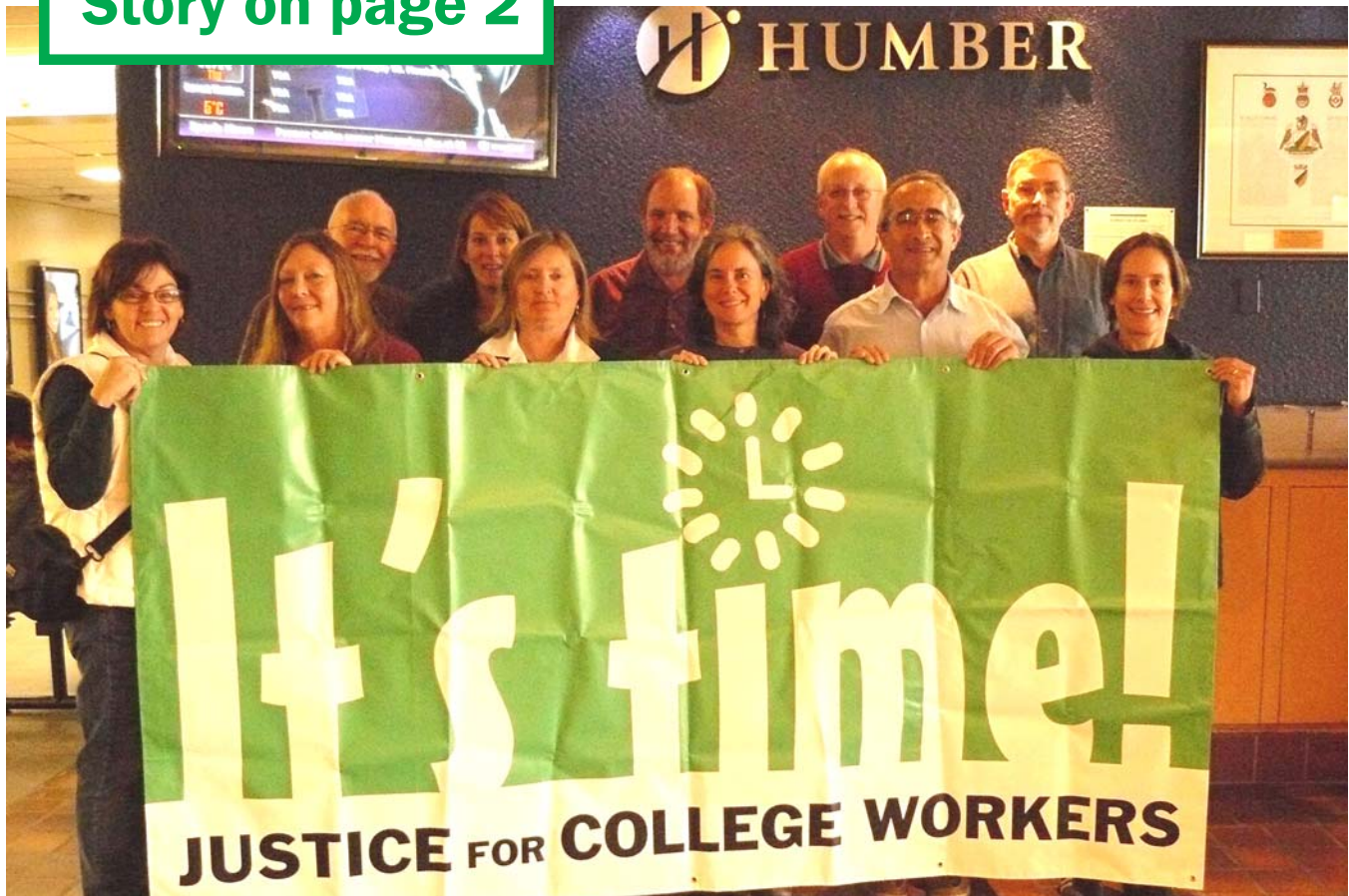


The Part-Time Times

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

Organizers sign up more members as OPSEU gets set to file new applications

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Part of the OPSEU organizing team at Humber College in Toronto (left to right): Candy Lindsay, vice-president, Organization of Part-Time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OPSECAAT); Deb Cooper, president, Local 563 (Humber - Support); John Huot, Humber faculty (retired); Martha Josephian, OPSEU Campaigns Officer; Terry Bedford, treasurer, Local 563; Paul Michaud, Local 562 (Humber - Faculty); Michelle Albert, Local 562 staff; Dave Camp, chief steward, Local 563; Roger Couvrette, president, OPSECAAT; Orville Getz, president, Local 562; Pam Johnson, part-time faculty, Humber College.

New applications

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As you read this, OPSEU organizers are once again on college campuses across Ontario to sign up more part-time and sessional members.

“We are focusing our efforts on signing more cards and triggering representation votes under the new *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* which became law Oct. 8,” OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas said. “While we could continue arguing with the colleges about the applications we filed in April, there is no telling when – or if – we will succeed.

“The quickest way forward is just to get some more cards and reapply under the new legislation,” he said. “That way we can avoid employer stalling tactics and move on to votes as soon as possible.”

On April 11, 2008, OPSEU filed two applications for certification at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Backed by the thousands of union cards signed by part-timers and sessionals, the union asked the Board to order two votes: one for part-time and sessional faculty, and one for part-time support staff.

Both the colleges and the Ontario government argued that the applications were premature, as new legislation to create a legal framework for them was on its way (albeit at an unknown time). The Board declined to order the votes.

The union then launched an intensive lobby effort. As a result, the McGuinty government quickly introduced Bill 90, a law to recognize part-timer bargaining rights. The Bill became law four months later.

When OPSEU filed the applications in April, it had enough signed cards to meet the generally-accepted threshold (35 per cent) required to trigger a vote. However, many people who were college employees in April are not college employees today. That means they cannot be included in a new application.



Photo: Jack Wilson

Claude Lacelle, OPSEU's tireless lead organizer at Algonquin College in Ottawa, adds the names of new card-signers to his confidential database.

Workers who have already signed an OPSEU union card and are still college employees will be included in the new applications, along with cards signed by new workers.

The union is currently contacting all card-signers to confirm whether they still work at a college.

“There is pretty high turnover among part-timers from term to term, but we are confident that the number of cards we need in order to trigger a vote is in the hundreds, not thousands,” said Thomas. “Based on our track record earlier this year, we can get that many and more in short order.”

Full details on the OPSEU organizing drive – with information on how to sign a card – are available on the web at www.collegeworkers.org.



For full information about the OPSEU drive to win union rights for part-timers and sessionals at Ontario's community colleges, visit www.collegeworkers.org or call 1-866-811-7274.

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.