

The Part-Time Times

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

Part-time college workers take centre stage

Exciting introduction of members at OPSEU Convention

OPSECAAT President Roger Couvrette, flanked by dozens of part-time workers in special OPSECAAT t-shirts, electrified the recent convention of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) April 21.

Couvrette told the 1,800 OPSEU delegates, alternates, observers and guests that it was the support of the union that would make it possible for college part-time workers to eventually organize and claim their rights.

Solidarity

“OPSECAAT exists because of the solidarity of our 15,000 CAAT full-time brothers and sisters in faculty and support staff locals in colleges across Ontario who have worked shoulder to shoulder with us over the last year,” he said.

“OPSECAAT exists because of the delegates to the 2005 OPSEU convention – right in this room – who moved a resolution that “OPSEU will devote the necessary resources to a long-term organizing campaign (which) will have as its goal to bring these workers into OPSEU and the labour movement and to extend to part-time college workers the bargaining rights enjoyed by all other workers.”

“With your support, I will come back to an OPSEU convention and I will say these two words to you: OPSECAAT won.”



OPSECAAT President Roger Couvrette addresses the OPSEU convention flanked by dozens of part-time workers in OPSECAAT garb April 21.

OPSECAAT holds first AGM

Also on April 21, OPSECAAT held its first Annual General Meeting at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto.

A new ten-member executive was elected.

President Roger Couvrette (academic, Algonquin) and vice-president Candy Lindsay (support, Fleming) were re-elected. Yvette Munro (academic, Humber) was elected new secretary-treasurer.

New OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas and Vice-president-treasurer Patty Rout attended, as did OPSEU academic division executive chair Paddy Musson and support division chair Jean Fordyce. All pledged full OPSEU support for OPSECAAT.

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Mayworks cabaret a huge hit

At the Rivoli in Toronto, May 2, as part of the Mayworks festival, OPSEU and OPSECAAT decided to highlight the talents of the very special visual and performing artists who also work part-time at Ontario colleges.

Hosted by part-time college worker Anna Willats (George Brown), the Do the RIGHTS Thing Cabaret showcased the talents of professional artists such as Juno-winning jazz performer Hilario Duran (Humber), blues artists Up the Line (George Brown – one is part-time, the other full-time), the group Kavli (Humber), saxophone player Colleen Allen (Humber) and her trio.

As well, Maja Ardal (Humber) performed a piece from her one-woman hit *You Fancy Yourself*, Susan Allen (George Brown) and partner Susiawan performed shadow puppetry, Kirsti Wynne (Seneca) performed a prose reading, and Emily Visser (formerly of George Brown) read a poem about part-time work. Visual artists Margaret Rodgers (Durham) and Genevieve Nolet (Centennial) had works on display. OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas and OPSECAAT President Roger Couvrette spoke at the event. Thanks to Maureen Wall of Humber College for organizing this great event.

More pictures can be found at: www.opseu.org/caat/parttime/mayworks2007.htm



Up the Line opened a bluesy set with “The White Collar Holler,” written by Stan Rogers, a song about an ‘office sweatshop’. Both work at George Brown College. Guess which one can’t join a union.



Hilario Duran, Juno-winning jazz pianist by night, Humber College part-time worker with no rights by day.

OPSECAAT planning summer-fall campaign activities

Do you have time to help promote your association? We are planning to raise awareness about our campaign over the summer and leading up to the provincial election on Oct. 10. This will include:

- Community activities over the summer in key ridings
- Welcome back activities at the college, such as BBQs, and orientation sessions in late August and the first weeks of September
- Participation in local labour day parades and picnics
- Attending and participating in all candidates’ meetings
- An OPSECAAT phone bank the week before the election

We need your help! Contact blinds@opseu.org to find out what you can do to help out.



Colleen Allen, Humber part-timer, on saxophone

Part-timer re-instated after OPSEU intervenes

A support staff worker at an Ontario college was recently re-instated after timely intervention by an OPSEU local president.

As well, the worker was compensated retroactively for lost hours during the period this dismissal was in force.

The worker in question had been dismissed (told they would not have further work) following a dispute over tutoring services.

The worker (who wishes to remain anonymous only because ‘this could be any college,’) worked with the OPSEU local president and the college to resolve the dispute.

“It was only thanks to the OPSEU local president’s timely assistance that I was able to have a fair hearing for my case,” said the worker.

Although technically, OPSEU does not represent part-time workers, it is an illustration of how the system could work for part-time workers, if they were allowed union representation.

“This worker was fortunate: not every college would act in this way, nor would every college agree to deal with the OPSEU president on a part-time worker issue,” said OPSECAAT President Roger Couvrette. “They are not legally bound to do so.”

“But it does give an example of ‘what the union could do for you,’ in each college, should the law be changed to allow part-time workers to join a union.”

Campaign makes Macleans

The OPSECAAT campaign made waves Canada-wide this month with a Macleans magazine article. The piece concerns the OPSECAAT document called “Compromising Quality” which outlines the argument that the abuse of part-time labour harms education quality in the colleges. It can be found on-line at: www.macleans.ca/education/universities/article.jsp?content=20070508_163513_9372 or via the OPSECAAT web site.



OPSECAAT members got an enthusiastic reception at the OPSEU Convention in Toronto, April 21.

Your new OPSECAAT executive

Elected from support staff delegates

- Candy Lindsay - Fleming
- Sherry King - Centennial
- Veronica Pinnock - Seneca
- Ruth Baker - Confederation
- Yvonne Wright - Centennial
- Michael Adedoyin – St. Clair (1st alternate)
- Chalo Barrueta - George Brown (2nd alternate)

Elected from faculty delegates:

- Roger Couvrette - Algonquin
- Shirley Wood - Centennial
- Deborah Headley – George Brown
- Yvette Munro - Humber
- Jason Russell - Fanshawe
- Jennifer Bryan – Loyalist (1st alternate)
- Douglas Lapierre – La Cité (2nd alternate)

Get on board! Call the part-time campaign hotline 416 448-7433 or 1 866 811-7274

Authorized for distribution by: (pending)

Roger Couvrette, President, OPSECAAT

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, OPSEU

www.collegeworkers.org