

#Bargaining for *Better*

NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN

Message from the President and First Vice-President Treasurer

Getting down to brass tacks

After first meeting with the College Employer Council in early July, CAAT-A bargaining resumed with the employer for three more days this week. The team laid out faculty members' comprehensive list of ranked demands established at our April demand set meeting. Key issues focussed on workload, staffing, equity, professionalism, and fairness for all faculty.

These proposals will not only benefit the hundreds of thousands of students who rely on our colleges for their future but also spur the province's economic recovery.

College faculty are the frontline professionals who assess students' needs every single day. You know what's working, what's not working, and what can be done to fix it. Without taking your input seriously, effective and lasting reform is not possible.

Finally, every OPSEU member shares your concern regarding the necessity for ongoing structural change to remove barriers for Black, Indigenous and other racialized faculty. We are proud to say that OPSEU has led the way in work that permanently breaks down systemic barriers. It's vital that our students see their colleges as model principles of equity and dignity, so not only will they know what they can and should expect from their potential employers but also commit themselves as allies, now and in the future.

We wish the team well when bargaining resumes on August 10 and stand ready to offer the full support of a 180,000 strong union moving forward.

In solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
OPSEU/SEFPO President



Eduardo (Eddy) Almeida,
OPSEU/SEFPO
First Vice-President/Treasurer

Message from your bargaining team

On August 5, the bargaining team for full-time and partial-load college faculty completed a scheduled three days of bargaining with the College Employer Council. During these days, the bargaining team presented all demands not related to issues of compensation.

The following are highlights from the major proposals presented by the faculty bargaining team. You may read our complete proposals [here](#).

Workload

provide faculty an extra two hours weekly on the SWF for supporting students with accommodations

- provide SWFs for partial-load faculty members to measure their entire workloads
- increase time attributed for preparation in general and recognition of the additional preparation associated with online teaching modes, including hybrid and hy-flex
- increase time attributed for grading “essay or project”-type evaluations
- create recorded workload assignments for counsellors and librarians

Staffing

- establish that 50 per cent of faculty complement at each college will be full-time positions in 2023 and 70 per cent will be full-time in 2026
- require partial-load contracts to be for a minimum of one year
- establish minimum numbers of counsellors and librarians based on student numbers
- end outsourcing and contracting-out of faculty work
- improve pathways to full-time jobs and service credits for partial-load faculty
- make partial-load registry transparent to faculty and locals, and include all courses taught, regardless of contract status

Equity

- form committees to i) review employment and workplace policies, address systemic discrimination and recommend structural changes; and ii) review compensation to ensure equitable compensation for all faculty
- create alternative dispute resolution processes respecting Indigenous cultures and practices
- implement workload practices that honour the work associated with decolonization, Indigenization and reconciliation by Indigenous faculty

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- strengthen language around bullying, harassment and discrimination, as well as return-to-work and accommodation language

Professionalism

- permit faculty members to work outside the college without manager permission
- clarify that academic freedom includes control over course content, evaluations and grading
- clarify that faculty own their work produced in the course of employment
- updating the class definition of counsellor
- establish academic councils at each college to permit elected faculty representatives to advise the Board of Governors on all academic issues at the colleges

The team has not yet presented demands related to compensation, as the employer's bargaining team has yet to disclose the information related to the colleges' finances we requested in our Notice to Bargain. We have been assured that we will receive this information shortly.

The two teams will be returning to the negotiating table on August 10, at which time we expect the employer to respond to our proposals. We look forward to ongoing discussions about how we can work together to build a better college system for both students and faculty.



Workload



Staffing



Equity



Professionalism



Fairness

Bargaining for better: faculty's vision for a future together

Below is the full text of our opening presentation for the faculty proposals to the College Employer Council:

Overall context for union proposals

We'd like to begin by saying thank you for sharing your opening remarks, eight stated goals, and contextualizing comments with us in early July. These were helpful in establishing where we have shared concerns and for clarifying that you "are looking forward to the opportunity to explore with [us] issues that are relevant to the faculty collective agreement, and to co-create solutions that will unite us and prepare us for a future together."

This, as reinforced by your bargaining tagline, "A Future Together", speaks directly to the top concerns faculty have raised over the course of the past few years around having a meaningful voice in academic decision-making at the colleges. Building a future together must involve faculty being consulted in a structured and meaningful manner in relation to our classrooms, libraries, labs and counselling sessions – as field experts and academic leaders. Through our research and discussion with our members and others in postsecondary organizations, we know how this can be done in a way that strengthens the Ontario college system, builds on existing structures and legislation, and creates space for diverse voices to participate equitably. You'll hear more about our approach when we

discuss our proposals for shared governance, intellectual property and academic freedom.

Similarly, we share your stated goal of working together "to provide students with stability, flexibility, and high-quality education." As we discussed in our first days at the table, the pandemic has exponentially accelerated the adoption of online educational tools and required a massive effort from faculty in creating and revising curriculum and content, reframing pedagogical approaches, learning new technologies, and adapting student supports. What has become perfectly clear over the past 18 months is that this will be ongoing work, and that our students' needs for additional mental health and educational supports will be similarly ongoing. It will also require our members to continuously upgrade their knowledge and review their curricula and pedagogy, to adapt to imposed changes, such as microcredentials and multiple modes of delivery in our classrooms. Our team has listened to, and worked with, our faculty to develop language that reflects these changing student and institutional needs, and ensure that we are able to best respond to them. Our proposed language on online learning, workload, class definitions and co-ordinator duties outlines a clear path to recognizing and addressing these changes to postsecondary teaching and learning environments.

We agree that stability is essential to student success and for maintaining the reputation of Ontario's college system. It is also crucial to the economic recovery of our province, as good jobs provide the foundation for economic and social growth post-pandemic. While some flexibility is necessary in any system, high-quality education is best achieved and ensured in the long term through a stable, ongoing complement of faculty. As recent analyses of the so-called gig or flexible economy have shown, the social and economic costs of high levels of precarity in the labour market far outstrip any short-term benefits. In addition, colleges attract students who are looking for good, stable, full-time jobs, and colleges have a responsibility, as employers, to provide them as well. Any expansion of flexibility in the ways in which courses and programs are offered must be counterbalanced with the stability students need through dedicated, full-time faculty. Our system is significantly out of balance in terms of the number of contract faculty compared to full-time faculty. Both sides recognized this as a key issue in 2017 and were making progress to addressing this on the Provincial Task Force before it was cancelled by the Ford government. In this round of negotiations, we have incorporated language to address staffing ratios, partial-load faculty job security and workload, minimum complements of counsellors and librarians, and prevention of contracting-out.

No true improvements to our system can be achieved without addressing issues of equity and addressing the specific barriers faced by Indigenous and racialized faculty. We were pleased to learn that one of your eight goals is that the "current collective agreement must be reviewed with the intention of beginning to collectively identify and address language and process issues which contribute to barriers to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive

workplace." We agree beginning this long-overdue process in this round is a central goal and would add that this needs to be done at a structural level and cannot be limited to "updat[ing] language and identify[ing] priorities to support Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion", as suggested in your non-monetary proposals document dated July 8, 2021. With that in mind, we are proposing comprehensive language to both identify and address structural barriers in hiring, employment, workload and compensation, as well as mechanisms to ensure these are ongoing and measurable efforts. Your stated commitment to "EDI" indicates a welcome willingness among your institutions to incorporate changes that reflect the value and contributions of all faculty, the importance of these changes for students, and for enacting measures that reflect best practices around decolonization, equity and diversity.

We noted that many of your stated goals referred to fiscal constraints, provincial funding concerns and faculty salaries. Our members are extremely aware of the chronic underfunding of the public college system, the legislative restraints imposed by Bill 124, and the current economic landscape. We are also aware of the massive layoffs faced by part-time support staff, many of whom are students, the non-renewal of contract faculty, and the decisions by many colleges to contract out faculty work and engage in partnerships with private curriculum developers and private colleges that target international students. We have noted, as well, that there has not been a corollary decrease in administrative staff, and that the vast majority of managerial positions are both full-time and have been eligible for salary and other monetary increases beyond the one per cent both before and during Bill 124 and the pandemic. You will find our salary and benefits proposals address the current

economic and legislative context in the colleges, and leave room to revisit them, as needed. They are in keeping with negotiated and accepted proposals in the postsecondary and public sectors.

Finally, it was interesting to us that you mentioned the Reg Pearson report, given that both the chair of this team and the chair of the CAAT-A Division were interviewed as part of that investigation. The report has not been made public, making it difficult to review your interpretation of the contents. What we recall clearly, however, is that Mr. Pearson made reference to the College Employer Council's apparent preference for bargaining through arbitration, rather than at the table. In addition, Mr. Pearson did not state in the report that it was the faculty who seemed to presume that any breakdown in negotiations that led to labour disruption would be settled through government intervention, but that this was a significant problem in labour relations in our sector. He was also clear that the EERC was not functioning effectively, despite your claims to the contrary. As a result, he suggested, conditions were not optimal for either side to bargain at the table with an eye towards finding common ground.

Our strength at the table lies in knowing and reflecting the expertise and will of our membership. The proposed language you will hear about in the coming days represents exactly that. We present it to you in the spirit of goodwill and in an attempt to restore to the college system the harmony, equity and mutual respect that are preconditions to building a better future together.

In solidarity,

JP Hornick, Local 556 (George Brown) – chair

Jonathan Singer, Local 560 (Seneca) – vice-chair

Michelle Arbour, Local 125 (Lambton)

Ravi Ramkissoonsingh, Local 242 (Niagara)

Kathleen Flynn, Local 354 (Durham)

Shawn Pentecost, Local 415 (Algonquin)

Rebecca Ward, Local 732 (Confederation)

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Authorized for distribution by:



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