

The Part-Time Times

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

NO VOTE

OPSEU slams McGuinty betrayal as Labour Relations Board declines to order a certification vote for college part-timers and sessionals

The Ontario Labour Relations Board has decided not to order a vote that would allow college part-timers and sessionals to decide if they want OPSEU as their legal bargaining agent.

A terse one-page ruling from the Board today at noon gave no clues as to the reasoning behind the decision.

But an angry OPSEU president pointed the finger of blame squarely at the McGuinty government.

“Yesterday at the Labour Board, the Ministry of the Attorney General argued strenuously against letting part-timers and sessionals have their say on union representation,” said Warren (Smokey) Thomas. “The McGuinty government has betrayed every college part-timer and sessional in Ontario.”

Since Aug. 30, 2007, the Liberal government at Queen’s Park has repeatedly voiced its support for union rights for part-timers and sessionals, but that

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– OPSEU president
Warren (Smokey)
Thomas



meant nothing at yesterday’s hearing, Thomas said.

“When it came down to the crunch, all these workers got was a stinging slap in the face.”

Thomas vowed to keep up the fight until part-timers and sessionals win the union rights they deserve.

“In recent months, close to 7,000 people have

(Continued on page 2)

signed OPSEU union cards,” he said. “Those cards represent a commitment that our union is sworn to keep. The outcome of this campaign is not in question. We will keep fighting, and we will win.”

Roger Couvrette, president of the provincial organization of part-timers (OPSECAAT), had a message for part-timers and sessionals across the province.

“We all know what it’s like to be underappreciated. We all know what it’s like to put our heart and soul into a job for an employer that doesn’t seem to care about us.

“Yet we are a part of the education system, and like everyone in that system the work we do is all about transforming the future – helping our students learn and grow and work for better lives and a better world tomorrow. And just as we transform the future for college students, we can transform the future for ourselves.

“Do not doubt for a second that we will succeed in our drive to have a strong, clear, voice in the workplace. Do not doubt for a second that we will be able to bargain together for a better life at work.

“Do not doubt for a second that we can transform the future. It’s time.”

The union is calling on OPSEU members, card-signers, and supporters to join in an immediate all-out effort to lobby Liberal MPPs.



April 18, 2008: Delegates at the OPSEU annual Convention in Toronto voted unanimously in favour of an emergency resolution calling for immediate recognition of OPSEU as the bargaining agent for part-timers and sessionals.

“The message to government MPPs is simple,” said Smokey Thomas. “The Premier must immediately order the colleges to recognize OPSEU as the bargaining agent for part-timers and sessionals and pass legislation to create a legal framework for bargaining. That’s all there is to it.”

Complete contact information for all Ontario Liberal MPPs is available online at www.ontla.on.ca.

The union plans further actions.

“We already have an entire campaign machine in place that we were going to use to encourage people to vote,” said Thomas. “That machine will now be used to intensify our campaign.”

For full information about the OPSEU drive to win union rights for part-timers and sessionals at Ontario’s community colleges, just visit www.collegeworkers.org or 1-866-811-7274.



The Part-Time Times is authorized for distribution by Roger Couvrette, president of the Organization of Part-Time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OPSECAAT), and Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).