



January 21, 2010

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President
Ontario Public Service Employees Union
100 Lesmill Road
Toronto, ON M3B 3P8

Dear Brother Thomas:

I am writing to you in support of your call for fair collective bargaining for community college faculty in Ontario. We are appalled that the College Appointments and Compensation Council chose to impose a contract instead of bargaining in good faith.

By allowing the Council to opt-out of the negotiations process, the 2008 amendments to the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* (CCBA)—that were to have expanded union rights to part-time college workers—have diminished union rights for all.

While the January 13 strike vote now gives the OPSEU bargaining team a clear strike mandate, the fair and reasonable course of action is for the employer to get back to the bargaining table and address the legitimate issues that have been tabled by the OPSEU CAAT-A bargaining team and that were reflected in the joint workload task force under Arbitrator William Kaplan.

The Ontario Federation of Labour understands that the erosion of full-time faculty jobs in the public college sector has resulted in significant workload issues for college faculty, who have been working diligently to maintain the quality of their instruction in the face of growing obstacles. This issue must be resolved to ensure quality education for the future.

We also know that academic freedom is a central issue affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Without the freedom for college faculty to teach in an independent manner, how else do we ensure that students receive a broad range of perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills?

It must also be said that maintaining and increasing the number of good jobs with decent pay and benefits is not just a concern for college faculty, but for generations of young people in the future. Ontario is suffering, not only from the devastation of job loss in the manufacturing and forestry sectors, but also from the onslaught of the global economic crisis. Further restraining wages and diminishing the proportion of good jobs relative to the population will only dampen economic recovery in this province, and dim the prospects of young people preparing to enter the labour force.

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Brother Thomas, we support your members' struggle for a fair contract and urge all working people to support your legitimate demands. We want to offer whatever support you and your members need to defend your reasonable demands and we are prepared to work with you to develop a concrete plan of action in this regard. Finally, the Ontario Federation of Labour has called on Training, Colleges and Universities Minister John Milloy to direct the Colleges Appointments and Compensation Council to bargain in good faith when they return to the bargaining table. A contract settlement that is fair to faculty improves the conditions in which students learn. And by preserving and expanding decent jobs throughout our province, we will ensure that our communities work—for everyone.

In solidarity,

Original Signed

Patrick (Sid) Ryan
President

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