



Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

THE SUPPORT REPORT

Ontario College Support Staff Newsletter

January 2013 - Issue #3

Don't risk losing your retirement!

There has been a lot of discussion lately about pensions; their value and their costs. Recently, Tim Hudak decided to share his vision of pensions for the workers of Ontario if he is successful in forming the next government. He says: "government pensions for new employees should be changed to defined contribution plans, where the money, staff and employers pay in determines the level of benefits." Many have been asking what is a defined contribution plan and what do I have now? Those are great questions! If we don't know what we have now, and what we risk losing, we might elect the wrong person to look after our interests.

Currently all full-time support staff, faculty and administrators have a defined benefit pension plan, the CAAT Pension Plan. It is one of the few ways in which all full-time college workers are treated equally. The plan is jointly sponsored between OPSEU, OCASA and Colleges Ontario and the parties work together to provide a defined benefit upon retirement. All of our pension monies are pooled together and invested by experts. Monies are set aside for retirees to guarantee their pensions. Although the investment markets may fluctuate, retired members are guaranteed their pension. This means that if you work in the College and retire, you will receive the benefit promised for as long as you live. If you live until 75 or 85 or 95, the monthly pension cheque will be sent to you. The pension benefit is defined up front and guaranteed.

Some workers in the province are not as fortunate as we are. They instead have a defined contribution pension plan. A defined contribution plan specifies the amount of the employer's annual contribution.

Individual accounts are set up where the employer contributes, the employee contributes and interest accumulates. Only employer contributions to the account are guaranteed, not the future benefits. In defined contribution plans, future benefits fluctuate on the basis of investment earnings. Thousands of people have lost their life savings and their retirement future this way. If you run out of money at 75 or 85 or 95, there will be no cheque in the mail. Employers can also change their mind about how much they are willing to contribute.

We've seen how support staff have received less benefits from the employer than other groups of workers in the college system. We've seen how support staff have received less wage increases than other workers in the college system. Our pension is the one thing where we are all treated equally. If Tim Hudak gets his way and wins the next election, we will be forced to negotiate our pension contributions at the bargaining table. We know that this will put our pensions and the pensions of future support staff workers at risk. Ask yourself: How many of your co-workers are going to be willing to strike to ensure that they get both a wage increase and pension monies with every contract?

Our current plan is a great pension plan. It isn't gold-plated as Tim Hudak would want you and the other citizens of the province to believe. It provides a living wage upon retirement so that support staff can retire and pay their bills. This is one of the issues that you really need to pay attention to when you are electing your next Premier.

Benefits Booklet on the way!

This spring you can expect to see a new booklet explaining what your benefits are. Many of you will be familiar with the old “green” book. The new one promises to be more user-friendly with

easy to understand terms. The Joint Insurance Committee and the Council have been working jointly on this project. Check the OPSEU website this spring for further updates.

Did you know?

Bereavement Leave provides you with three or more days without loss of pay in order to attend or make arrangements for the funeral of your parent, spouse (or common law spouse), child, step-child, brother, sister, mother-in-law,

father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, spouse’s grandparent, grand-child or guardian. The duration of the leave is at the discretion of the College.

Rally for a better Ontario

Ontario Liberals will meet in Toronto Jan 25-27 to choose a new leader and the next Premier.

Be there early in the morning to “greet” delegates as they enter the Convention. Send a strong message: No more privatization fiascos, Restore free collective bargaining for the education sector and a compassionate and prosperous Ontario for everyone



www.opseu.org

Saturday, January 26 • 7 a.m. - 9 a.m. • Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto

THIS NEWSLETTER IS APPROVED FOR DISTRIBUTION BY:

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