

the
part-time times
 News for part-time and sessional workers and friends at Ontario community colleges

Part-time support staff will shape their own future in October union vote

10,000 part-timers can opt for OPSEU as their voice at work

Up to 10,000 part-time support staff at Ontario community colleges are eligible to cast ballots in a union representation vote to be held next month.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board ordered the vote late yesterday. Voting will take place from Oct. 5 to Oct. 27.

“The colleges have treated part-timers as second-class workers for decades, with no benefits, no job security, and lower pay than full-timers,” said Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of the Ontario



OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas

Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). “It’s time part-timers had a strong union voice in the

workplace so we can all work together to stop this unfair treatment.

“A strong yes vote next month will be a huge step forward for all part-time support staff,” Thomas said.

Having a voice in the workplace is key for people like Candy Lindsay, who has worked part-time at Fleming College in Peterborough for 11 years.

“I’m very excited about this vote,” said Lindsay, a driving force behind the part-timers’ organizing drive since 2006. “The way it is right now, you just go in to work

and you do your job, but you can’t say much about the unfair treatment you’re experiencing.

“With a union like OPSEU, we’ll have a voice, and we’ll be able to sit down and negotiate with the colleges,” she said. “We’ll be in a legal framework where we can’t be ignored any longer.”



Fleming College part-timer Candy Lindsay

Huge opportunity for student workers

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Vote is a huge opportunity for student workers

The October vote is an historic opportunity for more than 5,000 college student workers.

In 2008, the Ontario government changed the law that covers unions in the colleges. At that time, the government decided that all part-time support staff would bargain together as a group. This includes all part-timers working 24 hours or less, but it also includes students in the Ontario Work Study Plan and other aid programs.

Kiera Chion was a Work Study student until four months ago when she started working for OPSEU as a student organizer.

“Young people on their own get

taken seriously as consumers, but as workers I don’t think we get enough credit for the fact that we perform valuable work,” says Chion. “With a union, you’re in a position to be heard.

One-on-one with your boss, you’re more likely to be shut down, but with a whole crew of your co-workers – students and non-students – you’re stronger together.

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is fairness and the right to be recognized for what they contribute to their college. Students are proud to be from their college, but they want respect, too.”



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– OPSEU student organizer Kiera Chion

Students under pressure

College students are under a lot of financial pressure these days, both before and after graduation.

Ontario now has the second-highest college tuition in Canada, and tuition fees are rising much faster than student wages. Student unemployment is at its highest level in recent memory. Student debt is at record levels. Many students graduate with debt loads of \$30,000 or more.

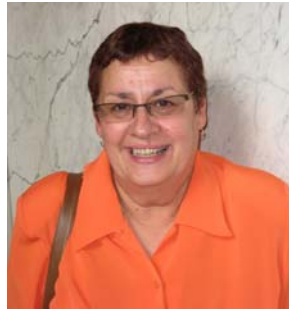
“Unionizing isn’t just about improving working conditions in the short term, it’s about having a stake in creating a future where it’s possible to earn a decent wage doing something that you care about, that you went to school for,” says Kiera Chion. “Voting yes means working together to change working conditions now, but it means also learning how to stand up for yourself in your future jobs.

“Our future needs good jobs. Vote YES!”

Full-timers back their part-time co-workers all the way

Unionized full-time college support staff have backed the union drive for part-timers since it began. Betty Cree, chair of the College Support Division of OPSEU, stresses the solidarity that exists between full-time and part-time support staff:

“As far as the work part-timers do, they are in no way different from full-timers. We do exactly the same work. We work, literally, side by side. In many cases we have worked side by side for a decade or more. Part-timers are required to have the same level of skills, experience and qualifications as full-timers in order to do the job. But full-timers earn a union wage with negotiated benefits, vacation entitlements, job security protections and a pension plan. Part-timers, on the other hand, earn wages which are in most cases lower and work without benefits for themselves or their families.



Betty Cree, Chair,
College Support
Division of OPSEU

“There’s just one difference between full-time and part-time support staff: part-timers work fewer hours.

“Our part-time co-workers absolutely deserve to have a way to get to the bargaining table and fight for the benefits full-timers enjoy, without fear of repercussions. People deserve rights.”

The College Support bargaining team has tried for many years to win union rights for part-time support staff. The colleges said no because part-timers could not access bargaining rights under the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*. But now

they can, since the law changed in 2008.

“We’ve been absolutely consistent about working to get union rights for our part-time sisters and brothers,” says Cree. “Now, by voting yes, they have the opportunity to go out and get those rights on their own.”

More information is on its way – get on the list!

The October union vote is an exciting opportunity for part-time support staff at Ontario’s colleges. We know people will have a lot of questions about voting yes, joining OPSEU, and how collective bargaining works.

Full details on these and other issues are being drafted and will be available very soon. The *Part-Time Times* is published on the OPSEU web site at www.opseu.org and on the college workers’ web site

at www.collegeworkers.org. To receive updates by e-mail, please call OPSEU direct at 1-800-268-7376 or send an e-mail to jevans@opseu.org.



Voting schedule

The Ontario Labour Relations Board will supervise the vote by part-time college support staff according to the following schedule:

College	Campus	Date	College	Campus	Date
Algonquin	Ottawa	Oct. 5	St. Clair	Windsor	Oct. 14
St. Lawrence	Cornwall	Oct. 5	Niagara	Welland	Oct. 15
St. Lawrence	Brockville	Oct. 5	Fanshawe	St. Thomas	Oct. 15
St. Lawrence	Kingston	Oct. 5	Conestoga	Stratford	Oct. 15
Confederation	Thunder Bay	Oct. 5	Conestoga	Waterloo	Oct. 15
La cite collégiale	Hawksbury	Oct. 6	Lambton	Sarnia	Oct. 15
La cite collégiale	Ottawa	Oct. 6	Sault	Sault Ste. Marie	Oct. 15
St. Lawrence	Kemptville	Oct. 6	Northern/Boréal	New Liskeard	Oct. 19
St. Lawrence	Smiths Falls	Oct. 6	Northern	Kirkland Lake	Oct. 19
Algonquin	Pembroke	Oct. 6	Niagara	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Oct. 19
Loyalist	Belleville	Oct. 6	Sheridan	Brampton	Oct. 19
Confederation	Kenora	Oct. 6	Fanshawe	London	Oct. 19
Confederation	Dryden	Oct. 6	Sheridan	Skills Development	Oct. 19
Confederation	Sioux Lookout	Oct. 6	Centennial	CCC	Oct. 20
Algonquin	Perth	Oct. 7	Centennial	Ashtonbee	Oct. 20
Loyalist	Bancroft	Oct. 7	Conestoga	Kitchener	Oct. 20
Fleming	Haliburton	Oct. 7	Humber	Lakeshore	Oct. 20
Fleming	Peterborough	Oct. 7	Boréal	Hearst	Oct. 20
Fleming	Lindsay	Oct. 7	Seneca	Markham	Oct. 21
Georgian	Barrie	Oct. 7	Seneca	Yorkgate	Oct. 21
Confederation	Fort Frances	Oct. 7	Seneca	Newnham	Oct. 21
Georgian	Orangeville	Oct. 8	Seneca	King	Oct. 21
Georgian	Owen Sound	Oct. 8	Northern	Timmins	Oct. 21
Georgian	Collingwood	Oct. 8	Centennial	HP	Oct. 22
Georgian	Midland	Oct. 8	Seneca	York	Oct. 22
Durham	Oshawa	Oct. 8	Centennial	Progress	Oct. 22
Durham	Whitby	Oct. 8	George Brown	Casa Loma	Oct. 22
Fleming	Cobourg	Oct. 8	Cambrian	Sudbury	Oct. 22
Georgian	Orillia	Oct. 8	Canadore	Parry Sound	Oct. 23
Georgian	Barrie	Oct. 8	Humber	Toronto	Oct. 26
Canadore	North Bay	Oct. 13	George Brown	St. James	Oct. 27
Boréal	Sturgeon Falls	Oct. 13			
Sheridan	Trafalgar	Oct. 13			
St. Clair	Windsor	Oct. 13			
St. Clair	Chatham	Oct. 13			
Fanshawe	Woodstock	Oct. 13			
Mohawk	Brantford	Oct. 13			
Mohawk	Hamilton (Applied Health)	Oct. 13			
Boréal	Sudbury	Oct. 14			
Cambrian	Val Caron	Oct. 14			
Cambrian	Espanola	Oct. 14			
Mohawk	Hamilton (Fennell)	Oct. 14			

Please note that college part-timers will be able to vote at any vote location in the province. Some vote times and locations are still being finalized. Full details will be published shortly.



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