



January 21, 2010

Honourable John Milloy
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
3rd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Milloy:

I am writing to you to request that you exercise your obligation to ensure that Ontario college workers have the right to fair collective bargaining.

In March 2009, Arbitrator William Kaplan chaired a joint workload task force that examined issues arising from the management dispute that emerged at that time. Among the issues examined were: workload issues, academic freedom and the quality of education. The task force released a unanimously supported report recommending improvements in all these areas. These matters were to be resolved during this round of negotiations.

We are therefore shocked that instead of addressing these issues, the College Appointments and Compensation Council simply imposed changes in the terms and conditions of its employees. We are extremely disappointed that this is the attitude of the employer during the very first round of bargaining conducted under the recently amended *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* (CCBA). The CCBA was amended to expand union rights to part-time college workers, but by also allowing the Council to opt-out of the negotiations process, the amendments seem to have diminished union rights for all.

While OPSEU has a clear mandate for strike action as a result of the January 13 vote, the fair and reasonable course of action is for the employer to address the legitimate issues that have been tabled by the OPSEU CAAT-A bargaining team and that were reflected in the joint workload task force.

The Ontario Federation of Labour shares OPSEU's concern that the erosion of full-time faculty jobs in the public college sector has resulted in significant workload issues for college faculty, who have been working diligently to maintain the quality of their instruction in the face of growing obstacles. Clearly, this issue must be resolved to ensure quality education for the future.

We also know that academic freedom is a central issue affecting the quality of teaching and learning, and that this is a key bargaining issue. Without the freedom for college faculty to teach in an independent manner, how else do we ensure that students receive a broad range of perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills?

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The OFL also supports OPSEU's desire to improve the working conditions of its members in the community college sector. Maintaining and increasing the number of good jobs with decent pay and benefits is not just a concern for college faculty, but for generations of young people in the future.

Ontario is suffering, not only from the devastation of job loss in the manufacturing and forestry sectors, but also from the onslaught of the global economic crisis. Further restraining wages and diminishing the proportion of good jobs relative to the population will only dampen economic recovery in this province, and dim the prospects of young people preparing to enter the labour force.

We are urging you to direct the Colleges Appointments and Compensation Council to bargain in good faith. A contract settlement that is fair to faculty improves the conditions in which students learn. And by preserving and expanding decent jobs throughout our province, we will ensure that our communities work—for everyone.

Yours truly,

Original Signed

Patrick (Sid) Ryan
President

PR/PF/ss/ cope343

cc: Don Sinclair, Executive Director, Colleges Appointments and Compensation Council
Smoky Thomas, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union

