

## Bulletin #6 – March 2015

Dear KFA members,

As you may be aware, 17 KFA members have received layoff notices. These layoff notices were the result of projected deep reductions in Academic and Career Preparation and in English Language Studies. If this sounds all too familiar, there is a good reason for that. For some of these faculty members, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or even the 4<sup>th</sup> time they have received layoff notices. As you can imagine, any sense of stability is lacking for these faculty members and for these departments.

The KFA's position is that these layoffs are pre-emptive and premature. There is no evidence to suggest that they are necessary, and in fact the hard data shows that they are not only unnecessary but they may also be detrimental to the overall health of the institution.

And yet, 17 regular faculty members have received layoff notices, and a further number of non-regular faculty members will not be able to access work.

### **KFA Support, Initiatives and Action**

Our KFA is working to support all faculty members. If you have questions, or if there is anything you don't understand about the layoffs, please call the KFA office at 2200 and ask to speak with one of the Table Officers, and we will answer your questions.

As KFA representatives, your KFA Table Officers are taking a number of actions. We have accompanied faculty members in layoff meetings and have spoken to individuals, answered questions and offered support.

We are also working together with FPSE, advocating for and helping plan actions and campaigns that will take place at the provincial level. On this level, there is a campaign, [Open the Doors to Education](#), that was initiated last year to support all public post-secondary education and that will directly address the situation with regard to ABE and ESL. As well, our KFA will be arranging meetings to discuss the cuts with our catchment area MPs and MLAs.

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We will also be meeting with members of the Kwantlen senior administration to discuss and question the reasons for the decision to cut sections and faculty in the face of such scanty evidence that these are necessary in the first place and to clarify whether cuts to faculty are the only way the funding situation is being addressed.

We will also advocate for action to alleviate the layoffs and work to find ways to reduce the number of layoffs. The Collective Agreement, in Article 7.12, “Targeted Labour Adjustment,” contains language about specific “labour adjustment strategies” and we will be working to ensure these strategies are used to minimize or eliminate layoffs.

**Here are the Problems in More Detail:**

Tuition fees: At the time of the original cut to ESL funding in 2014, institutions were not allowed to charge tuition fees for domestic ESL students. One of the solutions the institutions proposed to alleviate the funding cut was to allow ESL students to be charged tuition fees.

The tuition fee ban has now been lifted for domestic ESL students, and KPU will charge these students tuition fees as of April 1, 2015, and thereby, in theory, alleviate the funding cut. So why are we now looking at cuts in ELST, when tuition-charging for domestic students was touted as a solution for the funding reduction? This doesn't seem to make much sense.

Charging tuition fees for domestic ESL students may be seen as a way to solve one problem, but it creates a different kind of problem for the provincial government. At the time they announced they would allow tuition fees for domestic ESL students, tuition-free status was still in place for CCLS and ABE students. (ABE students are English-speaking students who did not complete high school, who have limited literacy/numeracy skills, and/or who do not have the necessary skills or pre-requisites to be successful in career, vocational, trades or degree programs). Keeping ABE fee-free in this circumstance would be problematic for the province for obvious reasons,

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and the tuition-free status of CCLS and ABE students has now been revoked by the provincial government.

The funds that were given to the institutions to replace the ABE tuition fees were taken back, \$760 000 for KPU. In order to make up this funding cut, the decision at KPU has been made to charge all ABE students full tuition fees, effective Fall 2015. Due to public pressure, the tuition-replacement grants have been returned to the institutions, on a one-time, one-year basis. But tuition-charging for ABE will go ahead regardless of this reinstatement of funds.

#### Section Cuts and Layoffs:

After the KPU Board approved full-freight tuition fees for all domestic ESL and ABE students, including students in the CCLS program and literacy and fundamental level ABE students, the university announced a 40% reduction in domestic ELST offerings, and a 40% across-the-board reduction in ACP. This has resulted in a total of 17 layoff notices being issued to faculty members this past week. The rationale given was that we can't know the impact of charging tuition fees

on these areas, so the cuts are precautionary. So far as we are aware, the only action being taken to address the situation is through direct section cuts and faculty layoffs.

It is not at all clear why the cuts have been made. ACP, for example, charged full tuition fees for at least some of their offerings as recently as 2013. The fill rate was 95%. If we assume similar fill rates going forward, expected revenue generation will be well in excess of the \$760 000 that was initially removed from funding. So why are these cuts going ahead?

In addition, the Adult Upgrading Grant (AUG) program, a student assistance grant program that covers domestic students in both ESL and ABE, has seen a 33% increase in the funding available, about \$7.6M for the province as a whole. The province has further committed that no students will be excluded and that additional funds will be added if necessary. KPU has committed to devote some of the \$760 000 to cover

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off students who have low income but do not qualify for the AUG. So why are these cuts going forward?

The Provost confirmed, in his presentation to FACA Faculty Council on Friday, March 27th, that national data shows when tuition fees are increased, impacts on enrollments are negligible so long as adequate financial aid is available. He also confirmed financial aid will be in place. So why are the cuts and layoffs going ahead?

The impact on the institution also is an important question. Over time, the percentage of graduates of all KPU degrees, programs and diplomas that have ACP or ELST coursework in their academic histories has ranged between 23% and 40%, and this was confirmed by Dr. Ferreras in the meeting with FACA Faculty Council. This data shows the strong impact that ELST and ACP have on entry and on persistence and completion in all other programs. So why are the cuts and layoffs going ahead?

The only rationale given for the cuts and layoffs has been some variation on the following theme: “We don’t know what the effect of tuition fees will be, so we have to be cautious.” But, in fact, we do have a pretty good idea what will happen. We have recent hard data from inside the institution. We have national data. We know the strong positive effect these programs have on the rest of the institution. The KFA officers have ensured senior administrators have all this information. So, once again, why are the cuts and layoffs going ahead?

Not one other institution is going ahead with these kinds of cuts and layoffs. Okanagan College, for example, has announced they will not charge tuition fees for the coming year and they will not lay off any faculty members. So why is it that KPU has to both charge these students tuition fees and lay off faculty members?

Impacts of these cuts: These cuts will have significant effects on our communities,

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our students, and faculty members.

Students in ELST, CCLS and ABE, students who we could argue reap the greatest social and economic benefit from post-secondary education, are having their access cut. Our communities benefit in many ways from improvements in language proficiency, literacy and numeracy amongst citizens, and there is a wealth of research that shows the direct positive economic, social and health benefits associated with this kind of education. This is not to mention the direct benefits that communities gain by having citizens who are empowered to advance their post-secondary education in ways that were previously unavailable to them. Students gain in all these ways and in a whole lot of other less easily defined ways. The impact on students and our communities will be felt in many ways.

The impact on faculty is clear. There have been 17 direct layoffs in FACA, 8 members in ELST and 9 in ACP. For some of these faculty members, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or even the 4<sup>th</sup>

time they have received layoff notices, and the negative impacts on these faculty members are substantial. This sustained lack of stability and this ongoing lack of certainty is bound also to have negative impacts on the departments.

We are acting and will continue to act to have these cuts reversed and the layoffs rescinded. Again, if you have questions or concerns about the layoffs or if you need support in this time, or if you would like to help stand up against these cuts, please call the KFA office and speak to one of the Table Officers.

In solidarity,

Your KFA Table Officers

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