SFUFA: The Risks of Unionization
An Open Discussion

Moderating Panel
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Why Discuss Unionization Risks

- SFUFA survey asked members if they had enough info for unionization
- One question stood out
- Members wanted to know Unionization Risks
- SFUFA Executive created this panel for open discussion of the risks
- Other presentations have been debates or focused on union advantages
- This event focuses on possible problems
Unionization is a One Way Process

- Once you form a union cannot go back to an association
- Unions can be decertified
- Result no union but also no association
- Unlikely SFU would recognize a reformed Association
- Risk one: if you do not like what the union brings
- You cannot return to the current state
Are the Advantage of Unions Real?

• Need to compare SFUFA association now to a union
• Do we really gain the benefits most discussed?
• Main advantages are some legal gains
• Potentially the ability to cover a wider set of issues than now
• Now limited in contracts to Salary and benefits
• Can discuss other issues
• but only with SFU Administrations agreement
• Eg Learning Outcomes
The Bigger Hammer

- Not clear we gain that much power
- Problem is BC’s government/university structure
- SFU is limited in what it can do by BC government
- They are the man behind the curtain pulling the strings: Wizard of Oz
- Only way around it is interest arbitration
- Not clear unionization gives us that
Strikes

• The ability to strike is the ultimate union weapon
• Most first contracts done without strike – but not all
• But most members do not know what a strike will bring
• Strikes if they happen can impact both your research and your pay

• Example from UNB strike email
• As you know, as of January 13th UNB is on strike. You may not know that as of January 14th we are also locked out and we would like to have that made known more widely. We would also ask you to let your members know that our email (and other e-services, including access to library resources and other payroll or benefits services) has been suspended.
Creating a Bigger Target

- All BC universities will be unionized if SFU does so
- Gives us strength
- But really does it give us more than we have with CUFABC?
- Does make us a bigger target
- Government is not really focused on higher education
- Strength in numbers may not work
The Union is what you make of it

- Unionization brings changes in working rules
- Eg to get uniform workload many have lots of rules applied
- Metrics to measure workloads that must be done
- Really affect your teaching and life
- Requires more SFUFA volunteers and work to run such programs