

Summary of FACTBC Board Meeting and Activities, October 3, 2014

Bringing Together the Strength of Our Unity and Diversity

The Board of FACTBC is composed of one delegate from each of the member associations, and those delegates met at the Coast Plaza Inns and Suites at Denman and Comox in Vancouver's west end from 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM on October 3, 2014. Also in attendance were alternate delegates from many of the Associations. Alternates take the place of the delegates when they cannot attend so that an absence doesn't take away our consensus, and having more wise minds at a FACTBC meeting is never a problem. We are interested in all good ideas, and we make our decisions in a simple way: One association, one vote, and the goal is consensus.

Talking Directly to the Decision-Makers

John Gawthrop described how he has been working to coordinate teams of therapists across BC, and with coaching from Hill and Knowlton Strategies, these teams have been visiting Members of the Legislature asking for their support of the FACTBC goal: protection of the public through regulation of counselling in BC. We are visiting old friends in the legislature who gave us support before the last provincial election, and making new friends among the newly elected. We have received thoughtful questions, which, thanks to our policy work, we were able to answer right away and in detail. Even more important, we have not encountered any opposition, and most meetings have ended with enthusiastic support.

As further evidence that our strategy of working directly with political decision-makers is paying dividends, we received an invitation to present our case for regulation of counseling to a government caucus meeting sometime in late 2014 or early 2015.

We Are Investing in our Future While Thinking Carefully About Fairness

We also talked about the finances of FACTBC. Associations contribute in proportion to the number of members they have who would be eligible to join a college. Right now, the FACBC per capita fee is \$17.00, almost all of which is used to fund the lobbying effort. In 2015 this per capita contribution will go to \$20.00 in order to fund further lobbying, an update of the Competency Profile, and design work on a competency-based registration process. In effect, work is already starting on the first steps of implementing a college.

On the question of money, FACTBC agreed to be as financially prudent as possible, and that includes moving away from paying hotel fees for meetings, and looking for venues of low or little cost. A committee was struck to take action!

Wendy Woloshyn has been at work on solving a problem that small single-purpose organizations sometimes bump into. We need to respond—not later, right now!--to government when they call a meeting or announce an initiative, and that means that, without staff, it is the board members who have to drop what they are doing—including seeing clients—in order to respond. Wendy is

working with George Bryce to find the right kind of procedure and bylaws where we can reimburse board members for wages they lost responding to pressing FACTBC issues. What has us proceeding very carefully with this is that, just as much as we do not want to exploit our colleagues' generosity, neither do we want to compromise our status as volunteers.

Fortunately, we were able to apply these principles without compromise to return to Susan Summers the income she lost when she stepped up to set up FACTBC's finances, website, and media presence when we got a call from the Minister of Health saying he wanted to meet with us and very possibly include our perspective in a review of the Health Professions Act. Susan made this happen with speed and quality that, until she did it, we thought couldn't be done. That work has been an anchor point for our lobby teams and for our meetings with government officials.

Protecting the Public is Valuable Social Policy

Aaron McLelland gave a presentation reminding us all that therapy not only helps clients, it also has social value that has only recently been appreciated for its ability to prevent social costs related to health, social dysfunction, and criminal justice. Helping counselling take its place in the professions helps the entire community.

Carefully Crafting the Policies Will Make the College Work

The meeting included many lively discussions. Thought was given to how important it is that when a college begins, no employer loses an employee, no client loses their therapist, and everyone is accountable to a standard. That is why it is FACTBC policy to port—give immediate registration by transferring their association registration directly to the college registration—all clinically qualified members of FACTBC member associations into a college. We also talked about how important it is for FACTBC members, which are associations, to have as much notice as possible about agenda items so that the associations can discuss how they want to approach these issues.

The Professional Community is Very Aware of FACTBC

FACTBC is also in contact with many other organizations, including a consortium of BC's universities, as well as the Professional Association of Christian Counsellors and Psychotherapists. These groups are opening up opportunities for collaboration concerning counsellor regulation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.