

it's all about Support

September 2, 2005



Bargaining news for OPSEU members in CAAT support Issue 9

CAAT (S) Tentative Agreement

Support pays off!

You did it... again! At 9:30 p.m. on September 1, we reached a tentative agreement with the colleges that addresses each of the priorities members set at the start of the bargaining process last fall.

The deal came at the end of the last scheduled day of contract talks before our September 7 provincial strike deadline.

What made the difference – and produced a deal your bargaining team is recommending unanimously – was your unprecedented level of mobilization and support throughout the bargaining process.

Mobilization works

By participating in the demand-setting last December, you helped establish a clear set of priorities. On August 4, by voting 85 per cent to strike, if necessary, you showed management how serious you were about your demands. And by working flat-out over the last month to prepare for the strike deadline, you proved that you were prepared to back those demands up.

Your hard work paid off.

Real gains

The result is a series of significant – in some cases precedent-setting – gains, and a big improvement over the employer's offer in June.

Moreover, we have forced a number of major concessions the employer was pushing for off the table.

Highlights of the deal include:

- a staged three per cent wage increase in each year of the three year deal
- an annual \$400 recognition allowance for employees with 10 or more years of service
- a drug card
- improved time off for union business
- withdrawal of the employer's proposed wages and benefits comparison
- withdrawal of the proposal for fixed-term contracts.

For an analysis of the deal see page 2. The full text of the Memorandum of Agreement is available online at www.opseu.org.

Ratification vote

Of course, it's your collective agreement. That means it's your decision. Over the next two weeks, you will have a chance to review the deal. And members of the bargaining team will be attending meetings across the province to answer any questions you may have.

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Support pays off... *(from page 1)*

Then you'll get to cast your vote – likely in mid-to-late September. The details of the vote are still being finalized and will be announced within the next few days.

Why you should vote “Yes”

The team is unanimously recommending that members vote “Yes” to the tentative agreement.

Why? Because we have made real gains on every issue that remained on the table.

We have achieved our goal of a combined wage increase plus recognition allowance equal to four per cent a year.

And we have laid the groundwork for continued improvements in future rounds of bargaining.

On behalf of the bargaining team, I want to thank you all for your energy and support. You made this deal possible. We couldn't have done it without you.

In solidarity,

Rod Bemister,
Chair, 2005 CAAT Support Bargaining Team

Mission Accomplished

Highlights of the new tentative agreement



The team set out to achieve a package worth four per cent per year. Between the wage increase and the “special allowance,” that objective will be realized for the majority of CAAT Support members.

Of the five items we had left on the table coming into bargaining August 30th, we made gains on all of them.

✓ **Wages:** Three per cent per year for three years. The increases are staged so that each year members receive a two per cent increase in September and an additional one per cent in April. Compounded, that represents about 9.4% to the end of the contract.

✓ **Recognition Allowance:** Now called a “Special Allowance” – After 10 years of service you will receive an annual bonus of \$400 – regardless of which step you are on. For the average support worker, this represents an additional increase of about one per cent. This is a significant gain given the colleges’ steadfast opposition to it. It now gives your team something to build upon in subsequent rounds. The length of time to qualify for this allowance is identical to that of the faculty.

✓ **Wages and Benefits Comparison Letter:** The employer has dropped this provision. This letter could have had an adverse impact on wages in future rounds, particularly outside the large metropolitan areas.

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Mission accomplished *(from page 2)*

- ✓ **Length of Contract:** We said four years was too long. The agreement is for three years, allowing us to go back to the table for improvements in 2008.
 - ✓ **Union Time Off:** We were able to improve language that will give locals more time off to take care of union business. Additionally, there is a provision that will look at more time off for mobilizers when it's time to return to the bargaining table.
- Other significant accomplishments**
- The tentative agreement also achieves other important gains, in addition to our final five objectives.
- These include:
- ✓ **Drug Card** – While achieved early in this round, it has been a longstanding objective for CAAT Support. Within six months of ratification, cards will be issued so that employees will only have to pay 15 per cent of the total cost at the pharmacy to purchase medications covered by the Extended Health Care Plan.
 - ✓ **New Classification System** – The new classification system will finally be able to be implemented with the ratification of this deal. More information on the new system is available at www.opseu.org.
 - ✓ **Benefit coverage** has been extended to cover acupuncture.
 - ✓ **Health and Safety:** Our health and safety provisions have now been improved and reflect parity with the Academic Agreement.
 - ✓ Clearer language has been established regarding the **Position Description Forms**, allowing members to access to their current job descriptions.
 - ✓ Appendix D workers will now have their **pay in lieu of benefits** increased from six per cent to eight per cent.
 - ✓ **Term certain contracts**, a major initiative for the employer back in February, was also dropped earlier in this round.

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