

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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March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racism

BACK AT THE TABLE


As you know, talks have resumed. The Faculty bargaining team was prepared to return to the table last Friday, but management wanted to wait till Monday.

In a statement to the Local Presidents, Ted Montgomery said, “You can expect a news blackout to be imposed and that is standard practice, and means neither that progress is being made nor that there is no progress.

The return to the table is a direct consequence of the success and strength of the 5000-strong faculty rally and all our efforts so far at the colleges. The students’ rally and emails, and, we hope, the meeting with the Minister also played a part. Though it was quite positive and helpful, there was nothing concrete from our meeting with the Minister. At this time we have not seen any change in management’s offer. We do hope to see those Monday.

Unquestionably, a return to the table is a positive sign and we are certainly hopeful. However, we have been hopeful in the past – following the 96% rejection and 81% strike vote. Those votes did not produce an offer from management that came to terms with the workload and quality issues. We all hope that these meetings will be different.

This is the time to redouble our efforts if the hopes for settlement are to become reality. If management still is unwilling to table an offer that addresses the quality issues, we must press Mr. McGuinty to act to get that settlement.”

And speaking last week of the management plan publicized in the papers, Ted commented, “We say there is a Semester Completion Strategy: *Settle.*” .

Excerpts from UNTANGLING MANAGEMENT SPIN ON SALARIES

by Paddy Musson and Phil Cunnington (Full text on www.opseu.org/caat)

The real sticking point in these talks is quality. Nonetheless, college management can only talk about one thing, ad nauseam, that their offer will bring salaries to \$94,277 by 2009.

Right now, the starting salary for a college instructor is \$32,077 a year. Getting from the bottom to the top rate of \$54,459 takes 10 years.

- The starting salary for professors, counselors, and librarians is \$44,285 a year, and getting from the bottom to the top rate takes 18 years.

- The top step on the salary grid for professors pays \$82,299. However, just 27 per cent of faculty are actually at this level.

- College management uses the \$94,277 number to imply that hiring new faculty costs too much. College hiring practices over the last decade mean only about 14 per cent of faculty are in the bottom half of the pay grid. A steady influx of new hires would actually bring average salary costs down.

Besides trashing the strikers, management’s fixation on full-time salaries serves another purpose: to hide their exploitation of part-time faculty. But:

- About 2,000 of the 9,100 striking faculty members are “partial-load” faculty, teaching seven to 12 hours a week. They don’t get paid for course preparation, course evaluation, or talking to students outside of class.
- A typical partial load professor with 10 years service, teaching nine hours a week, 32 weeks a year, would earn just over \$23,000 annually.
- The 6,000 part-time faculty, teaching 1 or 2 classes, are even worse off.
- Part-timers are not on strike. Because of an unjust Ontario law, they can’t unionize. As a result, their pay rates are unregulated and vary widely.
- Many students are surprised to learn that the prof who prepares their course, answers their e-mails, meets them after class, gives feedback on assignments, and decides their mark is earning the princely sum of \$120 a week – for a credit course on their transcript.
- Another 800 or so “sessional” professors are also paid by the hour, for in-class time only. They may actually teach full-time, but sessionals are barred from unionizing, too. They’re underpaid and over-worked as a result.

The demand to hire more faculty can only help part-timers and students. A full-timer with reasonable class sizes who is paid for all of the 44 hours a week that he or she works has more time for preparation, evaluation, and student feedback. That means a better learning experience, and a better education. Which, by the way, is what the strike is really about. ☞

SAFETY ALERT

As we go to press, Centennial College’s strike newsletter reports that John Stammers, a colleague and long-time Accounting Professor, was hit by a car and taken to hospital while picketing. The extent of his injuries is not known.

This brings to three the number of known incidents of people driving into picketers on Toronto college picket lines, and four of us have been hit. So please be careful on the line – let obviously angry folk go by and try not to respond to their provocations. They aren’t in a reachable or teachable state! ☞

HURRAH FOR GBC SUPPORT STAFF

On Monday morning, support staff – bless them! – provided soup and sandwiches to picketers on the line and raised the spirits of all. Solidarity in action! ☞☞☞

THE BUZZ WEIGHS IN

Buzz Hargrove, President of the Canadian Auto Workers, has written a letter urging Premier McGuinty to get “personally involved to bring the parties together...while respecting the collective bargaining process.” ☞