

# The Part-Time Times

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

## “Momentous victory” for part-timers as colleges act gets Royal Assent

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**Lambton college workers declare victory!** Roger Couvrette and Candy Lindsay, president and vice-president of the part-time college workers' organization, were at a meeting of campaign workers shortly after it was announced that Bill 90 had received Royal Assent. Celebrating this historic moment are (left to right) Candy Lindsay, partial load-teacher and organizer Stephanie Gunter; OPSEU Local 124 member Connie Byrns (Support); Local 125 (Academic) partial-load teacher Marianne Nichols; Jim Sharp, chief steward, Local 125, Lori Kaempf, Local 125, and Roger Couvrette. "Make no mistake about it, this is an historic victory," said Couvrette. "Every part-time and sessional worker in Ontario's college system will understand that. And every single college worker, academic or support, will know that the college workplace will be a much, much better place to be and to work once the part-time bargaining units have collective agreements."

# Momentous victory!

Part-time workers in Ontario's community colleges have won their long quest for the right to unionize. Their next step is to get certified with OPSEU.

Ontario Lieutenant Governor David Onley has given Royal Assent to Bill 90, the amendments to the



Warren (Smokey) Thomas

*Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*, ending more than 35 years of discrimination against part-time workers.

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas called it a "momentous victory" for part-time workers.

"We know that it was through the collective efforts of thousands of full-

timers and part-timers that we succeeded in righting this historic wrong," he said. "Now that the part-timers' bargaining rights are secured, we are determined to welcome them as OPSEU members."

College part-timers were excluded from

bargaining under the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*, passed in 1972, and successive attempts have failed to overturn the law, until now.

Over the past four years OPSEU has committed more than \$4 million to a campaign for union rights for an estimated 17,000 part-timer workers, including the formation of the Organization of Part-Time and Sessional Employees (OPSECAAT).

OPSEU mounted a full-fledged organizing drive in November 2007, and last April, the union applied for union certification for part-timers for academic and support bargaining. The union was determined to challenge the law under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, if necessary.

However, the Ontario Labour Relations Board deferred the union's request for an immediate representation vote after a lawyer representing the Ontario government said that they intended to amend the law. In June, the Ontario government introduced Bill 90, which extended bargaining rights to part-timers and made other changes to the colleges bargaining regime.

"We will continue our quest for justice for part-timers until they are safely within the union where we can negotiate a fair contract for them," Thomas said.



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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, visit [www.collegeworkers.org](http://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.