



# Negotiations News



Bargaining information for OPSEU members in the CAAT-Academic Division

## Workload, salary, and academic freedom top list of priorities

OPSEU members in the CAAT-Academic bargaining unit have identified workload, salary, and academic freedom as their top three priorities for the upcoming contract negotiations.

✓ Improvements to the workload formula are the top priority. The formula has existed for over 20 years, and while its basic principles still function well, faculty have made it clear that it is past time to update and amend the formula to reflect today's workloads. Changing academic delivery methods and a different student population with different needs and different demands on their teachers necessitate revisions to the times allocated by the formula to perform not only the curriculum delivery aspects of teaching but also the greatly increased time required for out-of-class assistance and lesson preparation.

✓ Salary negotiations are governed by the settlements reached by our established comparator groups – Ontario high school teachers and Ontario full-time university

professors. Fortunately, the teacher salaries have been agreed to provincially. Many universities, especially our closest comparators, have reached agreements. Therefore, we know – and the colleges know – where our salary increases must be. The state of the economy cannot be used as an excuse to suppress our salaries relative to our comparators. The comparators were established by a joint task force 15 years ago, and we will not set them aside nor allow the employer to do so on the basis of economic trends which are not good at the moment but are equally unpredictable.

✓ Hand in hand with workload improvements are demands for contractual rights that reflect the changing nature of the colleges. Colleges are expanding their role in post-secondary education, offering more degree programs and more articulated programs with university partners in and outside Ontario. As

### *Negotiations News* is back!

With our collective agreement expiring just four months from now, preparations are already well under way for the next contract for Ontario college faculty. Union members have set their contract demands and elected a new bargaining team. With contract talks fast approaching, *Negotiations News* is back for another round.

colleges become “institutes of technology” and “polytechnic institutes,” it is important that they adopt the fundamental characteristics and corner-stones of post-secondary education and training – academic freedom for faculty members.

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**Meet your team - page 2**

**Update on Return to Work grievances - page 4**

# Meet your team!

## Ted Montgomery

Once again, Ted Montgomery brings experience to the bargaining table as chair of the faculty team. With four returning members and three new participants the team is a great mix of talent and backgrounds. "This round of bargaining will be different in many ways as the new *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* is used for the very first time," Montgomery says. "There are significant changes from the past and we must be ready to adjust to those changes." Ted has been the president of Local 560 at Seneca College for 23 years and has chaired the past five bargaining teams.

"The greatest challenge this round will be to fulfill the goals of quality education. This will mean winning improvements to the workload system and strengthening the role of faculty as the key decision-makers in the educational decisions of the colleges. We must also ensure that our salary and benefits packages keep pace with our established comparator groups.

"These are our key priorities, but certainly not our only priorities. In these challenging economic times, it is critical that the province invest in an even stronger college system.

"Our past bargaining gains have been the direct result of the support and understanding of our membership. Once again, that support and understanding will lead to significant improvements in our next collective agreement."

## Jeff Arbus

Jeff brings a great amount of experience to his third consecutive bargaining team. He joins this team as vice-chair. Jeff is also the union co-chair of the Academic Joint Insurance Committee. Jeff is in his fifth term as president of Local 613 at Sault College, having been local vice-president for six years prior. Jeff is active on most local committees, and also in the community as a member of the Sault Ste. Marie and District Labour Council.

Jeff teaches in the Child and Youth Worker and the Social Service Worker programs. His main teaching speciality is counselling skills and human relations. He has delivered training internationally in the area of resolving confrontation.

Jeff is known as an organized, articulate communicator, and knows what it takes to get a good contract settlement.

"Strategic planning, doing the homework, and solidarity with the team and with the membership brings results," says Jeff. "Academic contract improvements, especially in the key area of workload, will translate directly into improved quality in the system. The faculty have shown the resolve in the past to bring about solid contract gains. They will again."

Jeff firmly believes that workload gains, elusive in the past, are within reach this time.

## Rod Bain

Rod is new to the bargaining team this year. He is a Professor in the Traditional and Heritage Masonry Program at Algonquin College. Rod is a mason and carpenter by trade. After earning a diploma in Technological Education at Queen's University, Rod began his teaching career at Algonquin College's Perth Campus.

Rod is a steward with his local, where he is a member of the College Employment Stability Committee, a member of the Workload Monitoring Group, and serves as a certified member of the Perth Campus Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

He has always been a forceful and effective advocate and defender of collective agreement rights for all faculty. His determination and tenacity have been invaluable, both as a steward and as a campus organizer for the OPSEU part-time campaign. He looks forward to working with the team to help ensure our members get the collective agreement they deserve.

## Sheila Bell

Sheila is a new face on the bargaining team for this round of negotiations. She is a Durham College professor in the School of Communication, Language and General Studies and teaches a variety of general education subjects to Journalism and General Arts and Science Students.

Sheila has been in the college system for over 30 years, starting at Conestoga College in Kitchener where she was chief steward of the support staff local before moving to Oshawa in 1984. In her 25 years at Durham College she has worked in all three staff groups: support, administration, and academic, serving the last 19 years as a faculty member. During the last 10 years she has become increasingly involved in union activities at Durham College and is currently chief steward of local 354. She is a member of the union/college committee and most recently one of the academic representatives on the Provincial Grievance

Scheduling Committee.

Previous experiences in Organizational Development and Team Building at Durham during the 1990s included providing training to organizations such as the Children's Aid Society, the Durham District School Board, and General Motors in Oshawa and Detroit for career preparation, conflict resolution and team building. Her skills and experience, developed throughout the years, will complement the vast array of skills brought by the other members of this bargaining team.

## **Daniel Bouchard**

This is Daniel's second time on a bargaining team. He began his career at Cambrian College in 1986 as a professor with the School of Justice and Public Security in the French division.

In 1993 he was elected to represent faculty of five colleges (Cambrian, Canadore, Confederation, Northern, and Sault) for the creation of Ontario's second French college, Boréal. In 1995 he transferred from Cambrian to Boréal.

Daniel has been a union activist throughout his 23 years, and has held many positions in the locals as a steward, communication officer, and chief steward.

"In this period of global economic recession, I do believe that education is part of the solution," Daniel says. "Bring back quality!"

## **Benoit Dupuis**

This is Benoit's first time on the negotiating team. He started teaching at St. Lawrence College, Cornwall Campus in 1985 and transferred to La Cité collégiale when the college was created in 1990. Benoit has been a union steward for 19 years and secretary of his local for seven years. He is the union chair on the College Workload Monitoring Group and a member of the College Employment Stability Committee and the Union College Committee.

Benoit is a professor in the Social Service Worker Program, where his teaching specialty is in counselling and case management. Benoit has given training in case management to community organisations.

Benoit has also been a member of the Divisional Executive of the CAAT Academic Division and a member on the provincial Employer/Employee Relations committee. These experiences have honed his problem-solving skills which he is bringing to the bargaining table.

## **Damian Wiechula**

This is Damian's third time on the Academic bargaining team and once again he returns with energy and enthusiasm.

Damian has been teaching mathematics, science and business in the Technology and Business divisions at George Brown College for 28 years. He has been a steward for 23 years and is currently the first vice-president and chief steward for his local.

In addition to being on the College Workload Monitoring Group for 20 years, Damian is also on the Health and Safety Committee and the Union College Committee. Damian is currently the faculty representative on the Pension Sponsor Committee and is on the College Relations Commission Information Service, a joint provincial body that gathers and analyses all workload and staffing data from all 24 colleges.

## **Manzur Malik**

Prior to joining OPSEU, Manzur has worked within the labour movement in various capacities. After the completion of his Masters degree from the University of Dhaka, Manzur joined the Solidarity Centre (the international branch of AFL-CIO) in Bangladesh as a Campaigns Coordinator. There, he worked to improve the labour relations in the garment sector.

While pursuing graduate studies at York University, and working as a Teaching Assistant there, Manzur became increasingly involved with his union. He was elected as a VP and subsequently as the President of his Local – CUPE 3903.

Manzur was also a union organizer and worked on a number of projects across Ontario providing expertise in research, campaigns, and Ontario Labour Relations Board votes. Manzur was an OPSEU member and has been with OPSEU Research Unit since January 2007.

## **Janet Wright**

Janet has been with OPSEU as a negotiator since 1991. Her bargaining experience began 25 years ago as an OPSEU bargaining team member of the Hospital Professionals Division while in the membership.

**Continued on page 4**

## Grievance update:

# Still no resolution to Return to Work grievances from 2006 strike

A number of members have claims outstanding from the additional workload that followed the strike of March 2006. There have been several dates of hearings dealing with preliminary matters all of which were raised by the colleges. Members have asked for an update on these “return-to-work” grievances.

The Board of Arbitration is a three-person board. Those three and the lawyers for both sides continue to canvass dates when they can all be available to meet. The union is frustrated that the Board has not moved faster and we have made that view known to the Board. The union has tried to move things along.

No claims have been heard as yet. Five or six sample claims were presented to the Board through witness testimony. Those teachers gave evidence and were cross-examined, but all of this was strictly in the context of giving the Board a better understanding of the scope and parameters of the issues, not to resolve or rule on those particular claims. Those claims – should this matter proceed one-by-one – would still need to be heard on the merits of the claims themselves.

None of the 1,100 claims that went forward to the arbitration has been settled.

The union will not be abandoning those claims or trading them off unless it is for appropriate compensation for all claimants. There is always the possibility of the

Board or the parties agreeing to a settlement or general award of some sort. If the claims are arbitrated one-by-one it will take decades, so some kind of a more generally-applied settlement makes more sense.

There have not been many updates because there is so little to update. The colleges’ early objections took time and were rejected as the union reported. The sample cases were completed last year. The union has expressed our impatience, but the timing is out of our hands. To pressure the Board would only be counter-productive to the success of the claims.

## Meet your team!

Continued from page 3

As a negotiator, Janet has worked with all sectors in the union and has been involved in numerous central and province-wide negotiations. She joined the CAAT-Academic group in 2006 when she became the department’s bilingual negotiator. Janet believes that joining the team in the last round of bargaining and working with the Academic Division over the last two years have proved invaluable as preparation for bargaining in this time of change.

*Negotiations News* is authorized for distribution by:



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