

# Faculty Update

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## STRIKE OF 2006

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

## We're moving the system *Up!*

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### EVERYONE OUT FOR THE THURSDAY RALLY!

Please gather at Dundas Square (SE corner of Yonge and Dundas) at 11:00 – sign in there with your picket captain for the march to the Queen's Park Rally at 11:45. Out of town colleges are relying on us for a loud, strong presence, as not all of them can afford to bus in lots of striking faculty. Let's show management, the government and the media our strength and resolve! ↵

### SHARING THE STANDING OVATION

Ted Montgomery, Chair of the OPSEU Bargaining Team, spent some time on the weekend at the AGM of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

Ted reported, "It was moving and heartwarming to receive a standing ovation from the secondary school teachers, who are fully in support of our cause and our strike. The ovation was for all of us – for every college faculty member fighting for quality. As it is March break, many teachers told me they would be joining us on our lines sometime this week." ↵

### PARTIAL-LOAD STATUS ERODES QUALITY OF EDUCATION

*by a partial-load teacher at George Brown*

I am a partial-load teacher at George Brown and Seneca Colleges. Here's what my term looked like before the strike: One section at Casa Loma, one section at St James, two sections at Seneca; four classes, three campuses, three different departments. I am the colleges' ultimate "just-in-time" worker, which might seem good for them, but it is not good for the students.

If I want to continue working for the colleges, I have to work where I'm needed, which means that I often end up "hitting the ground running" on short notice, (sometimes during week 2 of the term) with very little time to think of how I am going to develop, modify, or overhaul a course, let alone prepare for the classes. Before the strike, it was difficult to set office hours. Why? Well, if this is Tuesday, then I'm across town. If this is Friday, I'm downtown. If this is Wednesday, I'm in North York. On non-teaching days, I don't usually come to the college because I could be doing some freelance work or graduate studies. At any rate, I'm not paid to be there on non-teaching days. When a student wants to make an appointment, he/she will suffer a time lag before we can arrange a mutually convenient time. So the students lose from this arrangement, this scrambling around of partial-load teachers who run from different assignments and are simply not very available.

The students also lose from the revolving door of partial-load instructors who come and go, on short notice, from the colleges. We don't have regular offices in which to develop instructional materials. (At GBC, I have to share one with 100 other non full-time instructors who breeze in and out all week.) I've worked in almost every department in this college, yet I have no seniority, even though I may have had a long standing relationship with a department. When the administration changes, I end up leaving and going to another department, where I "go to the end of the line".

I can't predict what will happen from one semester to the next. Usually by intersession week, most of the non full-timers start to hang on tenderhooks because we don't know what's happening next term for us — not usually until a few weeks before class starts again. And even if we *do* know, that can change in a moment's notice.

So far, I've managed to survive this way for 17 consecutive semesters, but I'm seriously thinking of looking for work in the corporate sector, and I will take my materials with me. That will be the colleges' loss. If the colleges don't invest in those who have invested in them and in the students, then standards will keep regressing, as new people come in and start from scratch. The overuse of non full-time teachers, with its uncertainties and tenuous working conditions, erodes the quality of education. I am just one teacher, but I am aware of many other colleagues with similar situations. ↵

### **SOUND FAMILIAR? Here's an email we got from a faculty member at Sault College.**

"Enrollment is about 2100 full time students here and there are 130 faculty. A couple of years ago, management decided to disband the Language and Communications Department (i.e., the English Department), lay off most of the faculty in the department and reassign the two or three remaining to various other departments. After a hard and bitter campaign that the union local took to the public, the plan was scrapped.

However, layoffs did occur, though not as many, and the reason they did occur is that management doubled class sizes, from a standard 25 to 45, and often 50, or more, in first-year English writing classes. Management also eliminated most of the remedial English classes, so that students who need special help or extra assistance with basic English writing skills are hard pressed to find it at the college. So, in the end, while we did save the department management's actions resulted in the students suffering anyway, and continuing to suffer. The 'poster child for efficiency' in action." ↵



### **BILLY BRAGG BACKS COLLEGE TEACHERS**

Last Saturday night Bill Bragg played to a sold-out concert at The Opera House on Queen St. During his show he told the audience, "I want to talk to you about the number one issue in this province...the OPSEU College Teachers' Strike. They are on the sharp edge and are looking out for us. They deserve all our support." He went on to praise public servants as "what holds us all together." He then dedicated the song "*There is Power in the Union*" to the striking college teachers. The audience sang along like it was a National Anthem. ↵

*Photo of Billy Bragg (at left) and a Seneca teacher (Anthony). Note that Billy Bragg is wearing an OPSEU arm band.)*

### ***How many kms have you walked?***

Thanks to OPSEU Local 352's strike newsletter *The Local News*, at Sir Sanford Fleming for this item: **3.5 hours of picketing is equal to a 7-kilometer walk!**

**GOT A QUESTION? LET US KNOW YOUR PICKET LINE STORIES!**