

2011 Bargaining Bulletin



Information for OPSEU members in the CAAT-Support Division

Issue #1, May 10, 2011

A new round of bargaining begins



It doesn't seem that long ago that we completed our last round of negotiations. But here we are about to start our next round of bargaining. Your new bargaining team was elected in the autumn of 2010 and your final demands were brought forward in February. Since then your team has been working hard on strategy and developing our contract exchange document.

You would think by now this process would be simple considering there is only one new member on the team; four members are now on their second term, and two members (myself included), are entering their fifth round of bargaining. However, almost immediately after we completed our last round of bargaining in 2008 the government changed the rules that govern how we bargain.

Under the old rules we would have, by now, been almost halfway through negotiations. We would have

given notice to bargain in January, met in February or March and exchanged demands. We would have met at least once by now to discuss demands with the Colleges and we would have distributed several newsletters to you.

The new rules specify that we can give notice to bargain no earlier than 90 days before the expiry of our current agreement. That makes the first date we can exchange proposals June 3. We will be exchanging proposals on June 7.

To ensure the teams can get a deal by Sept. 1, we have set aside the same number of days for bargaining this round as we have in the past, which is approximately 20 days over the period of June until August 31. In this period of three months we will be doing what has previously taken eight months to complete.

For us to be successful in this round of bargaining we need to overcome several issues, including: the obstacles that the government has legislated in the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*; the shift in the employer's bargaining team's way of thinking and the obstacles they will most certainly put in our way; and, finally, the fact that the decision-makers on their side of the table – College management – are one more step removed from the process.

We can and will overcome these obstacles but we will need your full support. We must present a united front to overcome the biases contained within the legislation that we bargain under, and fight off concessions that the colleges will most assuredly place on the table in front of us.

In 2010 we saw how College management “negotiated” with our brothers and sisters CAAT-Academic. They imposed terms and conditions of work and forced a vote. Your team is determined that terms and conditions are not imposed on you by working to having a new Collective Agreement in place by the Sept. 1 deadline. Otherwise, job actions may be taken.

If we go past Sept.1 then management can unilaterally impose the terms and conditions under which you work. From what we witnessed during the CAAT-

A negotiations, management won't hesitate to take that action.

The Colleges will use any tactic they can to intimidate you and your bargaining team. They will hinder the negotiating process. They will keep you in the dark by limiting the information they share. They will make statements that misrepresent their position and are meant to confuse issues. Always remember this: management does not work for you.

I pledge that your bargaining team will work hard on your behalf and to keep the membership thoroughly informed with the facts. We will be quick to inform you when the Colleges choose to misrepresent the facts.

We will make the decisions and take the actions necessary to get you a fair Collective Agreement. You can count on your team to do what needs to be done and that is to negotiate a fair Collective Agreement. As always, we are counting on your support.

In solidarity,

Rod Bemister,
Chair, CAAT-S Bargaining Team

Read our new Q&A!

For more information on this round of CAAT-Support bargaining, read our new Q&A. It's online at www.opseu.org/caat/caat_sup/bargaining2011/qanda.htm .



Meet your team!

Rod Bemister, Chair



Rod has worked at Seneca College since 1988, first as a security guard until they were contracted out in 1998. Since then he has worked as a technician in the English Language Institute. A CAAT-S steward since 1990, Rod has served as president of his local – the largest support staff in the college system – for six years and vice-president for 10 years. He was vice-chair of the bargaining team in 2003 and chair of the team in 2005 and 2008. Rod was chair of the Employee/Employer Relations Committee (EERC) from 2003 until 2010 and has served two terms on the divisional executive. This past March Rod was elected to OPSEU's Executive Board for Region 5. Rod believes that this round of bargaining will be a particularly different one and is looking forward to the challenges it will bring.

Florry Foster, Vice-Chair



Florry has been working at St. Clair College since 1999 as a chemical engineer technologist. She became active in her local in 2000 serving as trustee, 2nd vice-president, 1st vice-president and finally as president for the past four years. She's been active in health and safety and co-facilitates her regional educational as a worker health and safety instructor. Florry served a term as vice-chair of EERC and in 2010 was elected as chair. She also served one term as vice chair to the divisional executive and now serves as chair. She bargained a variety of collective agreements as an OPSEU Member Development Trainee (MDT) in 2006. As the president of a composite local she's bargained three collective agreements for her members. This is her second round of bargaining on the CAAT support team and she looks forward to the experience and opportunity to serve the membership.

Richard Belleau



Richard has been employed at Confederation College as a skilled trades worker for 21 years. He was chief steward for six years and has been the local president for 15 years. Richard served on the divisional executive for 11 years and brings additional experience from the grievance scheduling committee as co-chair for five years, joint classification committee chair for 11 years and a member of the EERC for five years. He also served on the classification review committee for six years. Fluently bilingual, Richard is presently on the resolutions committee for a second term. Prior to his involvement with OPSEU Richard was an activist with the Brotherhood of Railway Airlines and Steamship Clerks. He's been actively involved in health and safety and this will be Richard's fifth consecutive term on the bargaining team. He is looking forward to representing the membership at the table.

Rasho Donchev



Rasho has been working for Centennial College since 2004 and became active in his local in 2005. He now serves as vice-president of his local as well as a classification grievance officer. He was elected as vice-chair on the EERC in 2010 and currently sits on the divisional executive committee servicing the membership. Rasho was also elected at his regional meeting as Region 5 hardship committee vice-chair since 2009. This is his second round of bargaining. Rasho is our first youth member on the team and brings a fresh perspective to bargaining.

Christine Legault



Christine has been a support staff member with George Brown College, Local 557, since 1983. She has held several different officer positions at the local including classification steward, chief steward (currently in her second term) and 2nd VP. In 2005, she was elected to the CAAT-S bargaining team for the first time and was also vice-chair of the 2005 team. This will be her second time on the bargaining team. Prior to that she served on the provincial joint classification committee. From 2005 to 2008 she was also an elected member of the provincial EERC. As an MDT in 2006 with the grievance department at OPSEU, she became more familiar with different types of issues faced by OPS, BPS, and CAAT-Academic members. Christine is committed to fighting the corporate agenda found inside the Colleges and to ensuring we get a fair and reasonable contract.

Fred Oliver



Fred works at Sheridan College in marketing and communications and serves his OPSEU Local 245 as VP communications. He is a project leader, web developer/designer and a photographer. In the last round of bargaining he served as a member of his local's mobilization team acting as communications officer and conducted a successful media/communications campaign. He has attended Convention and regional and educational meetings, as well as attending picket captain training during the last round of bargaining. He was elected in 2011 as an alternate for the divisional executive. Fred is the newest member of the CAAT-S bargaining team. What he lacks in experience he makes up in determination and a strong sense of justice. He looks forward to learning from, and contributing to, his fellow seasoned team members.

Marg Rae



Marg has worked as a computer technologist at Fanshawe for 10 years. She was chief steward at her local and is now the local president. Marg has been active within her local for nine years. Marg also sits on the union/college committee and the employment stability committee at Fanshawe. She was elected to the provincial EERC in 2005, 2008 and 2011. This is Marg's third round of negotiations and her experience will serve us well. She looks forward to representing the members and knows we will have to work closely to achieve the best outcome.

Michael Culkeen, OPSEU Negotiator



Michael started his career in 1974 with the Ministry of Correctional Services as a casual correctional officer at Sault Ste. Marie jail. He moved to a full-time position at Peterborough jail in 1976. Michael became a local steward and health and safety committee representative in 1979 and was elected local president in 1983. Michael served as an MDT at the Peterborough regional office from 1990-1992. Michael was elected to the OPSEU Executive Board in 1993 and served one term. In 2006 Michael was made acting staff representative at the Peterborough regional office and came to OPSEU head office in 2008 in a full-time position as a negotiator.

Contact your team!

If you have any questions at all about bargaining, feel free to e-mail your team at any time. Our address is bargaining@rogers.com.

Please post and circulate.

This publication is authorized for distribution by:
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Everyone
needs
support.

