

The Part-Time Times

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

Durham College backs OPSEU organizing drive

“We will support organizing with no hesitation”

Management at another Ontario college is taking a friendly approach to OPSEU’s campaign to win union rights for part-timers and sessionals across the province.

“We support the right to organize and will not, and have not, interfered with the activities on our campus,” the Vice-President of Human Resources for Durham College wrote in a memo to the union last week. “We don’t have objections to your work in contacting part-timers and getting cards signed.”

The memo from Durham’s Ken Robb to OPSEU local officers John Bisset and Rick Nemisz arrived late Wednesday, one day after the union slammed Algonquin College in Ottawa for interfering in the organizing drive.

“Given the negative press on Algonquin regarding the visit of the part-time organizing group, I need to be clear about the Durham College stance,” Mr. Robb wrote. “The college was a little uncomfortable

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OPSEU hosted a news event in Whitby Jan. 25 to tell local reporters about the college organizing drive.

Left to right: Roger Couvrette, president, OPSECAAT (Centennial College – Faculty); Rick Nemisz, president, OPSEU Local 353 (Durham College – Support); Patty Rout, First Vice-President/Treasurer, OPSEU; Rod Bemister, chair, OPSEU CAAT-Support bargaining team (Seneca College – Support); Leslie Sanders, OPSEU organizing representative; Crystal Hiltz, OPSEU Communications; Betty Cree, president, OPSEU Local 351 (Fleming College – Support), Candy Lindsay, vice-president, OPSECAAT, Claire Rowett, OPSEU Executive Board Member; Margaret Rodgers, part-time organizer. John Bisset, vice-president of OPSEU Local 354, also attended the event but is missing from this photo.

Colleges need money for people, too, OPSEU president says

Ontario's colleges need a funding boost to pay for better wages and working conditions for college employees, the president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union says.



OPSEU president Warren (Smokey) Thomas

Warren (Smokey)

Thomas made the comments Tuesday after the Ontario government announced an extra \$65 million in college funding. Most of the money is earmarked for upgrades to buildings and equipment.

"We have no bone to pick with spending money to make buildings safer and more energy-efficient, and obviously our students need up-to-date equipment if they

are going to be up to speed when they enter the workforce," Thomas said. "But the number one driving force behind quality education is people, and if you don't support your people all the money spent

on buildings and equipment will be wasted."

Thomas's remarks follow a letter he sent two weeks ago to colleges minister John Milloy. New funding will be needed in 2008 to pay for improvements for part-timers and sessionals, Thomas wrote.

"There will soon come a day when college part-timers and sessionals are OPSEU members," he told Milloy. "Shortly after that, we will engage in collective bargaining with the colleges.

"Our goal from the start of bargaining will be to improve the wages and working conditions of these workers. This will cost money....

"Be sure to include additional funding for improvements to wages and working conditions for part-time and sessional college employees in your plans for this year's provincial budget."

In addition to part-timer considerations, OPSEU's CAAT-Support Division, which represents more than 7,000 workers, is bargaining a new contract this year. Their collective agreement expires Aug. 31, 2008.

Durham College

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with a press conference which would portray colleges as villains in the employment of part-timers. We don't see Durham as part of that message.

"But, clearly, we ARE NOT barring the organizing team from visiting the campus to speak with part-timers. They can walk the halls as they see fit."

The president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT) applauded Durham's "sensible" approach.

"This just proves what we've been saying all along," said Roger Couvrette, who teaches part-time at Centennial College in Toronto.

"Good college managers support our campaign," he said. "They know that unionization for part-timers and sessionals will lead to a more stable work force that is better able to provide a quality education for the students we all serve."



On the road again!



On the ground at Northern, from left to right: J.L. Roy, part-time faculty at Collège Boréal in Sudbury and OPSEU lead organizer for Northern and Boréal; Mike Bisailon, OPSEU Membership Development Trainee; Peter Wall, OPSEU Executive Board Member (Region 6); Roger Couvrette, president, OPSECAAT; Frank Wright, president, OPSEU Local 654 (Support – Northern), and Cindy McQuarrie, OPSEU staff representative, Timmins.

Northern visit gets warm welcome

The president of the provincial organization of part-time and sessional college workers (OPSECAAT) flew north to Timmins this week and came home to Toronto with a smile on his face.

Between stops at the South Porcupine campus of Northern College and the downtown campus of Collège Boréal, Roger Couvrette hosted a news conference that drew reporters from five media outlets to learn more about OPSEU’s college organizing campaign.

“Our campaign is reaching every region of Ontario,” said Couvrette. “Our organizers are being met with enthusiasm by college part-timers and sessionals, and local media are very interested in what we are doing.”

Local media outlets want to know the basic facts about the campaign and how long OPSEU has been

fighting for the rights of non-union college workers, Couvrette said. Reporters are also curious about how unionization will affect workers, students, their community, and their college.

The Timmins news conference came on the heels of similar media events in Ottawa, Peterborough, and Whitby last week.

“Getting into the news media is just one more way for us to reach out to part-timers and sessionals where they live,” Couvrette said. “Many part-timers, particularly faculty, only spend a limited amount of time on campus, so it’s important to reach out in a variety of ways.

“Once we find these colleagues of ours – or they find us – getting them to sign union cards is usually very easy.”

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

1-866-811-7274

Humber prez stops to chat with organizers

The OPSEU “It’s time!” campaign bus stopped by Humber College on Tuesday, and local organizers were happy to welcome an unexpected guest: Humber College President John Davies.

“I was very impressed that he came over to the bus and stood out front of it for a good five minutes chatting with us,” said Candy Lindsay, vice-president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT). “I think it is important for us to mention colleges that do something positive and this man went out of his way.”

Student journalists from Humber’s newspaper, *EtCetera*, and its radio station, CKHC-FM, also visited the bus to report on the campaign.



Photo: Robert Mills, L. 562

Happy Humber organizers, from left to right: John Huot, OPSEU Local 562 (Faculty), retired; Gayle Lebens, OPSEU Organizing Representative; Maureen Wall, steward, Local 562; Orville Getz, president, Local 562; Mary Vesia, steward, Local 563 (Support); David Camp, chief steward, Local 563; Deb Cooper, president, Local 563.

Meanwhile, back at Algonquin...

He gets paid to say this stuff?!

When you hire a lawyer, you expect him or her to represent your point of view. Here’s what Jock Climie, counsel for Algonquin College in Ottawa, had to say about part-time faculty at a Jan. 10 arbitration hearing (yes, these are verbatim quotations!):

- “Part-time teachers are stop-gap measures.”
- “The depth of knowledge required of part-time teachers is less than full-time teachers. Otherwise, there would be a lot of empty classrooms.”
- “If the College gets a couple of complaints about a part-time teacher, you can just grab the part-time teacher out of the classroom and don’t bring them back.”
- “Part-time teachers are hired to deliver courses and then go home.”

- “You can’t tell me the part-time teachers can teach as well as full-time teachers who specialize in [the same] areas.”
- “Part-time teachers who can teach well in two different subject areas are diamonds in the rough. And diamonds don’t grow on trees.” (*Editor’s note: The Part-Time Times agrees that diamonds don’t grow on trees.*)

Climie made the comments at a hearing into a union grievance aimed at winning more full-time positions in the college’s School of Media and Design.

– Jack Wilson, Local 415



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).