

# The Part-Time Times

A newsletter for Ontario community college part-time employees and friends

## Bentley won't talk about union rights for college part-timers

The minister in charge of Ontario's colleges doesn't have much to say about union rights for part-time college employees.

Since OPSEU drew attention to the issue in late October, Chris Bentley has made it clear that he simply won't talk about college part-timers.

Bentley met with OPSEU representatives Nov. 1 to talk about college tuition. When the union folks mentioned that the quality of college education had a lot to do with the treatment of part-time faculty and support staff, Bentley ended the meeting.

"When we mentioned part-timers, he completely shut down the conversation," said Janice Hagan, chair of OPSEU's Divisional Executive for college support staff.

**"First they ignore you.  
Then they laugh at  
you. Then they fight  
you. Then you win."  
- Gandhi**

"He put on his suit jacket, stood up, and ended the discussion. He refused to talk about it. Period."

Bentley took the same tack in an interview with the Ottawa *Citizen* newspaper, too.

Bentley "refused to comment on the employees' lack of collective bargaining rights," reporter Juliet O'Neill wrote.

"He also declined to acknowledge colleges' heavy reliance on part-timers," she added.

In the Legislature, Bentley mocked MPP Rosario Marchese when the NDPer tabled a private members' bill aimed at giving union rights to part-timers.

"It's fascinating," Bentley sneered Oct. 27. "The member and the NDP must have been cleaning out the garage because this is virtually the same bill they introduced in 1992, and what did they do with it? Absolutely nothing.... We're taking a different approach

### Colleges promise to state their position

Management at Ontario's community colleges says it will provide OPSEU with its position on union rights for part-timers – in writing – at a meeting next month.

Representatives of the College Compensation and Appointments Council met with OPSEU faculty representatives on Dec. 12.

Stay tuned.

by investing in students, investing in colleges and investing in the people who teach."

Part-timers who do not feel they are being "invested in" can contact Bentley as follows:

E-mail:

[cbentley.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:cbentley.mpp@liberal.ola.org)

Phone: (416) 326-1600

Fax: (416) 326-1656

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# Campaign committees will soon be up and running at every college

55 attend Dec. 7 meeting at Georgian

The OPSEU campaign to win organizing rights for part-time college workers will soon have campaign committees set up at all 24 Ontario colleges.

Barbara Linds, a Senior Campaigns Officer with OPSEU, says local-level committees are essential to a successful campaign.

“We need to reach over 16,000 part-timers, and to do that we need people on the ground who can find their co-workers and talk to them face-to-face. We’ll make sure the local committees have the resources they need to organize that.”

The committees will include both full-timers and part-timers.

The union has held “focus group” conversations with workers – both faculty and support staff – at 20 colleges so far.

About 55 very vocal people, mostly part-timers, came out to a meeting at Georgian College in Barrie on Dec. 7.

“As things get off the ground, some really good questions are arising,” said Linds. “At Georgian, for example, people wanted to know about what kind of bargaining unit part-timers would be in if they had union rights.

“That kind of question can only be answered with input from part-timers themselves, in conversation with full-timers. We’re hoping the local organizing committees will be the basis for a province-wide organization of part-timers that will be able to develop positions and speak out

on these kinds of issues.

“In the meantime, we’ve got a law to change.”

OPSEU is planning a province-wide canvass of all part-timers for the new year.

To join the campaign committee at your college, e-mail [collegeworkers@opseu.org](mailto:collegeworkers@opseu.org).

## Elementary teachers lend support to college part-timers

The 70,000-member Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has thrown its support behind the OPSEU campaign for union rights for college part-timers.

“It is hard to believe there is Ontario legislation that denies part-time college staff from the basic democratic right to belong to a union,” ETFO president Emily Noble said in a letter to Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. “It is particularly offensive that Ontario stands alone within Canada in discriminating against employees of community colleges in this fashion.

“The fact that Ontario colleges

employ more part-time employees than full-time staff is clear indication the current law is being used to avoid paying full-time salaries and benefits and accord staff reasonable working conditions,” Noble said.

The ETFO president urged Bentley to support Bill 13, a private member’s bill introduced in the Legislature Oct. 27.

If passed, Bill 13 would change the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* to remove the clauses that exclude part-time workers from union rights.

The Ontario Federation of Labour, the umbrella organization of Ontario unions, and the Canadian Association of University

Teachers have also voiced their support for union rights for Ontario college part-timers.

**Questions? Go to [www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org) or e-mail [collegeworkers@opseu.org](mailto:collegeworkers@opseu.org).**

## Who's a "part-timer"?

*The Part-Time Times* has received quite a few e-mails. The most commonly asked question is, "Am I a part-timer?"

The *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* specifically excludes certain employees from union rights. Here's what we mean by "part-timer":

- **part-time** faculty (six hours or fewer of teaching a week);
- **part-time** faculty (Continuing Education; six hours or fewer of teaching a week);
- **sessional** faculty (more than 12 hours of teaching a week on a temporary contract for one or two semesters);
- **part-time** support staff (24 hours or fewer a week);
- **student** support staff (24 hours or fewer a week); and
- **casual**.

Sessional faculty cannot work more than 12 months in 24. If they do, the position must be converted to a full-time (unionized) faculty position.

### What about "partial loads"?

Strangely, one group of part-time workers *is* allowed to unionize. **Partial-load** faculty are paid for seven to 12 teaching hours per week. Because they are unionized, they are paid on a wage grid in the OPSEU collective agreement. They also have employer-paid extended health insurance, a tuition subsidy, statutory holiday pay, and other benefits (although not all the ones full-timers get).

Under the collective agreement, partial-load faculty have the same rights no matter what college they work at. The wages and working conditions of other part-timers, meanwhile, vary widely – from college to college and within individual colleges.

Many partial load faculty find themselves part-time one session, sessional another, and partial-load another. The rights of partial-load workers are closely tied up with those of other part-timers.

## Five things you can do right now to legalize unions for college part-timers

**TAKE ACTION**

**1 Get informed.** Learn about the part-time issue, and the OPSEU campaign, at [www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org).

**2 Volunteer.** To join the campaign committee at your college, drop us a line at [collegeworkers@opseu.org](mailto:collegeworkers@opseu.org). We'll put you in touch with the right people. First task: attend a meeting.

**3 Go to the web site at [www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org).** Then click "Sign On-Line Petition" to sign our petition. Have your family members sign as well. The petition will be presented in the Ontario Legislature.

**4 Talk to all the part-timers you know.** Tell them about the campaign and the web site. Ask them to sign the petition, too.

**5 Contact your MPP, your nearest Cabinet Minister, or the Premier.** Tell your politician your story and ask for his or her support. To be on a team to go visit your MPP, contact [collegeworkers@opseu.org](mailto:collegeworkers@opseu.org).

## Plug yourself In!

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