

The Part-Time Times

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

Part-time faculty vote starts Monday



First nine colleges vote Jan. 19 - Jan. 22

On Monday morning, a part-time or sessional faculty member at Algonquin College in Ottawa will cast the first ballot in a history-making vote.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) has called a representation vote to see if part-

time and sessional faculty at all 24 Ontario community colleges want to join the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). The voting, supervised by Labour Relations Officers from the OLRB, will happen at 60 locations on 12 days from Jan. 19 to Feb. 5.

“This is the vote we have been waiting for, and I encourage everyone who is or has been a part-time or sessional faculty

member to get out and vote yes,” said Roger Couvrette, president of the organization of part-time and sessional college workers (OPSECAAT).

“By joining OPSEU, we’ll have the right to take part in collective bargaining to try to improve our wages and working conditions,” said Couvrette, who

Continued on page 2



“My dream is to have a massive turnout of voters who can see a future where we are empowered, respected, and recognized for the important work we do....”

– Roger Couvrette

Voting this week

Officers of the Ontario Labour Relations Board will supervise voting this week at these colleges:

- Jan. 19 Algonquin, St. Lawrence
- Jan. 20 La cité collégiale, Fleming, Loyalist
- Jan. 21 Georgian, Durham
- Jan. 22 Sheridan, Mohawk

For a complete listing of vote locations and times for this week’s vote, see the chart on page 6.

Vote starts Monday

From page 1

teaches part-time at Centennial College in Toronto. “We’ll be able to create a more organized, stable work environment for part-timers at the colleges, instead of the chaos which often prevails today. And lastly, we’ll be able to build a better quality of education for the students we teach.

“This is an exciting moment for part-time and sessional faculty,” he said. “Let’s seize the moment and vote yes, yes, yes!”

The vote is the result of nearly four years of campaigning by part-timers and sessionals in cooperation with OPSEU.

“In 2005, when we started this drive, the legislation to make it possible didn’t even exist,” said Couvrette. “But by talking with part-timers and organizing ourselves into a force to be reckoned with, we changed the law.

“By collecting thousands of signatures on union cards since 2007, we convinced the Labour Board to order this vote,” he said. “We’ve worked hard and we’re moving ahead.

“With this vote, we are taking the next big step towards positive change in the lives of college part-timers and sessionals,” Couvrette said. “My dream is to have a massive turnout of voters who can see a future where we are empowered, respected, and recognized for the important work we do to build the future for our students and our province.”



The VOTE YES campaign stopped at Fleming College this week, with Roger Couvrette once again behind the wheel of the blue bus from the OPSEU card-signing campaign. Pictured here are: Candy Lindsay, vice-president of the Organization of Part-Time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (OPSECAAT); Dave Shaw, part-time faculty, Fleming College; Gary Bonczac, president, OPSEU Local 352; Barb Linds, retired OPSEU campaigns officer and lead hand for the vote in eastern Ontario; Audrey Healy, chief steward, Local 352; Roger Couvrette, OPSECAAT president.

QUESTION OF THE DAY

What happens to your wages and working conditions when you unionize?

The wages and working conditions of part-time and sessional faculty at Ontario colleges vary widely. People at one college might earn half the wage of people doing the same job at another college. Part-timers in one department may be paid for attending a mandatory training session while those in other areas are not. Every college is different.

Some college employees have asked what happens to their wages and other workplace benefits when they unionize. They want improvements, but they don’t want to lose what they have.

It is exactly this concern that led to the creation in Ontario

labour law of what’s called the “freeze provision.” Under the freeze provision, your wages and working conditions are frozen the minute a union is certified as your legal bargaining agent. That means it is against the law for your employer to cut your wages or remove certain perqs just because you unionize.

Once you unionize, you and your co-workers have the means to negotiate improvements to what you have. By banding together, you maximize your bargaining power. And under Ontario law, your employer must bargain in good faith.



Who should vote? **YOU** should vote

Some part-time or sessional faculty members are wondering, for various reasons, if they are eligible to vote in the Jan. 19 - Feb. 5 certification vote. The answer is YES.

“Because of the extreme turnover rates among part-timers, this organizing drive is unlike any other I’ve been involved with,” says Connie Huziak, Organizing Representative with OPSEU. “Normally, the people who are in the bargaining unit on the day the union applies to represent them are the same people who vote. With the colleges, it’s a different story.

“The issue of who is eligible to vote will be the subject of many arguments between lawyers after the vote is complete. In the meantime, if you think you are eligible, you should vote.”

That’s the advice of the Labour Relations Board. In its Jan. 6 order, the Board wrote:

“If employees believe that they are eligible to vote, or have any question as to their eligibility to vote, they should attend at a polling place and identify themselves to the Board Officer conducting the vote. If an employee’s eligibility to vote is unclear or in dispute, the employee will be given an opportunity to mark a ballot, but it will be segregated. This means that the ballot will be sealed in a separate envelope until the employee’s eligibility to vote has been determined.”

The Board will use a double-envelope system for every ballot.



That way, the Board can rule on the eligibility of an individual voter while keeping his or her vote confidential.

“You will never regret voting, but you may regret not voting,” says Huziak. “Please come out and vote. It’s worth it.”

You can vote **ANYWHERE** in Ontario

Many part-time and sessional faculty work at one college but live near another. Others may be traveling during the vote period. Here’s the good news: You can vote at any one of the 60 vote locations in Ontario. For a complete and up-to-date listing of vote locations, please visit

www.collegeworkers.org.



Part-time wages to quadruple with OPSEU, college boss Don Sinclair hints

Employers always say unusual things during union organizing drives, but Don Sinclair, Executive Director of the Colleges Compensation and Appointments Council, has come up with something truly exceptional.

In a Jan. 7 letter to part-time and sessional faculty, Sinclair warned that “OPSEU’s current dues structure requires an employee to pay approximately \$100 per semester.”

If Sinclair is right, part-timers are going to be earning a lot more money with OPSEU as their bargaining agent.

Here’s the math. OPSEU dues are calculated as a percentage of gross pay – 1.375 per cent, to be exact. At this rate, a part-timer who pays \$100 in OPSEU union dues would be earning \$7,272.73 per semester.

That’s pretty good money compared to what part-timers actually make. Take the example of someone teaching three hours a week at \$45 an hour for a 13-week course. This person makes \$135 a week and \$1,755 per semester. At this rate, his or her union dues for the semester would actually be \$24.13.

For this individual, the only way Sinclair could be right is if wages *quadrupled*.

Of course there is no way to tell if Sinclair is talking about a part-timer who works three hours a week or one who works six. If the part-timer teaches six hours a week with a salary of \$3,510 per semester, his or her union dues would be \$48.26 – still less than half of Sinclair’s number.

“Obviously no union can promise specific wage increases before bargaining begins, but if Don Sinclair’s opening position is to double or quadruple wages, then obviously we’re happy to use that as a starting point for further negotiations,” said Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of OPSEU.

“The purpose of Sinclair’s letter is to subtly persuade part-time and sessional faculty to vote for the *status quo*,” said Thomas. “The colleges have been cutting costs by underpaying part-timers compared to full-timers for two decades. They know

A part-timer teaching one course would pay about \$25 in union dues per semester, not \$100 as Sinclair suggests

that a union like OPSEU, with a proven track record at the bargaining table, is bound to put upward pressure on wage costs.

“That’s why the colleges are opposed to part-timers having a strong voice in the workplace.”

Got questions?

We’ve got answers

If you have questions about joining a union, the Ontario Public Service Employees



Union, or collective bargaining in general, we’ve got answers. For answers to the most commonly-asked questions, visit www.collegeworkers.org. If you have questions that don’t appear in our Q&A, call our hotline at **1-866-811-7274**.

You have the power to change your life at work

A message to all **new** part-time and sessional college faculty from Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president, Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)

Dear friend:

I'm hoping one of your new co-workers has given you a copy of the *Part-Time Times* so you can read this letter. I want to offer greetings from my union and give you my perspective on what's been happening on college campuses over the last few years.

As it happens, you've started your new job in the midst of a union representation vote. This vote was ordered by the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to find out if part-time and sessional want OPSEU to represent them in collective bargaining.

This vote didn't just come out of nowhere. Part-timers and sessionals have been working with OPSEU for close to four years to make it happen. In the last year or so, thousands of your co-workers signed OPSEU union cards. It was their commitment that convinced the OLRB to call this vote.

People come to work at colleges for many reasons. Those who like the work, and want to stay, quickly learn that the wages and working conditions for part-timers leave a lot to be desired.

This is the result of 30 years of unfair discrimination. Until last October, it was against the law for part-time and sessional college workers in Ontario to even join a union. Our campaign changed that. The new *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* says you've got a legal right to join with your co-workers and bargain for a better life at work.

I joined OPSEU more than 30 years ago. It was the right decision for me then, and it's the right decision for you now. That's why I'm asking you to come out and vote. When you do, **VOTE YES.**

With OPSEU, you'll have a strong voice in the workplace – not only to improve your job, but to improve the quality of education your college delivers.

With OPSEU, you'll be represented by a fully democratic union with a 40-year track record in Ontario's community colleges. Ask a full-time faculty member about his or her wages and working conditions. They are the results of years of solid bargaining by OPSEU, and I think those results speak for themselves.

You do not pay union dues until you have your own collective agreement in place.

I look forward to welcoming you as a new OPSEU member. As we've been saying for a few years now, it's time!

In solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)



Vote times and locations

Part-time and sessional college faculty certification vote January 19 – Jan. 22, 2009

Mon., Jan. 19	Algonquin	10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon; 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Room P105, 1385 Woodroffe Ave., OTTAWA
Mon., Jan. 19	Algonquin	11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room 323B, 315 Pembroke St. E., PEMBROKE
Mon., Jan. 19	Algonquin	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; Room 10, 7 Craig St., PERTH
Mon., Jan. 19	St. Lawrence	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room B105, 2288 Parkdale Ave., BROCKVILLE
Mon., Jan. 19	St. Lawrence	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Riverview Room, 2 Belmont St., CORNWALL
Mon., Jan. 19	St. Lawrence	4:00 p.m. – 7:00 pm. Room 12215, 100 Portsmouth Ave., KINGSTON
Tues., Jan. 20	La Cité	11:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room C-3040, 801 Aviation Pkwy., OTTAWA
Tues., Jan. 20	Fleming	12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room 158, Albert St. S., LINDSAY
Tues., Jan. 20	Loyalist	4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room 209, 195 Hastings St. N., BANCROFT
Tues., Jan. 20	Fleming	12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room 515, 599 Brealey Dr., PETERBOROUGH
Tues., Jan. 20	Fleming	12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Main Meeting Room, 297 College Dr., HALIBURTON
Tues., Jan. 20	Loyalist	4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Room 3N2, Wallbridge-Loyalist Rd., BELLEVILLE
Weds., Jan. 21	Georgian	11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room C353, 1 Georgian Dr., BARRIE
Weds., Jan. 21	Durham	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Administrative Boardroom, 1610 Champlain Ave., WHITBY
Weds., Jan. 21	Georgian	2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Room 619, 1450 8 th St. E., OWEN SOUND
Weds., Jan. 21	Durham	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Main Meeting Room, 2 Campbell Dr., UXBRIDGE
Weds., Jan. 21	Georgian	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. A101 Conference Room, 825 Memorial Ave., ORILLIA
Weds., Jan. 21	Durham	12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.; 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Room H132, 2000 Simcoe St. N., OSHAWA
Weds., Jan. 21	Georgian	6:45 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Room 113, 649 Prospect Blvd., MIDLAND
Thurs., Jan. 22	Sheridan	11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. ; 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Room C230, 1430 Trafalgar Rd., OAKVILLE
Thurs., Jan. 22	Mohawk	10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon; 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.; 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Room C043, 135 Fennell Ave. W., HAMILTON
Thurs., Jan. 22	Mohawk	12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room 208, Institute of Applied Health Science, 1400 Main St. W., HAMILTON
Thurs., Jan. 22	Mohawk	12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room A211, 481 Barton St., STONEY CREEK
Thurs., Jan. 22	Mohawk	12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m.; 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room A-127A, 411 Elgin St., BRANTFORD
Thurs., Jan. 22	Sheridan	12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.; 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Room B216, 7899 McLaughlin Rd., BRAMPTON

For vote times and locations across Ontario, visit 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.



Ontario Public Service Employees Union, 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8
www.opseu.org