

Faculty Update

Vol. 2 Number 1 • March 13, 2006

STRIKE OF 2006

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE • LOCAL 556
College Professors, Counsellors & Librarians

We're moving the system *Up!*

CALL-OUT FOR THURSDAY RALLY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

OPSEU is holding a huge rally at Queen's Park to support the faculty strike on Thursday, March 16. All the Metro College locals are asked to make special efforts to attend, as it will be difficult for many of the out-of-town colleges to send a lot of reps.

Instead of your regular picket on Thursday, please arrive at Dundas Square (SE corner of Yonge and Dundas) at 10:30, check in with your picket captain and we will march over to Queen's Park for the 1:00 Rally for Quality Education.



NEWS FROM THE PICKET LINES

Turnout has been good at all campuses, especially for the evening shift. The rain may have dampened signs but not spirits, which are high. Resolve is strong and solidarity is growing. Faculty are very clear that the number one issue is quality education. The St. James campus evening shift has engaged in guerilla theatre, eg. having a mock class. Some picketers have used chants and songs ("These Boots Were Made for Walking" and "I Walk the Line" adaptations) distributed with a previous newsletter. Continuing education students who are members of unions made clear that they were there to visit and show support but they wouldn't cross the picket lines.

MANAGEMENT FACT-FINDING AND SCARE-MONGERING

Well, GBC picketers can confirm it's happening to us, too. There's a system-wide management strategy of senior management visiting us on the picket lines, chatting us up and generating rumours designed to scare or demoralize us. OPSEU's CAAT Action website says that many college picket lines are getting these visits.

"These are fact-finding missions aimed at gauging member attitudes toward bargaining," says Paddy Musson, the Chair of the CAAT-Academic Division (see CAAT-Action, www.opseu.org/caat/caat_ac). In our case, one senior manager is also telling picketers that the strike will last 6-8 weeks! This may reflect how determined the management team is to avoid the bargaining table, but doesn't reflect

the actual situation. The legislature returns on March 23, and the government will be feeling the heat from our strike much sooner than that!

We are asked not to discuss bargaining matters or the strike with managers. The proper place for these discussions is the bargaining table. Paddy suggests that you confine your conversations with management to the weather, your kids or your dog, or the Leafs. And the advice from Local 556 is to hand the manager a pen and ask him or her to sign your picket sign!

Instead of chatting us up on the picket line, why aren't our managers pressing the government for more funding for a system that has been chronically underfunded for years?

OPSEU TAKES THE COLLEGES TO THE COLLEGE RELATIONS COMMISSION

OPSEU is taking the employer to the College Relations Commission, announced Ted Montgomery, Chair of the union's bargaining team, to a packed news conference on Friday, March 10.

Ted said that in the final hour of negotiations on March 6, the management bargaining team, having tabled nothing in 5 days of bargaining, tabled an offer at that crucial stage that they knew could not lead and would not lead to a settlement. Its purpose was not to settle, not to move ahead, but rather to force and provoke the strike we're now on.

The management team re-introduced the demand to remove the limit on the number of classes that a teacher can have in a week (currently at six different classes, 3 hours each). That demand had been withdrawn after union members rejected the December offer by 96%.

OPSEU IN THE LEAD AT IWD

Along with the UNITE HERE hotel workers, an OPSEU college contingent led the International Women's Day March on Saturday, March 11 with banners flying. The IWD rally honoured the strikers, publicized our issues and gathered lots of support for our demands for Quality Education!

CAR HITS TWO GBC PICKETERS

On Thursday night at the entrance to the parking lot behind 500 MacPherson at Casa Loma, a driver hit two picketing faculty members. An ambulance was called and both faculty members, one from Graphics and one from Plumbing, were treated on site. Later, one of the picketers was once again shoved aside by another car at the same entrance. Tom called the police, reports were filed and it is not certain if the police are pressing charges.

FTEs—MYSTIFYING STATISTICS ON NON-FULLTIME TEACHERS

"Between the truth that is called a lie and the lie that is called the truth is the field of mystification – confusion confounded into false clarity." R. D. Laing, Politics of the Family

In 2004, there were 6,634 full-time faculty, counsellors and librarians in the Ontario college system, and 4,467 FTEs – full-time equivalents. FTEs, a mystifying way of referring to part-time, partial load and sessional faculty, did 40.2% of the teaching. But how many actual people did that work? Only management knows. And they won't tell us, the public or the Ministry.

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKERS TEAM

We wish to extend our sympathy and solidarity to the family, friends and colleagues of Christian Peacemakers Team member Tom Fox, who was killed March 10th in Baghdad. Professor Robin Buyers of the Community Worker program at GBC is currently serving with the Christian Peacemakers in Colombia.