BC from March 7 to 9, 2019. This three-day event coincided with International Women's Day and was an opportunity for women from districts across the province to come together and celebrate the power of sisterhood. Within an atmosphere of inclusion and empowerment, participants explored how women can support each other to achieve greatness.

This atmosphere of empowerment and inclusion was echoed in the workshops, presentations and gatherings in which delegates took part. Opportunities for workshops included explorations around gender issues such as pay equity and childcare, mental and physical wellness and advocacy for equity seeking groups. The "living books" presentations allowed delegates to meet with women from diverse backgrounds and hear about their lived experiences. These "living books" included writers, construction workers, politicians, former union leaders and those working to help marginalized workers.

Perhaps the most powerful parts of the institute were the presentations from various indigenous groups. One keynote reminded us

of the very real struggle that Vancouver indigenous women face daily as she shared her personal story of adversity and loss. M'Lady, who performed after our Saturday night banquet, brought us inspirational music and words of encouragement. Finally, in leading the closing ceremony, the indigenous drummers consolidated the feeling of empowerment by leading us all through several rounds of the Women's Warrior Song. Throughout the closing presentation, there were somber reminders of the realities of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Taskforce and the slow movement towards reconciliation, but so, too, were there reminders that together, women are strong and can rise to any challenge.

Each local can send one delegate that identifies as a woman to this institute yearly. In addition, there are applications for extra spots that are set aside for women who identify as an equity-seeking group. Those who are interested in attending next year's institute are encouraged to keep an eye out for the call for applications next March, which will be distributed by our local union.

Kristie Oxley



Meet Your Executive Member

Rome Lavrencic – Treasurer

Bonjour! My name is Rome Lavrencic and I am happy to serve as your NWTU Treasurer this year.

I have been teaching in the Languages Department at New Westminster Secondary since 1996 and have just completed my first year teaching the International Baccalaureate programme. I have taught in many different classrooms throughout NWSS over my 23 years and it's been heartening to see some of my former students teaching in some of the rooms where I used to teach. Teaching Core French has been my passion throughout my career. What many people do not necessarily know about me is that I am the only person in my family who speaks French, despite having a last name that could give the impression that I might be a Francophone. Au contraire! In fact, I am a product of the Core French programme and am proud to show my students that through dedication, hard work, and a growth mindset, all students can become masters of a subject area that may not be necessarily easy to them initially.



Like many of you, I wear many different professional hats that keep me fairly occupied. I have worked quite extensively with my Provincial Specialist Association (PSA) – the BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) for the last 14 years, and am its current president. Being involved with my PSA has allowed me to grow professionally, refine and improve my craft, and expand my Professional Learning Network. As well, being a member of my PSA has allowed me the opportunity to work with the Ministry in rewriting the Core French redesigned curriculum. No matter what your time commitment, I always to encourage all teachers – both new and experiences – to get involved with a PSA or other professional body. This is one reason why I have been involved with the NWTU in a few different roles: Staff Rep, Pro-D Chair, and Treasurer twice. The experiences you will have from joining a professional body are invaluable!