



# THE *Quality Times*

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Strike Bulletin of OPSEU Local 655  
Cambrian College Academic Personnel



## Negotiations Update

At press time, College and Universities Minister Chris Bentley is quoted in an interview as asking that both parties get together, accept arbitration and end the strike. However, he declined to declare for binding arbitration instead of 'final offer selection.' The union finds the 'final offer selection' option unacceptable and no way to resolve the strike.

Go to the OPSEU website for the latest updates  
[WWW.OPSEU.ORG](http://WWW.OPSEU.ORG)

## On the Line

LUFAs (Laurentian University Faculty Association) members are joining us on the picket line at 10 a.m.

Make sure to welcome them as they show their solidarity in our fight for quality.

...  
Picket lines will come down early today as we take some time to relax. Everyone is invited to the Trevi on Lasalle for a little social time.

## Interesting

A Journalism student went into the college Thursday morning to see what he could work on. When he got there, he couldn't even get into the lab he needed.

When he told people on the picket line about it, he wasn't happy. He also made it clear he supported us and intended on writing some angry letters.

It's becoming increasingly clear that those students who really know us, know what we do, and what we are after support us.

### Staying informed on the line



Local members are avid readers, digesting all the various materials being put out. Thursday was a day of mixed emotions as the news seemed to change by the minute.

## Management still not getting message

The message is clear. Management never intended to reach a negotiated settlement.

The most recent failure in negotiations, the subsequent refusal by management to the union's proposal to go to binding arbitration, and management's own call for the rarely used 'final offer selection' option are proof positive.

Voluntary binding arbitration means that all matters in dispute are sent to a third party for resolution. An agreement based on the submissions of both parties is imposed. While this process is taking place, the strike ends and faculty, counsellors and librarians go back to work. Theoretically, this process is still based on striking a balance and coming up with what is in the best interest of all parties, including students.

Final offer selection, on the other hand, is rarely used. The two sides each draw up their own final offer and the arbitrator chooses one or the other. While the strike would end, there is no effort to compromise – the essence of negotiations.

From the beginning, management have undervalued the

contribution faculty can make to the 'quality education' discussion. The content experts and people who actually deliver curriculum and deal with students have been told

their opinions in this area are of little or no value. Instead, managers, who have either never been in the classroom or likely haven't been since the days of more faculty and smaller classes, are trying to dictate what is best there.

While management talks of the underfunding to the college system over the last decade or more, faculty members have dealt with the reality on a daily, if not hourly basis. Faculty know intimately about the larger classes and reduced teacher-student contact time, and what they have meant to everything from quality to retention.

Both Bob Rae in his report and Premier Dalton McGuinty in his support of that report have agreed on the need for more faculty and smaller classes, and their ultimate aim of putting students first. The only group not listening is management. Suspiciously, its stance seems to be more about power than about either quality or students.

*Local reaction Page 2*

### Union says no

**OPSEU has turned down management's demand for 'final offer selection.'**

**Instead, the union has called on Premier Dalton McGuinty to support voluntary binding arbitration. The union's experts have said that the final offer selection option is "tantamount to flipping a coin."**

Visit Local 655's Website for more information  
[WWW.OPSEU655.CA](http://WWW.OPSEU655.CA)  
Strike Headquarters Phone: 521-1530

Local reaction

## Members unhappy with latest failure

Disappointed. Discouraged. Outraged. There were no shortages of words to reflect the mood on the picket lines Thursday morning. What began as a promising week of negotiations ended last night in a call for binding arbitration by OPSEU, a response of a 'final offer settlement' from management, and a flurry of mud-slinging media jabs. Members reactions on Thursday ranged from sullen to incensed.

"We're concerned for our students," says Christine Tworo, Picket Captain at the main entrance. "We're angry that management doesn't care enough to accept binding arbitration."

John Closs, president of OPSEU Local 655, feels this latest development is ridiculous.

"We'd be back on Monday if they'd agree to binding arbitration. We're concerned. We want students to complete their year. We're willing to make that happen, but management doesn't appear interested in student success."

"They're (management) not agreeing to anything. There's no way the union is going to go with the final offer settlement option. At 5:30 (Wednesday), we suggested binding arbitration. At six, management suggested final offer settlement. It's like they had planned this all along."

Some union members feel that agreeing to final offer settlement arbitration is tantamount to a crashout.

"I do not accept final offer settlement. It's a gamble. Fifty-fifty. It requires no talent, no skill, no negotiation," says one impassioned picketer at the NorCAT entrance. "We will be embarrassed by this kind of decision for years to come. It's insulting, and (if we accept management's offer of a final offer settlement), it will mean that we've done this for nothing. Arbitration is fine. It makes sense to have an impartial party to make decisions without the emotion, history or ego of the present negotiating committees."

"We must continue to remain strong," says Mary Lou Trowell, Picket Captain at the Lamothe Street entrance.

At press time, the Union's offer of binding arbitration remains on the table.



A student (left) comes out to support faculty.

Media Release: Canadian Federation of Students

## CFS supports voluntary binding arbitration

TORONTO, March 22 /CNW/ - The Ontario Public Services Employees Union representing faculty at Ontario colleges put forward an offer that could end the strike - but only if the College Compensation and Appointments Council accepts it.

According to Jesse Greener, Ontario chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students, by agreeing to voluntary binding arbitration, the College Compensation and Appointments Council could end the strike immediately.

"Students could be back to class tomorrow morning," said Greener. "But only if the College Compensation and Appointments Council steps up to the plate accepts the Union's offer."

"Voluntary binding arbitration, if accepted, would end the strike immediately," said Greener. "Both parties would agree on an arbitrator who would, after a serious evaluation of the positions of both parties, provide an informed resolution to the dispute that has kept students out of their classes since March 7. This process would be trusted by both faculty and management and would bring the best results for all parties."

"Back-to-work legislation is not an option that will work in the interests of students," said Greener. "If imposed, there will be absolutely no trust in the process since back-to-work legislation could impose not only an arbitrator, but even a contract. In this case, students will

likely not see improvements in the faculty student ratio - this would be serious set-back in the quality of college education."

"Furthermore, like any legislation, before becoming law back-to-work legislation must go through three readings in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, not to mention possible committee hearings," said Greener. "Given that Thursday is Budget Day this option can only prolong the strike and keep students out of their classes unnecessarily."

"Calling on an arbitrator to simply pick one side or another is also seriously flawed," said Greener, referring to the Council's demand for a final offer selection. "Clearly both sides have rejected the latest offers, so forcing an all or nothing decision is merely a game of brinkmanship that won't address the real issues of the dispute - quality. Again, students will be the biggest losers."

"There is absolutely no reason for the College Compensation and Appointments Council to hesitate in accepting voluntary binding arbitration," said Greener. "The process would be fair, informed and trusted by all parties and would immediately end the strike. Every minute the Council delays in accepting the Union's offer is prolonging uncertainty for students and setting the stage for a more poisonous dynamic between faculty and management."

## Management's semester completion strategies ill-conceived, ill-received

As we expected, the 'semester completion strategies' being put out by the colleges, including Cambrian, are ill-conceived, and even more, ill-received.

Our students who are stopping at the picket lines and contacting us are complaining about a strategy that is long on promises but short on details, including such fundamentals as who is really giving the assignments, who is going to mark them, and who can guarantee that the resulting marks will stand up to professional scrutiny.

At least one student has written a detailed letter outlining their concerns and pointing to the apparent shortcomings in Cambrian's strategy.

In general, the student's letter covers such concerns as:

- access to necessary facilities and specialized software;
  - need for prior approval for different aspects of complex assignments;
  - lack of Internet access in students' homes;
  - stringency of marking;
  - vagueness about who will mark assignments;
  - lack of support in completing complex assignments;
  - lack of content expertise by those currently overseeing the assignments;
  - the fact many students support faculty.
- Funny, many of these are the things we have been saying all along.