

The Part-Time Times

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

It's time! OPSEU launches union drive for part-time and sessional college workers

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union is calling on part-time and sessional workers at all 24 Ontario community colleges to sign an OPSEU union card today.

“Our union is throwing its full support and resources into winning union representation for college part-timers and sessionals,” said Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of OPSEU. “It’s time these workers had access to the advantages collective bargaining offers.”

Last night at a meeting of the Hamilton and District Labour Council, Thomas joined Roger Couvrette, president of the organization of part-time and sessional college employees, to launch the largest organizing drive in Ontario history.

“To everything there is a season,” said Couvrette, a part-time professor at Centennial College in Toronto. “The time of using college part-timers and sessionals as a source of cheap labour is over. The time for us to get the recognition and respect we deserve is now.”

Don Fraser, president of the labour council, signed an OPSEU card last night. Fraser, a retired member of the United Steelworkers, teaches in the Labour Studies program at Mohawk College. In total, members of four unions signed cards.

The labour council also passed a resolution in support of the OPSEU campaign.

“The support we saw in Hamilton last night was absolutely tremendous,” said Couvrette. “People right across the labour movement are seeing that we are

working to right an historic wrong.”

The OPSEU drive follows a June 2007 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, which ruled that collective bargaining is a protected right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Under Ontario law, college part-timers and sessionals had been barred from unionizing. But following the Court ruling, the McGuinty government said it would extend bargaining rights to them.

The new organizing drive will reach out to more than 12,500 college part-timers and sessionals in the weeks and months ahead. Organizing committees – made up of full-time and part-time workers – are up and running at every college.

OPSEU has decades of experience in Ontario colleges and represents over 16,000 full-time support and academic staff.

Find out more!

Visit www.collegeworkers.org

Full details about joining OPSEU, and how a union organizing drive works, are available online at www.collegeworkers.org.

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).