

MEMORANDUM

OPSEU



SEFPO

Syndicat des Employé-e-s
de la Fonction Publique
de l'Ontario

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities
All Stewards in the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities

FROM: Cameron Walker, Supervisor Contract Enforcement

DATE: February 4, 2004

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities
ERC Minutes – December 9, 2003**

Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the our Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

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AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,

Leah Casselman
President

/ms
att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

Cameron Walker
Supervisor, Contract Enforcement

MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Ministry Employee Relations Committee

December 9, 2003
Room 341C, Mowat Block
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

For the Employer:

Donna Marafioti (Co-Chair)
Kim Bellissimo
David Doherty
Kevin French
Barbara Simmons

For the Union:

Terri Elliott (Co-Chair)*
Sophie Ambrose
Stephen George
Lucie Rondeau

* chaired the December 9, 2003 meeting

PRE-MEETING:

Prior to the commencement of the formal meeting Donna Marafioti met with the Union team to indicate that after this meeting she would be withdrawing as the Management MERC Co-Chair to be replaced by Kim Bellissimo.

At the request of the Union, Management clarified the roles of the Management Team members as follows:

Kim Bellissimo - Co-Chair (effective the next meeting)
Kevin French - representative for the Postsecondary Education Division
Barbara Simmons - representative for the Training Division
David Doherty - staff support
Labour Relations Intern - assistant to David Doherty for taking minutes

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved as written

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

It was agreed that the reference to “meat inspector apprenticeships” on page 7 of the minutes of the September 11, 2003 meeting should read “dairy, swine and herds person apprenticeships”

BUSINESS ARISING:

1. Workplace Training Branch LERCs update:

The Union reported back to the MERC that no LERCs were currently established in the Northern or Central Districts of the Workplace Training Branch, and that local management has not approached the Union about setting up LERCS for these offices.

Action: The importance of LERCS will be raised with Workplace Training Branch area managers.

2. Training in the Student Support Branch

The Union requested that the list of training provided by the Student Support Branch, tabled at the December 2002 MERC meeting, be appended to the Minutes (see attached). The Union noted that most of the training listed is mandatory training related to systems and program changes. It expressed concern that there is insufficient developmental training identified through the performance management process. Management indicated that while not all requests for training can be met, meetings held pursuant to the performance management policy are an ideal opportunity for management and employees to have a discussion about developmental training. Once a training plan has been agreed upon as part of the performance planning process, it is expected that the plan will be implemented.

3. Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (WDHP) Policy:

Management provided an update on the roll-out of the WDHP / Information and Information Technology (I&IT) training program referenced at the previous MERC. It indicated that the Management Board Secretariat (MBS) has prepared a package of materials to be used by Ministries to provide training on I&IT issues including the use of I&IT in ways which may offend the WDHP Policy. Divisional meetings have been held to provide the training to directors and managers. The training is now being provided to employees through unit meetings. Management confirmed that the training is mandatory for all staff.

The next phase of the roll-out will involve six screen pop-ups which will appear over a six-week period upon employee log-in. Each pop-up is linked to a fact sheet. The fact

sheets cover conflict of interest, downloading issues, and WDHP issues. An all-staff memo will be sent prior to the commencement of the pop-ups.

A copy of the training slides and the pop-ups was provided to the Union at the MERC.

The Union took the position that not enough emphasis has been placed on WDHP training outside of the I&IT context. It argued that there is a need for more in-depth training on identifying discrimination, knowing your rights, and understanding the WDHP complaint process. It stated that true training required at least a half day session away from the workplace - anything less is just information sharing.

Management agreed that the MBS package was focussed on WDHP in the context of I&IT. It indicated that it had provided significant training on WDHP at the time the policy came into effect and will continue to do so where a problem is identified. It also noted that it has added a WDHP fact sheet to the new employee orientation package and that the Shared Services Bureau runs regular half and full day programs on the WDHP policy. It offered to include a reference to these programs in the all-staff memo announcing the commencement of the pop-ups.

Action: An all-staff memo will be sent prior to the commencement of the pop-ups. The memo will include a reference to the availability of WDHP specific training through MySSB.

4. Establishment of Private Institutions Branch

Management distributed a revised Private Institutions Branch organization chart which identifies the OPSEU positions within the Branch.

5. ITO - 1 Job Specification

The Union thanked Management for clarifying that the current ITO1 job specification is the 2002 job specification signed by David Walker.

6. Ontarians with Disabilities Act Compliance

Management reiterated that the release of the Accessibility Plans was delayed during the election and that the release is expected early in the new year.

Action: Management to provide a copy of the ODA Accessibility Plan to the Union when it is publicly released.

7. Electrical Safety Authority

The Union requested clarification as to why this item was in the Workplace Training Branch Operational Plan if there are no operational impacts on the work of the Branch - as indicated at the September 11, 2003 MERC. Management responded that the inclusion in the Operational Plan was merely to reflect the Branch's participation on the inter-ministerial committee.

STANDING ITEMS:

1. Redeployment:

Management indicated that there was no redeployment activity to report.

2.. Student Support Branch:

Management indicated that there was nothing new to report. The parties agreed that this item should be removed as a standing item.

3. Office Administration Group (OAG) Learning Needs Update:

An update was provided on the OAG Learning Needs initiative, including a report on the following:

- OAG Conference held in Thunder Bay, October 24, 2003;

The Union indicated that the Conference had "phenomenal speakers", that the participants were treated with dignity and respect, and that the Conference helped boost employee morale and faith in the Ministry. Victoria Sonosky was especially praised for her hard work in preparing the Conference, and for the way she spoke to the participants individually, making them feel welcome and comfortable.

- First OAG Community of Practice meeting of November 20, 2003 (next meeting scheduled for December 18, 2003).

The union asked what exactly is a community of practice. Management responded that it is a group of individuals who perform similar functions in different parts of the organization who meet periodically on an informal basis to share information and to discuss issues of common concern. There are currently OPS communities of practice for

Human Resource Consultants / Analysts, Labour Relations Consultants, and managers. The OAG Community of practice is an EDU/TCU initiative for Mowat Block OAG employees, which can be expanded beyond the Mowat Block if there is sufficient interest.

Action: Management will provide the Union with any feedback it receives on the November, 2003 Community of Practice meeting.

4. Seniority List, True Vacancy Report, Unclassified Contracts

Copies of these reports were provided. The Union noted that the list is getting smaller and asked if this was because of conversions. Management advised that there have been some conversions and some contracts have not been renewed because of the hiring freeze.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Organizational Change

Management confirmed that there are no organizational changes for the Ministry arising from the change of government, though there may be some changes in the way the Ministry interacts with central agencies.

2. Exemption Testing

Management provided an update on the roll-out of additional exemption tests. Currently there are 11 trades in which apprentices can write tests to be exempted from the classroom portion of their training. These tests are distinct from the trades certification tests that all apprentices write at the end of their program. Of the 11 existing exemption tests 5 are delivered in field offices (not all 5 are delivered by all offices). All 11 of the tests are delivered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Approximately 1500-2000 exemption tests per year are administered by the colleges, while approximately 400-500 are administered by Workplace Training Branch offices.

The number of trades in which exemption tests are offered is being expanded from 11 to 33. The 22 new tests will only be offered through the colleges. A service agreement for the administration of these tests has been developed (not yet signed) which will require all colleges to administer tests in all 33 fields, and will standardize fees for these tests. The agreement also sets out restrictions on the use of the tests, establishes security protocols, requires regular audits and annual reports, and requires the reporting of test results within 10 days.

Management indicated that there is no current intention to change the way the existing five tests are administered, consequently there will be no impact on current staff.

The Union suggested that the exemption tests should be offered exclusively by Workplace Training Branch offices. The resourcing issue could be dealt with by pulling the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) testing function. Management disagreed arguing that the TSSA function is already being transitioned to the colleges and, in any case, the removal of the TSSA test function would not free up sufficient resources to accommodate the expanded exemption testing.

There was a discussion about the utility of exemption testing. The Union argued that employers do not want an exemption process.

3. Territory Changes within the Workplace Training Branch

The Union argued that the recent changes to the area office boundaries within the Western District Office of the Workplace Training Branch are inefficient and result in lowered client service. It argued that the new boundaries will result in more travel for training consultants from the Sarnia Office, the new boundaries no longer conform to those used by Job Connect, and they will reduce service to clients in Courtright.

Management indicated that the decision was made based on area manager feedback on workloads over the past year. The change was an attempt to balance cost pressures, workload and local pressures. Management emphasised that managers are required to make decisions which might be unpopular to some - in these cases there are often perceived winners and losers. Management agreed to relay the Union's concerns to the District Manager.

Action: The Union's concerns will be relayed to the Western District Manager, Workplace Training Branch.

4. Auditor's recommendations referenced in the Workplace Training Branch Operational Plan

The Union asked Management to provide it with the 12 public, and 2 'non-public' recommendations made in the Ontario Auditor's 2002 Report, as referenced in the Workplace Training Branch Operational Plan. Management explained that the audit made 12 recommendations. The 2 'non-public' recommendations are merely action which the Ministry determined should be taken as a result of discussions which occurred during the audit. Copies of the chapter of the Audit Report dealing with the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities - including the Ministry's response to each recommendation - were distributed. The Union was advised that provincial audit reports are available on-line at <http://www.auditor.on.ca>.

5. Federal/Provincial Labour Marketing Development Agreement

The Union claimed it has heard rumours that the signing of a Federal/Provincial Labour Marketing Development Agreement is imminent. Management confirmed that the negotiation of such an agreement was in the Liberal Party election platform and the Throne Speech. It indicated, however, that negotiations have not yet commenced and that as yet there has been no indication of the form which those negotiations will take.

Management stressed that it is critical that the lines of communication are open on this issue through both the negotiation and the implementation phases. The intensity of the discussion will probably require more frequent meetings than can be accommodated within the normal MERC cycle. It was suggested that all MERC members should think about a mechanism to ensure such a dialogue continues between MERC meetings.

Action: All members are to come prepared to discuss a mechanism for ensuring ongoing dialogue on the negotiation and implementation of a Federal/Provincial Labour Marketing Development Agreement

Dates for 2004 Meetings

The following dates were agreed upon for the 2004 MERC meetings (location to be announced):

February 3, 2004
May 11, 2004
September 14, 2004
December 14, 2004

Meeting adjourned.

For the Union: John Liath

Date: Feb. 3/04

For the Employer: Kim Bellesonne

Date: Feb 3/04

Next meeting: February 3, 2004

Staff Training in the Thunder Bay Office of the Student Support Branch During 2003

Staff training is ongoing in the Thunder Bay OSAP office. Given the OSAP business cycle, different training initiatives are undertaken as needed by the staff, business and partners' needs.

Training initiatives since January 1, 2003:

Acting Opportunities:

- As in the past, and wherever possible, staff are encouraged to take advantage of developmental assignments or opportunities or secondments that are available to them. Currently, there are two staff members in developmental assignments – one in the branch and one in another ministry in Thunder Bay. Since January, 2003, there have been a total of 5 staff members in developmental opportunities – in positions in the finance area – dealing with claims processing and controllership functions and in the program area in special projects dealing with partner training.

Lunch and Learn:

- Staff in the Thunder Bay office continue to have this service available to them.

Ongoing Job related Training:

- All 21 program staff participated in full program training in February, 2003. This training was prepared for all program staff in preparation for the roll out of the new 2003-2004 OSAP program. As the new program enhancements were rolled out, staff were able to function fully in their duties as the OSAP program came 'on line' with students and our partners.
- Program staff also trained their peers in the Finance area of the Thunder Bay office. The training provided the finance staff the necessary information they needed to understand the various new screen presentations and process enhancements and their interactions with them to process student financial transactions.
- Program staff participate fully in the final User testing of the various OSAP initiatives. Test scenarios are built, and they work closely with the Information Systems staff to identify and resolve any production issues before going live with the process.

- OSAP staff participate in 'Train the Trainer' sessions in the Thunder Bay office each year. This year, with all the changes to OSAP processes, a major retraining of our FAO partners was required. The program area staff, after completing their training in Thunder Bay, in turn visited their public FAO partners in regional training conferences throughout the province in March and April 2003 to ensure a smooth transition with the 2003 program rollout.
- 8 OSAP staff members from programs and information systems areas completed online training from WEB X. This service provider trained OSAP staff in alternative methods of delivering training sessions and information sharing techniques that OSAP would like to use in the future.
- As part of the job related training, 13 staff in the financial area were trained at various levels in the IFIS financial and procurement systems to ensure a smooth rollout and efficient ongoing processing of important financial and purchasing operations of the branch.
- In the Information Systems area, 4 staff have received comprehensive training from industry imaging experts to ensure that OSAP staff have a solid understanding of OSAP's new high speed imaging processes and equipment.
- OSAP recently installed new iSeries computer servers to replace its underpowered equipment and 4 Information Systems staff were trained by IBM specialists to operate new sophisticated computer processes and assist in future branch processing requirements.
- OSAP also received additional and new mail processing equipment this past spring and 6 staff in the Information Systems area were fully trained on this new equipment and additional functionality which allowed staff in this area the capacity to almost double the outgoing mail throughput this year. Additionally, these staff members were also trained to assist in some of the necessary processes in the document production area and using these new skills this year, assisted the branch success in delivering funding and other necessary documents to students and institutions in larger volumes and earlier time frames than ever before.
- Security review processes have been evolving throughout the year and 2 staff members were thoroughly trained by industry specialists in the new advanced security processes and
- 2 Information Systems staff members were trained by industry professionals for OSAP's new Domino processes in the new OSAP computer system in Thunder Bay.

- All staff were trained in the new enhancements to the ICE telephone system which was developed for the OSAP staff in Thunder Bay. These new features allow staff to deal more effectively and efficiently with student callers by integrating the telephone system in the office with the OSAP computer system.
- By working closely with a major business partner, Lansa Canada, Information System staff and some program staff have learned new computer processes and the effective use of new programming tools to effectively deliver the 2003-2004 OSAP program on time. Additionally, Information Systems staff were trained by Lansa specialists in the use of new techniques to maintain OSAP web modules on the web site.
- Additionally, 4 Information System staff regularly make use of web based training information updates from various business partners to keep their skills current e.g. high availability upgrades, operating system enhancements as well as other on-line sessions by industry professionals to keep skills and knowledge current.

Staff are continually being made aware of different training and developmental opportunities through regular staff meetings and casual discussions as well as the performance agreement processes. As always, staff are encouraged to continue to develop their skills to attain their individual career goals, whether they be within or outside of the OPS. To this end, two OSAP staff have arranged leaves of absence to pursue their career goals.

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FOR MERC ACTION

Strategic Action from Local Employee Relations Committee
(to be used when an issue is not resolved at LERC table)

Ministry:

Workplace Location:

Local #:

Please use a Separate Form for Each Unresolved issue.

- ✓ Please include the specific details about the issue.
- ✓ Provide any documentation that may assist the discussion at your Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC).

Is the issue related to (please ✓):

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Job Security and Article 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reasonable Efforts - Divestment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Employer's Corporate Initiative and work re-organization | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Enforcing the Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contract Interpretation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Health and Safety | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: (please identify) | | |

Statement of the Issue:

The Resolution sought by your Local Employee Relations Committee (LERC):

Date Issue was declared unresolved by your LERC:

Is the Relevant material attached? Yes No

LERC Minutes dated:

Correspondence. Please list:

Local ERC Member Contact

Name:

Home #:

Address:

Work #:

**FORWARD to: OPSEU Job Security Unit, 100 Lesmill, Toronto, Ontario M3B 2P8
Fax: (416)448-7462**

