

# New college law brings opportunity, uncertainty

by Randy Robinson

By the time you read this, up to 10,000 part-time support staff at 24 colleges will just be finishing a historic vote.

Nearly as many part-time and sessional faculty may still be waiting for their votes to be counted.

And full-time faculty will still be bargaining a new contract.

They're all college workers. They're all being affected by changes to the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA).

A year ago, the McGuinty government made sweeping changes to the CCBA following a three-year campaign by OPSEU. The new law recognized, for the first time, the right of thousands of part-time college workers to unionize. OPSEU organizing drives led to a certification vote for faculty in January – February of this year, followed by the support staff vote in October.

The results of both are still unknown.

After the faculty vote, the colleges began a concerted campaign at the Ontario Labour Relations Board to stop the vote from being counted.

“It is absolutely outrageous that lawyers paid by a government agency should be raking in \$5,000 or more a day to sabotage legislation brought in by the very same government,” said OPSEU president Warren (Smokey) Thomas. “We will use every tool at our disposal to get both the faculty and the support staff votes counted as soon as possible.”

The new CCBA has caused much uncertainty at the bargaining table, says Ted Montgomery, chair of OPSEU's College Academic bargaining team and a member of the union's Executive Board.

“Under the new legislation, the Colleges Compensation and Appointments Council, which is technically the bargaining agent, has less authority and the individual colleges have more power,” he said. “They have a harder


**“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,” says Candy Lindsay, a part-time support worker at Fleming College in Peterborough and a driving force behind the campaign to organize part-time college support staff across Ontario.**

**“With a union like OPSEU, we'll have a voice.”**



Photo: Jason Crowtz

time getting to a settlement because there are so many colleges — and they have differing opinions about labour relations.”

These days, the only thing certain about college labour relations is that OPSEU will keep fighting for the rights of all college workers — full-time and part-time. 

## CBS reaches a 3-year deal

by Don Ford

After 13 days of bargaining, OPSEU's Canadian Blood Services and Diagnostics bargaining team reached a new collective agreement on Sept. 14, 2009.

Backed by a 98 per cent strike mandate, the team circumvented the employer's concessions and made gains on premium increases, meal allowances and rest periods. Members will also receive wage increases totaling 8.5 per cent over the life of the collective agreement, which runs from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2011.

Congratulations to the bargaining team on a great new deal for CBS members.



**The following photo spread includes images from the 'Perfect Storm' of bargaining which took place across the province in 2008/2009.**

Photos: Jason Crowtz, Rick Janson, Emily Visser, Brian Willer and OPSEU files