

# it's all about Support

August 22, 2005



Bargaining news for OPSEU members in CAAT support Issue 8

## Strike preparation means bargaining *power*

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, college support staff sent the employer a wake-up call. By voting 93 per cent to reject the employer's contract offer – and 85 per cent to authorize a strike, if necessary – we showed college management that we're serious about winning a fair collective agreement.

That's the message our team will be delivering when they head back to the bargaining table on August 30.

### “Three Rs” of a fair contract

The team will also be telling the employer that they need to give us the “three Rs”: respect, recognition and rewards. That means:

- a fair wage increase – and one that's substantially higher than the employer's last offer
- a service recognition allowance like the one enjoyed by faculty
- a shorter contract than the 4-year deal proposed by management
- union time off so our bargaining team, mobilizers and local leadership can represent us more effectively
- the withdrawal of management's proposed “wage and benefits comparison,” which could pave the way for lower support staff compensation.

### Building our bargaining power

Our strike vote is a great start. The next step is translating that vote into real bargaining power that our team can use to get a fair deal.

### Strike preparation is the key

We need to pressure management to make a reasonable offer now, *before* the September 7 strike deadline.

The best way to do this is by demonstrating that we're fully prepared to back up our demands with strike action, if necessary. That means getting organized at every college, campus and worksite.

Work is already well underway:

- As of August 22, we are on official strike alert across Ontario.
- Strike committees have been established and strike headquarters are being set up.
- Local presidents and mobilizers will be heading to Toronto on August 30 for a special picket line training session.
- And every member has been asked to sign up for picket duties and strike pay (please see page 2 for more details).

*(Please see page 2)*

### **Mark your calendar**

- Aug. 22 – Strike alert starts**
- Aug. 30 – Teams return to the table**
- Sept. 6 – Fall semester starts**
- Sept. 7 – Strike deadline**

## **Strike preparation** *(from page 1)*

### **Turning up the heat**

We also need to turn up the heat on management by making our campaign as visible as possible.

Plans are already in the works for activities and events on campuses across the province. These could include picket-registration meetings, strike headquarters launch parties, rallies, demonstrations and orientation week information pickets aimed at students, part-time staff, faculty and the public.

### **You can make the difference!**

Whatever the event, your participation will help send a powerful message to management. Contact your local strike committee or mobilizer to find out about upcoming events at your college and plan to attend. Better yet, offer to help organize an event and encourage your colleagues to get involved.

You can also help get the message out in every worksite by wearing your OPSEU buttons and talking to coworkers, students and the public.

***Remember: United we bargain; Divided we beg!***

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# **Building our bargaining power: What you can do**

By actively supporting our bargaining team, you can give them the leverage to get a fair deal *before* the strike deadline. And if a strike is necessary, you can help make it as strong, effective – and short – as possible.

Here's how YOU can make the difference:

- ✓ **Register for strike pay.** Be sure to fill out OPSEU's *Member's Personal Information Form* (MPIF) and return it to your steward, mobilizer or strike committee by August 30.
- ✓ **Sign up for strike duties.** Just contact your steward, mobilizer or strike committee. Picketing and other strike duties are key to the success of any strike. Strike pay is only for strike duties performed.
- ✓ **Show your support.** Come out to OPSEU's pre-strike meetings, information pickets and events.
- ✓ **Make a fashion statement.** Wear your OPSEU buttons, stickers and bandanas.
- ✓ **Stay informed.** Check the CAAT (S) section of the OPSEU website regularly for updates on bargaining and strike preparations.

- ✓ **Get the message out.** Talk about the issues and the possible strike with your co-workers, students and the public and ask for their support. Write a letter to the editor or call your local phone in show. Write or call your MPP.
- ✓ **Lend a hand.** Contact your local strike committee and volunteer to help with the pre-strike campaign or strike preparation.

### *Who ya gonna call?*

### ***Provincial campaign office opens***

With bargaining coming down to the wire and strike preparations in full swing, OPSEU has launched a CAAT (S) provincial campaign office. The office will help support mobilizers, strike committees and members and coordinate the campaign province-wide.

Got a question? Contact your mobilizer or strike committee or check the OPSEU website at **[www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)**. Still need more information? Just call the CAAT-S provincial campaign office.

***CAAT (S) Provincial Campaign Office: 1-866-811-7274***  
***Complete CAAT (S) Bargaining Information: [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)***