



Negotiations News

OPSEU



SEFPO

Bargaining news for OPSEU members in CAAT Academic

#1 - January 14, 2003

Negotiations are beginning; Current contract expires Aug. 31

Our contract expires Aug. 31, and the union team hopes to have a new agreement in place by that time. Negotiations are set to begin.

Double cohort will stress the system

The first wave of the double cohort will enter the system this September. We must ensure that the Colleges are in a position to deliver the quality of education and training that those students deserve. In order to accomplish that, there must be adequate numbers of full-time teachers, counsellors, and librarians. They must have the time and resources required to address student needs and demands. Faculty must be properly compensated and feel secure in their positions as educational professionals.

Salary and workload priorities

The majority of faculty identified salary and workload as their top two priorities for this round of bargaining. Benefits and staffing were also seen as key elements for the next Collective Agreement.

It is common ground between the Council of Regents and the faculty union that academic salary levels should be between Ontario high school and university teachers. The introduction and expansion of applied degrees demonstrates further that the colleges have more in kind with the universities than with the secondary schools. As the college system continues to define its place in the post-secondary educational spectrum, we need to make certain that faculty remuneration and working conditions reflect that reality.

Quality of programs compromised

On workload, the quality of programs is being seriously compromised by burgeoning student numbers.

We lack the controls on student/teacher ratios that exist elsewhere in the educational system. The bargaining team will introduce mechanisms to combat excessive student contact hours.

The expansion of a cheap, part-time work force instead of full-time faculty poses another threat to the quality of college programs. Part-time teachers must supplement, not replace, full-time professors. The colleges will not succeed if the core curriculum, teaching, and academic services are placed in the hands of part-timers, contract workers or non-academic staff.

The key to winning negotiations

Over the winter, spring, and summer months, your negotiating team will be reporting on the progress of bargaining. The process of bargaining involves votes on proposals and sometimes strike votes. We must be prepared to do what is necessary to win an acceptable contract. As always, the key to successful negotiations rests with the members. The job of the team is to bring your demands to the table and to achieve an acceptable settlement. We can succeed only if we receive and retain your support. We look forward to working with you over the next several months.

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Meet your negotiating team

The negotiating team comprises seven individuals who collectively encompass a wide range of experiences and abilities. All are local presidents or chief stewards and are actively involved in all aspects of local union activities. They also have experience on various provincial committees and in leadership positions in OPSEU.

Their varied backgrounds, including both post-secondary and non-post-secondary teaching experience, bring a well-balanced and informed team to this bargaining table.

Ted Montgomery

Ted is the chair of the bargaining team for the third successive time. His proven leadership and communication skills have worked well in the past for the faculty. Ted has nearly 30 years of experience in the college system.

Ted comments, “This year’s negotiations bring both a challenge and an opportunity. As the college system evolves, we need to develop a collective agreement that both enhances change and maintains stability. The challenge will be to find both the courage and the creativity to accomplish these goals.”

“Once again, we have a team of seven highly talented and committed people. Together, with the members’ support, we expect success.”

Sandi Webster

This is Sandi’s third consecutive time on the bargaining team; and second time as vice-chair. Sandi has been at St. Clair College for 32 years – more than 20 of them as an officer of Local 138, the past seven as president. She is the union chair on the College Workload Monitoring Group and the College Employment Stability Committee, and is a member of the Union College Committee.

Sandi has a diverse teaching background in post-secondary and non-post-secondary programs. She has also taught curriculum development to college faculty in Ontario and in China.

Those who have worked with Sandi describe her as focused, hard working, and committed to union principles and equity. The experience she gained as a member of the last two bargaining teams will be put to good use in this round.

Jeff Arbus

Jeff has been a teacher at Sault College for 25 years. Always active in the union, Jeff has been steward, secretary, and vice-president and now is in his fourth year as president of Local 613.

Jeff has taught in the Child and Youth Worker, Correctional Worker, Massage Therapy, and Social Service Worker programs. His assignments have included training programs for educators and human service staff in agencies across Canada and internationally.

Jeff comes to his first bargaining team with proven negotiation and communication skills. He brings direct knowledge of issues pertaining to smaller and northern colleges.

Gary Fordyce

Gary returns from the last team. He has taught courses in automotive, welding, carpentry, and electrical at the secondary school level. In 1980, he began working in Fanshawe College’s Motive Power Division Apprenticeship Program.

As chief steward of the local for 19 years, Gary has been a member of the Union College Committee and the College Employment Stability Committee. As chair of the Fanshawe Workload Monitoring Group since its inception, he has extensive experience in the details and nuances of the workload formula.

Provincially, Gary is the chair of the Joint Educational Qualification Subcommittee and a member of the Joint Grievance Scheduling Committee. He has a strong background in and knowledge of the grievance/arbitration process. Gary is a dedicated trade unionist who champions issues of equity and fairness. He brings a wide range of skills and experience to the team.

Peter McKeracher

Peter is a professor in the School of Justice Studies at Durham College in Oshawa. He has degrees in Law and Business Administration and teaches courses in business law, administrative law, immigration law, and labour relations.

Peter is the president of Local 354, vice-chair of the provincial Academic Divisional Executive and a member of the Sick Leave Buyout Task Force.

Meet your negotiating team

This is Peter's fourth consecutive term on the negotiating team. In addition to his legal training, Peter brings to this team his dedication and experience in bargaining.

Peter comments, "Faculty's role is fundamental to quality education in the College system."

Harry Plummer

Harry Plummer comes to the team from Loyalist College where he serves his members as chief steward and treasurer. A professor in the School of Business, Harry's background is in accounting; he is a Chartered Accountant. Previously, Harry taught at Confederation College in Thunder Bay.

Additionally, Harry has 20 years of involvement in the Joint Insurance Committee for academic employees. This has given him invaluable expertise in the area of employee benefits.

Harry has been on four previous bargaining teams.

Sherri Rosen

Sherri began her career at Niagara College in 1983 as the coordinator of the Labour Studies Program. She has taught in post-secondary and non post-secondary programs and holds an undergraduate degree in the

social sciences and a graduate degree in education.

An active member of the local executive committee for most of her 19 years at Niagara, Sherri has held the positions of secretary, vice-president, chief steward, and president. She has chaired or been a member of the Union College Committee, the College Employment Stability Committee, and the Workload Monitoring Group.

Sherri is a trustee of the CAAT Pension Plan; she co-chairs the pension plan sub-committee that deals with plan administration. This is Sherri's first time as a member of the bargaining team.

John Ford, OPSEU Negotiator

John has been with OPSEU for over 15 years as a grievance officer and staff representative/negotiator. He has negotiated in the Broader Public Service including Art Gallery of Ontario staff, Ryerson support staff, and two other province-wide bargaining units.

"I am looking forward to working with this bargaining team. The College sector is a significant and important component of OPSEU and their bargaining success has often set the tone for negotiations throughout the union," says John.

We're not alone

Our contract expires Aug. 31, and so does the current contract for support staff across the college system.

We have had an introductory meeting with the bargaining team for support staff and the group of union staff members who are assigned to work with us in this round of negotiations.

There is a lot of common ground on bargaining priorities.

We plan to work closely together.

The double cohort gives both groups additional bargaining leverage.

Obviously, faculty and support staff plan to use this fact to the advantage of all our members in the colleges.

To get in touch with the bargaining team, send a message to: caata@opseu.org

On behalf of the Bargaining Team:



Ted Montgomery, chair

Authorized for distribution:



Leah Casselman, President