

# FacultyUpdate

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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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### **LET THERE BE NO DOUBT — WE'RE WALKING THE LINE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

Management has emphasized their offer of 12.6% over four years, implying that salary is the major issue and that we're not unhappy with the offer. But salary, though important, is not the main issue. Both management and faculty agreed in principle years ago that college faculty should be paid about halfway between the highest paid Ontario high school teachers and the lowest Ontario university salaries. This is both reasonable and been agreed upon, although it has to be bargained for each contract.

The more significant issues concern the impact of working arrangements on quality education. Management claims their offer doesn't involve increases to full-time faculty workload. But if examined carefully, their proposals do involve actual, and potential, increases to workload for full-time faculty. Their announcement ignores an even more troubling reality of teaching in the colleges—the abuse and the exploitation of part-time, partial load or sessional teachers.

Their proposals ignore the working conditions of our part-time colleagues who outnumber full-time faculty in many colleges like ours. Our proposal is that part-time faculty—who are not paid for either their preparation or evaluation time—be covered by the same workload guidelines as full-time faculty. This would establish conditions for improved quality of education as well as a more respectful treatment of our part-time colleagues. And it would also help secure the workload formula for full-time teachers.

A second significant issue regarding working arrangements and quality education concerns preparation and evaluation time. The current times were set in the early 1980's, and there has been little research to see if they actually correspond to the current realities of teaching. However, a very detailed study was undertaken by our union last year to determine preparation and evaluation time now that the colleges are involved in e-learning, applied degree programs, and so on. To paraphrase Bob Dylan, "the times have been a-changin".

Change is something management talks about all the time. So it'd be really nice if management listened to their own message and accepted some responsibility for the very changes they have been implementing over the last decade instead of asking faculty, both part-time and full-time, to carry the costs. Student numbers have been increasing, and many are not well prepared for college level work. So preparing and evaluating are taking more time to do well.

Both these working arrangement issues involve exploitation. "Exploitation" is a harsh word, but only because it refers to a harsh condition. Basically it means someone is getting paid less than the economic value or worth of what they are being asked to do. Management has claimed that altogether, the total cost of faculty's proposals is an outrageous \$135 million, much of which is the cost of bringing the part-time and full-time faculty under the guidelines of a reasonable workload agreement. Yet this is not the cost of the faculty's proposals as much as it is management's own determination of the extent of "exploitation" they are currently engaging in. We agree it's a lot; in fact, it is outrageous.

Managers often hire part-time faculty quite deliberately because they can ask them to do the work of full-time faculty and pay them less. That is, they often hire part-timers to “exploit” them. When challenged, managers often say they do it because they have no choice given the realities of the world class, competitive, global economy they must contend with. But it’s not clear how anyone in any position of “managing” has no choices. If they’re not being paid to make decisions to guide a group, what are they being paid for? This is especially relevant at our college, where we have about one manager for every three full-time faculty members. This is the highest ratio in the college system, and that doesn’t include the many part-time managers we have at our college called “consultants”.

There are good reasons why we’re walking the line. But not liking a 12.6% increase over four years isn’t really the most significant one. Now there are reasons not to accept that offer on economic grounds—if for no other reason than it locks us in for four years at a time in our current economy when we don’t want to be locked in like that. But that aside, let’s publicly discuss what is more deeply at issue here. And that is quality education.

## EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

How do they get the “*Keep off the Grass*” sign on the lawn?

What do you call a male ladybug?

Why do you need an appointment to see a psychic?

### **I WALK THE LINE** *submitted by Barbara Thistle*

The once popular song title takes on new meaning on DAY TWO of the faculty strike. (Is it possible that faculty “walking the line” might be singing this song soon but with the new lyrics to express what they are striking for? (*Hmmm....., I wonder??*))

As I walk the line with my faculty colleagues, we talk about the impact of the strike on students. Many faculty have left students with guidelines for the keeping up with their studies while classes are on hold. Faculty know that these guidelines are a poor substitute for the interaction that takes place in the classroom. Faculty “walking the line” know that the quality of contact time students have with their professors is essential to excellence in learning for their students. (Bob Rae, in his report on post-secondary education in Ontario knew this too!) Faculty, (and students) are wondering how they are going to keep up, catch up and finish up in time to meet the deadlines for this academic year.

As I walk the line with faculty colleagues, we talk about the issues imbedded in the strike. For us, “walking the line” is about **quality education**. Quality education means a workload that is fair and manageable. This has to do with class size, number of sections, and number of courses taught during a semester. Management wants the right to assign class size and sections and numbers of courses without any consideration of quality let alone what is humanly possible. Management seems to manage the financial resources of the college without any consideration of the impact on the human resources of the college. It boggles my mind that this attitude could be possible!!!

Our bargaining team demands that more full time faculty be hired. I “walked the line” with a couple of partial load faculty who mentioned with some irony that they are “walking the line” to lose their jobs! We smiled at the possibility. I reminded them that one of the strike issues was better salary for partial load faculty. Since these faculty colleagues have been employed at the college for 4 years as partial-load faculty and taught the same course for each of these 4 years, it seems to me that these positions should be filled by full-time hires and they should be first in line to be hired. I think these faculty colleagues are savouring the possibility.

Quality education is at the heart of so many issues embedded in why faculty are “walking the line”. Quality education begins with the quality of contact time students have with their professors. This contact time is reflected in the workload formula which must be fair and equitable across all colleges throughout the province. How long will it take until management can understand this and direct their energies toward working with our bargaining team to make quality education a reality? Faculty who are “walking the line” hope this happens soon. This hope is echoed by the students we serve.

## **REAL LIFE BUMPER STICKERS**

*If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments.*

## **MORE EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS**

What is a free gift? Aren't all gifts free?

When they first invented the clock, how did they know what time to set it to?

Why are hemorrhoids called “hemorrhoids” instead of “asteroids”?

## **CAR INCIDENT AT THE CASA LOMA LINE**

Wednesday evening, an angry person in a car, frustrated from waiting in a lineup, suddenly backed up and pulled onto the sidewalk at high speed, hitting Tom Tomassi. Charges have been filed against the driver. Tom is fine.

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS FRIDAY? A FEW CHANGES. BUT MORE IMPORTANT IS WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT THURSDAY!**

There was a rumor circulating that there may be a rally this Friday. There is *no* rally planned for this Friday. But there is a provincial rally being planned for Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 to 2:30 at Queens Park. We will provide you with more details as soon as we hear from OPSEU Head Office. But if it is anything like the rallies in 1984 and 1989, it is *the* event to attend!

Regarding this Friday, there are changes to the evening picket. Because there are so few classes on Friday evening, pickets are cancelled. Friday evening picketers are encouraged to be available for the big rally next Thursday.

## **TROUBLED BY SOME OF THE MEDIA REPORTS?**

Some members have been dismayed by some reports in the media regarding the strike and asked if our Strike Communication Committee would respond to them. Since such responses are made on behalf of our Union, they need to be issued from OPSEU Head Office. There is a provincial communications committee headed by Paddy Musson and Phil Cunnington which takes up such concerns as part of its work. So if you are troubled by some of the reports you hear and feel some kind of response is warranted, please contact them at (416) 443-8888.

## **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

*“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and help them to become what they are capable of being.”* Goethe [submitted by Margo Novak]

# CHANTS

“1, 2, 3, 4, Don’t go through that college door!

3, 5, 7, 9, Join us on the picket line!”



“Teachers on strike for quality education!

Teachers on strike for smaller classes!

Teachers on strike for more full time professors!”



“What do we want? Quality education!

What do we want? Less exploitation!

What do we want? More time for preparation!

What do we want? More time for evaluation!

What do we want? More time for students!!!

**Faculty Update Editorial Staff**

Lois Athanasiu, Brenda Bennett, Maureen Hynes, Ed Ksenych, Bob Luker, Jennifer Stellings