

it's all about Support

July 6, 2005



Bargaining news for OPSEU members in CAAAT support Issue 6

Vote against the latest offer It's a matter of respect

Your bargaining team asked management to submit an offer on June 23, 2005. We hoped this offer would bring about the deal we were looking for. Unfortunately, we could not find enough of the improvements you need and deserve in management's last offer to recommend acceptance. The team is asking you to turn this offer down for many reasons:

Wage increases

- The proposed wage increase of 2, 2.25, 2.5 and 3 per cent over four years is not enough.
- The 2 per cent wage increase in the first year is below the inflation rate.
- The offer does not compare to wage gains made by college management.
- The team believes there is more room for management to move.

4 year deal

- The term of the agreement is too long and there aren't enough gains to make it worthwhile.
- New money from the province will have run out at the end of this deal.

No recognition Allowance

Management doubled the recognition allowance for faculty from \$700 to \$1400 after they told us there was no money for a similar allowance. This time they bluntly refuse to even consider a recognition allowance for us.

Wages and Benefits Comparison Letter

The wages and benefits comparison letter will ensure we will be compared to the lowest-paid, not "industry" standards. Our wages will be driven down.

Article 5.2 – time off

We have proposed language to prevent the kind of problems we have had getting mobilizing time at Fanshawe, Sheridan, and Cambrian colleges. The employer has turned us down despite similar language in the faculty collective agreement.

Without this, the communication between the bargaining team and our members will be much more difficult. Ask yourself, why do the colleges want to keep you in the dark?

At every step we have been reasonable:

1. We gave them a year's notice that we intended to start bargaining earlier.
2. In management's words, we are "moving faster than we ever have" at the bargaining table by agreeing to drop less important items, and by making agreements where we could.
3. We focused on meaningful discussions around proposals.

We waited patiently for management to address our priority issues.

In the next few weeks we will have details on the vote. We need you to back the team, turn down this offer and do what it takes to get an acceptable one.

Management's response has been to offer less-than-desirable wage increases and tie all of us into a four-year contract. The team feels the wage offer does not reflect your contribution to the colleges. Their request for a four year contract is an attempt to limit our ability to gain future improvements.

Management also fails to understand why service recognition is important to you. They repeatedly told us support staff should not be comparing themselves with academic employees. They refuse to even discuss options that would recognize your service. Instead, management has put forward a letter of understanding that would destroy central standards within our system.

Your priorities

While there are gains in the present offer, the team has continued to focus on your issues. In October we asked for your priorities in this round. About 67 per cent of the 2,880 respondents said our wage increase should be at least four per cent. Their proposed increases were not even close.

Sixty-three per cent said that it was "very important to achieve parity with other college employee groups." The recognition allowance management refuses to consider would go a long way to achieving that.

How will we feel when the gap between support staff and faculty widens? Why do the colleges insist we are not as valuable as other employee groups? (They call us a "cost centre" rather than an asset, like other employee groups.)

Management will probably compare this deal to the one our Ontario Public Service brothers and sisters have ratified. A few differences must be noted:

- They received gains in job security language, we have not.
- Unclassified employees will now get access to benefits and vacation entitlements.
- There has been significant conversion of unclassified (temporary – no benefits) employees to classified (permanent).
 - Seven of their classifications will be receiving wage adjustments, none of ours will.
- Their long term insurance benefits are changing, ours aren't.

While the nominal wage increases may be the same, the OPS made gains in other monetary areas not in our offer. Also, the colleges have had more than \$100 million added to their operating budgets in the recent provincial budget.

The colleges have agreed to five of our monetary positions that have a dollar value. They are:

- Increasing Appendix D percentage in lieu of benefits to 8 per cent from 6 per cent – total cost to the colleges is \$305,171.
- Appendix G: lieu instead of vacation, total cost is \$286,200.
- Increase in time off for negotiating team to 10 days from 7 days – total cost of proposal if the team is in payband 15 at 8 hours per day is \$6,308.
- Introduction of the drug card is \$221,000.

Finally their wage proposal of 2 per cent in the first year would cost about \$5-million dollars. If the total package being offered to support staff is worth \$6 million, where is the other \$94 million going?

As always, the team is interested in your thoughts; contact us at bargaining@rogers.com.