



12th Tri-national Conference in Defense of Public Education

May 13–15, 2016

University of British Columbia campus
Vancouver, BC

Welcome, registrants!

Thank you for registering for the 12th Tri-national Conference in Defense of Public Education. The BC Teachers' Federation and the BCTF International Solidarity Program are pleased to be hosting this event.

We have an amazing and growing list of attendees from several countries, representing many unions, universities, and K–12 schools. This document covers some logistics relating to the conference, describes pre-conference events and activities, and offers ideas on how to get the most out of the conference.

BCTF contacts for conference information:

Larry Kuehn, lkuehn@bctf.ca; 1-800-663-9163, local 2255, or 604-871-2255

Anne Field, afield@bctf.ca; 1-800-663-9163, local 2251, or 604-871-2251

Addresses:

BCTF building: 550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2

Accommodation: Walter Gage Residences, also known as Gage Towers:

5959 Student Union Boulevard, Vancouver, BC V6T 1K2

Conference venue: South Great Hall, Level 2, in the new student union building—“the Nest”:

6133 University Boulevard, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

From the airport:

Getting to the BCTF building

Catch the Canada Line from the airport (\$9 ticket) and get off at the Olympic Village station. The BCTF is across the street, at 550 West 6th Avenue (slightly to the west, at the corner of 6th Avenue and Ash Street).

Getting to the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus

Purchase a ticket for \$9 at the Airport Station and use the ticket to transfer from the skytrain to the bus (directions follow). Buses are frequent, but often crowded during rush hours.

At the airport, take the Canada Line skytrain to the Langara-49th Avenue Station. Transfer to a bus to UBC: You will want to turn to your right on 49th Avenue to catch the #49 UBC bus, to head west. Ask the bus driver for confirmation of your destination, if you are unsure.

When you get off the bus, Gage Towers is just around the corner to the left on the street that is at the end of the bus loop (Student Union Boulevard).

A taxi is a more expensive option, \$35–40. The fare will become more comparable to the cost of public transit if you can share the ride with other conference attendees. The trip, 15 km/10 miles, will take 30–45 minutes. Tell the driver that you want to go to Gage Towers at UBC.

Parking at UBC:

Guests at Gage Towers can park in the Walter Gage lot at a daily rate of \$10 per day (plus taxes). A valid parking pass must be displayed at all times. Overflow parking, and parking for those not staying in campus accommodation, is available “next door” in the North Parkade at an hourly rate, and a flat rate after 5:00 pm. For a map indicating locations of surface lots and parking garages, see <https://parking.ubc.ca/find-parking>.

Accommodations:

If you are coming from outside BC and have not yet booked your stay, please do so from: <https://goo.gl/ywMAHQ>.

If you are a BCTF member or conference speaker/guest, accommodations have been reserved for you, and you should receive further information about this. Contact Anne Field if you have any questions.

The check-in Front Desk is in the lobby of Gage Towers.

Conference sign-in and package pick-up:

Sign-in is for everyone; it will be located in the lobby of the Gage Towers residence from 4:00 to 6:45 pm, on Friday, May 13, near where you check-in to your accommodation. Here you will pick up your conference package, and pay your conference fee (if applicable).

Late sign-in on Friday, or on Saturday morning, will be at the South Great Hall in the Nest.

Meals:

A continental breakfast during your stay is included with your accommodation. Lunch on Saturday (food trucks parked outside the Nest), a salmon barbecue dinner on Saturday evening, and a box lunch on Sunday will be supplied by the BCTF, with the help of registration fees.

N.B. If you have any dietary requirements, please let us know at least a week in advance.

Weather:

We suggest that you bring a jacket and umbrella/hat/hood. You may have heard that it rains in Vancouver—but not all the time....

Items from your organization to display and share:

There will be display tables for banners, buttons, posters, hand-outs, and other literature.

Please bring any such materials from your organization that you’d like to display or give away.

Translation:

Simultaneous translation will be available at all sessions. Headsets can be picked up and returned in the South Great Hall.

Pre-conference – Thursday

For those of you in Vancouver on Thursday, there is a free public event, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, at the BCTF building (550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, at the corner of 6th Avenue and Ash Street).

The TransPacific Partnership (TPP), the global economic crisis, and education

Speakers:

William I. Robinson, Professor at the University of California Santa Barbara, and author of *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*

Alejandro Alvarez, Professor of Economics at UNAM, Mexico

Blair Redlin, Chair of the Trade Justice Network of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

This event will be Livestreamed at <https://livestream.com/BCTF/may12>

If you are taking the skytrain, come to the Olympic Village stop on the Canada line. Exit the station and cross 6th Avenue at the pedestrian-controlled crosswalk; walk less than half a block west (to the right) to 550 West 6th Avenue.

If you are coming from UBC, take the #84 bus, and get off at the Cambie Street stop; this is a block to the east of the BCTF building, and on the same side of the street—walk a short distance to the west. The trip will take 35 to 45 minutes, depending on when you catch the bus, and traffic.

Transit fare is \$2.75 for anywhere in Vancouver (“1 Zone”), but requires that you have exact change. Your ticket is good for 90 minutes in any direction.

The TransLink trip planner is helpful to research your route: <http://tripplanning.translink.ca/>.

Pre-conference – Friday

For those of you from out-of-province who have registered for Tour 1 on Friday morning, the excursion around the city includes visits to Vancouver schools, a labour walking tour, and lunch at a downtown brew pub. A bus will pick you up at 8:00 am in front of the Gage Towers residences, and bring you back to the same location around 3:00 pm.

Those who are also participating in the guided tour of the Museum of Anthropology (Tour 2) will be dropped off at the museum instead. The museum has a major collection of West Coast totems, masks, and jewelry—a must-see.

There are two guided-tour times arranged: 2:00 pm and 3:30 pm. If you are not on Tour 1, you can join the museum tour at either time, and you can also visit the museum independently to spend longer there, and then join a tour at the scheduled time if you wish.

There are small fees associated with the above activities, to assist with covering costs, which will be collected at the time.

If you've registered for a tour but changed your mind, please let us know.

The conference

The conference will officially begin at 7:00 pm on Friday, May 13, in the South Great Hall (Level 2) in “the Nest”, at UBC, just a short walk from your accommodation.

See you there!

The conference schedule and program are in a separate document.

Getting the most out of the Tri-national Conference in Defense of Public Education

Languages

All sessions will have interpretation for Spanish and English, generally simultaneous. Receivers will be checked out, and please make sure they are returned.

Please help the interpreters by speaking slowly and clearly.

To facilitate informal discussion across languages, a group of bilingual participants will be available to help.

Plenaries

We have many people speaking for short times, aiming to bring a wide range of ideas and perspectives and using the concluding plenary to share ideas for ongoing work on defending public education. The workshops will provide more opportunities for discussion and sharing.

Contributing to the workshops

The workshops are a key part of the conference. These are a chance to share ideas from among the countries represented. Please come prepared to contribute to the workshops.

Nine workshops are scheduled, with three scheduled in each of three sessions. You will need to choose one of the three for each session.

While we want to encourage participation, the workshops will have to be large because of the limitations on translation.

The central idea is to develop a collective understanding of how things are similar or different in the three countries, and identify ways we can work together on defending public education—describing the problems we face and sharing effective strategies.

We should have as many “testimonies of resistance” as possible that inspire everyone working together in the ongoing defense of public education.

What alternative policies and approaches have inspired action and solidarity in relationship to the topic of the workshop? What has been the most difficult part of your struggle that might be relevant to others attending the conference? How has your group challenged the neo-liberal “reform” agenda and had success?

We will need to have some balance in the numbers of participants in each workshop.

The Vancouver Declaration

A conference declaration is one way of communicating about current challenges and how they are being addressed to people who were not at the conference. The Tri-national Coalition is not a formal organization, and any declaration is really an expression of ideas considered.

The declaration from the 11th Conference hosted by the Chicago Teachers’ Union in 2014 is available online at <http://www.bctf.ca/IntlSolidarity.aspx?id=39549>, in both English and Spanish, under the heading “Background”.

Please read through the Chicago declaration before the conference, and consider suggestions you would make for improving it as a consensus statement of the participants in the 12th conference.