

# Un Employed

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News & Views of OPSEU Local 558 Striking Workers

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## Faculty and students blast “Semester Completion Strategy”

In a news conference yesterday, management announced a “Semester Completion Strategy” that completely disregards the integrity of teaching and learning in Ontario’s college classrooms.

The Colleges are “guaranteeing” that students won’t lose their academic year despite the strike. How exactly this is to be achieved, though, is yet to be determined. Along with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), faculty rejected the colleges’ guarantee, calling it “meaningless.”

The Globe and Mail reported yesterday that, according to Rick Miner of the colleges’ committee of presidents, “the colleges will look at the transcripts of graduating students first to determine the essential work necessary to complete each course” (p. A12). According to Algonquin president Robert Gillett, with or

without faculty back in class, the colleges will determine the essential work necessary to complete each course, with management teaching classes and marking assignments and exams if necessary.

The idea that a manager could walk into a classroom tomorrow and successfully complete the course reflects a deep misunderstanding of, and disrespect for, the work that college teachers do.

The way to ensure that students won’t lose their semester is crystal clear to Ted Montgomery, chair of CAAT negotiating team. Management needs to “put a serious and responsible offer on the table.”

Despite management reports to the contrary, OPSEU has repeatedly invited management to return to the negotiating table to begin serious conversations about quality education improvements. ☒



ECE professor Cindy Brandon shares information about faculty demands for quality education with the public

### Strike heroes

The picketers of the 7:30am shift on Monday and Tuesday this week deserve an award for determination. Despite pouring rain and lightening on Monday, and cold, gale force winds on Tuesday, the picketers resolve to get the message out was undeterred.

“We considered delaying the shift till the rain let up,” said Debra Warren, Progress Site Coordinator, “but the picketers thought it was too important to be out on the lines.” The conditions were similar at the Morningside campus. “At one point, the winds were so high that clip boards were flying out of our hands” said Chris Brown, site coordinator for Morningside. “We got into our cars for a little while when the lightening picked up, but then we were back on the line.”

We will win quality education improvements in this strike because of this kind of resolve. ☒

## In solidarity

Once again, as in 1984 and 1989, it is the college faculty and not the colleges or the government that is standing up for quality education. I'm out of the country but my heart is with you in this struggle. You will win this strike because of your resolve and solidarity.

In solidarity,  
Ron Golemba,  
Retired Chief Steward, Local 558



## TGIF: Friday pickets changed

If your normal shift is 1:30-4:30 or 5:30-7:30, on Friday please attend one of the early shifts in the day. Be sure to sign in on that shift and indicate your normal shift time and location.

## An open letter to McGuinty

Dear Premier McGuinty

We often read that the productivity of Canadian workers is declining and that we are losing our competitive edge to other countries as a result. As a community college teacher, I'm not surprised by these reports. When the classes of Canada's future workforce contain 50, 60 or sometimes 75 students, is it any wonder why Canada is losing the productivity contest? Five years ago I was asked to teach in Centennial's Nursing program, which trains outstanding nurses for our growing health care system. In the first year of the program, I had a class of 45 students. The next year saw my class size rise to 55 students. Then in the third year of the program I had a class of 76 students! If this strike means that Ontarians will have safer hospitals and clinics because future nurses are being treated as professionals and not numbers, then it will have been worth the inconvenience to the college community and the public at large.

Respectfully,  
John Artibello  
Centennial College professor

## Rally for quality

Remember to join striking faculty from all Ontario's community colleges at the rally for quality education tomorrow, **Thursday, March 16th at 11:00am**. The rally will begin at Dundas Square and we will then march to the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities at 11:45am, 900 Bay St. at Wellesley. Try to get there by 10:45 and remember to sign in with a Centennial strike team member. This is your picket duty for the day. This rally is very important to get the message to McGuinty.

## Strike Facts

**Between 1989 and 2004:**

- the number of college students in Ontario increased 52%
- the number of full-time faculty decreased 21.8%
- government funding per college student shrank by 41%