

The Part-Time Times

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

BANNED!

St. Lawrence College tries to clamp down on *The Part-Time Times*

The *Part-Time Times* has been banned!

St. Lawrence College has told OPSEU there that the union is not allowed to distribute the newsletter on the college e-mail system.

"I've been distributing the *Part-Time Times* to all our contacts in Kingston, Brockville, and Cornwall for about a year now, and we've never had a problem," said Mary Ann White, Chief Steward of OPSEU Local 417. "After the (December) issue came out, a consultant working for our human resources department showed up waving the *Part-Time Times* at us and saying we were not allowed to use the college e-mail system to solicit union memberships.

"We'll continue to do what we've been doing," said White. "We've said to them, if you've got a complaint, take us to the Labour Board."

Local 417 distributed the Jan. 7 edition of *The Part-Time Times* without incident.

"We know we're having an effect if some employers start trying to shut us down," said Roger Couvrette, president of the organization of part-timers and sessional college workers. "They realize that our campaign is working and they know that the vast majority of workers who know about our campaign don't hesitate to sign a union card.

"On those campuses where management dinosaurs still roam the halls, the employer

strategy is to try to prevent workers from finding out about our campaign. It won't work."

Some colleges have taken a different approach, writing letters to staff in an attempt to cause a "chill" among part-timers and sessionals.

Others have removed OPSEU's "It's time!" posters from college bulletin boards. Some managers have privately warned workers of the alleged "dangers" of unionization.

"The biggest danger college workers face is the danger that they will remain without representation and without the ability to bargain a better life at work," said Couvrette. "At the few colleges where we are seeing employer interference, the main effect of it is that it helps publicize our campaign."

Couvrette said it was "odd" that, while the McGuinty government is committed to extending bargaining rights to part-time college workers, some of its own agents – the colleges — appear to want to interfere with them taking the necessary steps to exercise that right.

Fortunately, most colleges around the province have not interfered with the campaign in any way, Couvrette said.

"As I've said all along, most college managers know that unionization will be good for staff and good for the quality of education we provide," he said. "It's the best thing possible."



Government to get advice this month on part-timer bargaining rights

The McGuinty government expects to receive advice this month on how to extend union rights to college part-timers and sessionals.

In August 2007, the government announced its intention to recognize the right of part-time college workers to join a union. It asked the chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, Kevin Whitaker, to review the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* (CCBA) and recommend changes. Whitaker's report, due at the end of January, will be presented to Training, Colleges and Universities Minister John Milloy. It may or may not be made public.

The McGuinty government announced the review last summer after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that collective bargaining is a protected right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This called into question all the rules in the current CCBA that exclude part-timers and sessionals from bargaining.

"The Supreme Court's decision

fundamentally shifted the legal landscape for Ontario college part-timers and sessionals," said OPSEU president Warren (Smokey) Thomas. "They won the right to join a union and engage in collective bargaining the minute that decision came down.

"The main purpose of the Whitaker review is to ensure that part-timers and sessionals can become unionized and bargain workplace changes within a legal framework that is fair, sensible, and transparent," he said.

The review is addressing issues like how employees become union members, who can be a union member, how workers are grouped together in bargaining units, and collective bargaining procedures.

OPSEU's written submission to the Whitaker review is available online at <http://www.opseu.org/caat/parttime/pdf/WhitakerEnglish.pdf>.



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).

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