

# The Part-Time Times

A newsletter for Ontario community college part-time and sessional employees and friends



**Getting the job done at Mohawk, from left to right:** Don Fraser, president of the Hamilton and District Labour Council and a part-time teacher at Mohawk College; Roger Couvrette, president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT); Cheryl Wing, organizer; Len Hupet (kneeling), organizer; Gaspere Bonomo, organizer and steward, OPSEU Local 240 (Mohawk – Faculty); Kathy Maxwell, president, OPSEU Local 241 (Mohawk – Support); Candy Lindsay, vice-president, OPSECAAT; Veronica Weir, first vice-president, Local 240; Sam Maga, president, Local 240.

## OPSEU to colleges: “Let’s vote” ▶

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# OPSEU to colleges: “Let’s vote”

*Thomas extends invitation after colleges reject voluntary recognition*

“It’s time part-timers and sessionals had a chance to vote to join OPSEU,” President Warren (Smokey) Thomas says.

Thomas made the statement last week after the Colleges Compensation and Appointments Council (the Council) turned down a proposal to agree to “voluntary recognition” of the union as the part-timers’ bargaining agent so talks toward a first collective agreement could start right away.

In a letter received at OPSEU March 26, Council Chair Debra Cooper Burger said “it would be premature to engage in recognition discussions” until the province passes a new law setting out the process for part-timers to unionize.

Ms. Burger also suggested it was hard for the Council to get involved in contract talks when the government may end the Council’s role in collective bargaining altogether and create a brand-new agency to negotiate on behalf of the colleges. Kevin Whitaker, the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) Chair who reviewed the legislation for the government earlier this year, had made that recommendation.

“I appreciate how the Council might be leery of

bargaining if it may be about to close its doors for good, but quite frankly that’s a separate issue,” said Thomas. “The real issue is that we have a group of workers who have expressed a strong desire to join our union, and they have a constitutional right to do so.

“That is why I am asking the Council to come with us to the OLRB and request, together, that the Board order and supervise a vote for part-timers and sessionals at all 24 colleges.”

Thomas dismissed the notion that new legislation must be in place before workers can hold a vote.

“Again, these workers have a constitutional right to join a union, and the OLRB is the entity in

Ontario that supervises union certification votes,” he said. “We can certainly apply for certification on our own, but if the employer and the union are both asking for the same thing it makes things a lot simpler for the folks at the Board.

“So let’s just get on with it,” Thomas said. “Let’s vote.”



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**For full information about the OPSEU drive to win union rights for part-timers and sessionals at Ontario’s community colleges, just visit or call!**

**[www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org)**

**1-866-811-7274**

# Card-signers a hit at Humber professional development conference

*Part-timers and sessional not paid to attend – but do*

Part-time and sessional faculty at Ontario's community colleges don't usually get paid for professional development days, but they come to them anyway.

"It's a real testament to how much part-time and sessional faculty care about their students that they keep coming out for professional development days that they don't get paid for," said Roger Couvrette, president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals. "But then again, they don't get paid for many of the hours they work anyway, so I guess it's not surprising."

Couvrette made the comments after the union set



**OPSEU card-signing table at Humber College March 29. From left to right:** John Huot, organizer; Candy Lindsay, vice-president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT); Gayle Lebars, OPSEU lead organizer for Humber College; Maureen Wall, organizer and steward with OPSEU Local 562 (Humber – Faculty); Yvette Munro, secretary-treasurer, OPSECAAT; Roger Couvrette, president, OPSECAAT.

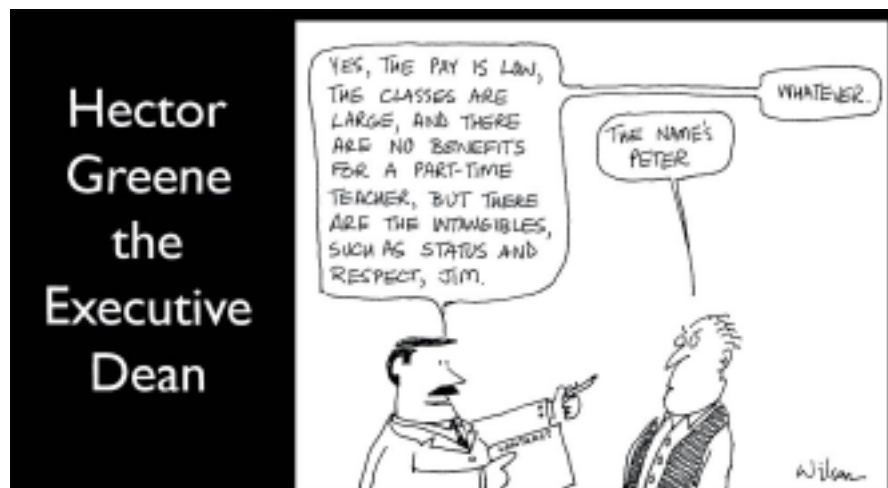
up a card-signing table at a "mini-conference" for part-timers and sessionals at Humber College on Saturday.

Colleges in the Greater Toronto Area hold, on a rotating basis, three or four mini-conferences a year to offer professional development for part-time faculty.

Many of the sessions are held on weekends or evenings. The Humber session included workshops on diversity and teaching English as a Second Language.

"Quite a number of part-timers and sessionals took the opportunity to sign union cards," according to Gayle Lebars, OPSEU's lead organizer for the college.

*Cartoon courtesy Local Lines, OPSEU Local 415.*



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Executive  
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# Full steam ahead on card-signing drive

OPSEU organizers are pushing hard to sign up as many part-time and sessional college workers as possible before the school term ends. And they're getting big results, as the OPSEU "It's time!" bus found out after visiting three colleges last week: Mohawk in Hamilton on Wednesday, Conestoga in Kitchener-Waterloo on Thursday, and Humber in Toronto on Saturday.

"I am just astounded by the commitment of our organizers on the ground," said Roger Couvrette, president of the organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT). "Everywhere I go, I'm hearing stories of single individuals signing up 30, 40, 50 people a week. "It does my heart good."



**OPSEU organizers meet at Conestoga College on March 27. Back row:** David Kerr, OPSEU lead organizer for Fanshawe, Lambton, St. Clair and Conestoga colleges; Jay Jackson, OPSEU Executive Board Member; David Cushing, OPSEU campaign coordinator, Conestoga; Lisa Nequest, president, OPSEU Local 238 (Conestoga – Support); Vic Vinerskis, organizer; Eddy Almeida, OPSEU Executive Board Member; Mike Grimaldi, OPSEU Executive Board Member. **Front row:** Candy Lindsay, vice-president, OPSECAAT; Roger Couvrette, president, OPSECAAT; Denise Sands, organizer and president, OPSEU Local 144. **Inset:** David Cushing talks to TV reporters about the organizing drive.



The Part-Time Times is authorized for distribution by Roger Couvrette, president of the Organization of Part-Time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OPSECAAT), and Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).