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# FBS Strategic Plan 2023-2028

## Introduction

FBS was formed in 2004 as a service within CAUBO. It has since grown to the point that FBS services span 77 institutions, engaging with approximately 730 individuals within them. One of the themes of this strategic planning process for FBS - its first since its inception - was to assess its overall future. Given the context and the needs of the sector, what is the next stage of FBS' organizational development?

## Background

Three key questions emerged from our extensive research, conducted through focus groups and member surveys analysis and discussion.

- 1. Should FBS be taking on a stronger strategic role, to advance the sector and support a strategic approach to academic labour relations within individual institutions?**
  - The overall context for academic labour relations is broadly seen as increasingly complex and difficult, particularly when the issues of the pandemic are laid on top of underlying and longer-term fiscal challenges, demands on universities as institutions, and trends toward greater government oversight.
  - FBS has historically played a role of providing information to participants rather than providing strategic sector and/or institution-specific guidance and direction. Academic labour relations are increasingly challenging, and some members are talking about the need for a strategic rethink.

## 2. How should FBS be meeting the needs of its participants in the coming years?

- Universities face an increasingly challenging context, they are highly constrained in terms of time and resources, and individuals are more likely to be new to their role and/or the sector due to high turnover rates.
- Members are looking beyond data for current, relevant, accessible information and analysis, and they want to hear more about issues and trends from FBS. Some of their needs may vary by region, but also by size or other factors.
- FBS data is unique in Canada, but it is a challenge to keep it up to date. Opportunities to use the data more fully, including analysis based on the data, have also been identified. At the current staffing level, and with its current organizational model, FBS does not have the resources to significantly increase its work in data and analytics.

## 3. What kind of infrastructure and operating model would be optimal to deliver these services?

- The desired expansion of the FBS program has required that an assessment of its operating model be undertaken with the objective of establishing FBS version 2.0.
- While FBS is currently intensely service-driven, our goal is for it to become a **more member-oriented association**, with bonified access to colleagues and networks.
- To achieve this shift, **three priorities**, which impact our operating model, were highlighted:
  - Pivot towards an **increasing use of data**, notably with a proactive, member-driven, and analytical approach to research and information
  - Implement segmented **professional development programming** that meets the needs of a diverse membership
  - Build member awareness and engagement through the establishment of a strategic **communication plan**

The answers to these questions as well as the considerations and priorities highlighted above have been woven through the 2023-2028 strategic plan.

# FBS' Strategic Plan 2023-2028

## Vision, Mission and Value

Even though FBS is not a standalone organization, it was deemed useful to develop a vision and mission specific to the Service, to ground its strategies and ensure that the organization moves forward towards its goals. Determining an FBS-specific mission and vision also enabled analysis of its alignment with CAUBO from a governance point of view.

### Vision

Excellence in academic labour relations helps ensure the success of Canadian universities.

### Mission

Promote excellence in academic labour relations in Canadian universities

### Values

#### FBS strives to:

- Reflect the values of EFFICIENCY and EFFECTIVENESS that underpin members' efforts on behalf of their institutions;
- Act with INTEGRITY and demonstrate ACCOUNTABILITY in our interactions, our decision-making, and our service to the higher education system.
- Embody a genuine sense of SERVICE to our members and to the higher education community at large;
- Foster COLLABORATION among institutions and individual members;
- Demonstrate our abiding belief that LEARNING is essential to success.
- Create a WELCOMING and INCLUSIVE community that is REPRESENTATIVE of our diverse membership base;
- Consider SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, and ENVIRONMENTAL impacts within our operations, programs, and offerings.

## Strategies

### 1. Strengthen and grow academic labour relations skills within university personnel

Within the sector, many people working on academic labour relations come from other backgrounds, or do this work as part of a broad portfolio. There is also significant turnover. As such, there is a need to build capacity across the sector, based on member needs and priorities.

### 2. Connect members to relevant, accessible resources that inform decision-making and problem-solving

Members look to FBS for information and support, often on a near-real-time basis. This strategy maintains FBS' focus in this area, expanding offerings and availability of resources that are useful in their work in academic labour relations.

### 3. Foster an informed, engaged membership

This strategy is key for FBS to move from a simple service provider to a broader association model. FBS is in a unique position to develop the academic labour relations community across Canada, which offers often-isolated members the opportunity to connect with each other as colleagues.

### 4. Lead strategic discussions to advance academic labour relations in Canadian universities

Given the importance and complexity of academic labour relations for the university sector as a whole, a way to have broad-based and forward-thinking discussions is needed. FBS will provide the means and a venue for these conversations to take place.

### 5. Align FBS' structure and capacity to support strategies and enable success

Given that the forgoing strategies mark a significant change in the approach that FBS is taking as it moves into FBS 2.0, there are corresponding changes required in FBS' structure and capacity. The next five years will require significant shifts in FBS' operations and governance and will require careful, intentional management and planning so that FBS is able to achieve its ambitions.

## Conclusion

Overall, this is seen as an inflection in the history of FBS. This set of strategies is designed overall around the idea of FBS 2.0, which moves the service into the next chapter of its evolution, looking more broadly at member needs and taking a more strategic, systematic approach to its offerings.

The next five years will require significant shifts in FBS' operations and governance and will require careful, intentional management so that FBS is able to achieve its ambitions. Throughout the plan, FBS will seek areas of synergies with CAUBO as a whole, to maximize value for members, and to deploy resources efficiently.

With this plan, FBS - no longer a pilot project, is moving into the next chapter of its history. With strategic intent, FBS will be far better positioned to respond to the complex and evolving needs in academic labour relations in Canadian universities.