

The Part-Time Times

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

It's time! OPSEU applies to Labour Board for right to represent part-timers and sessionals

With close to 7,000 cards signed, union asks for certification vote

See story page 2



The success of OPSEU's drive to sign up part-timers and sessionals was built on the hard work of every part of the union: top OPSEU leadership, strong OPSEU locals, dedicated staff, and hardworking, passionate part-timers. **From left to right, just a few of the many who played a part:** Rod Bemister, president, OPSEU Local 561 (Seneca – Support) and chair of the bargaining team for full-time support staff; Marnie Niemi, OPSEU benefits counsellor and lead organizer at George Brown College; Roger Couvrette and Candy Lindsay, president and vice-president of the organization of part-time and sessional college workers (OPSECAAT); and OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas.

OPSEU asks OLRB to order vote

OPSEU has applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for recognition as the legal bargaining agent for part-time and sessional workers at all 24 Ontario community colleges.

“To the best of our knowledge, this application covers more workers than any application for certification by any trade union in Ontario history,” said OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas. “We are excited at the prospect of representing college part-timers and sessionals, and we are asking the Labour Relations Board to order a certification vote as soon as possible.”

With close to 7,000 cards signed, the union has demonstrated that a substantial number of college workers want OPSEU as their bargaining agent, Thomas said.

“A certification vote will allow the union to demonstrate, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the large majority of part-timers and sessionals want OPSEU to represent them.”

Roger Couvrette, president of the provincial organization of college part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT), said OPSEU’s application for certification is “an historic moment” and said there is no good reason why these workers should wait any longer for the chance to be unionized.

“All the parties with an interest in this issue have publicly voiced their support for bargaining rights for part-timers and sessionals,” said Couvrette. “It’s time to make those rights real. Close to 7,000 hardworking Ontarians have signed union cards with OPSEU. We are knocking on a door that has been closed to us for too long, and we want in.

“An immediate certification vote is the key that will open the door to collective bargaining.”

The union has asked the OLRB to supervise a province-wide vote over a two-week period.

Based on past practice, the Board will likely make a decision this week and could order a vote to begin as early as Monday, April 21.

“The moment we hear that a vote has been scheduled, all the energies of our union will be

channeled towards getting that vote out,” said Smokey Thomas. “I will be calling on all OPSEU members and all future OPSEU members to help out, so be ready.”



Above: George Brown College part-timer Anna Willats talks to CBC radio at a media event in Toronto today. **Below:** OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas tells the story to OMNI-TV.



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 or 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 (OPSEU).