

Council / Conseil

College Compensation and Appointments Council
Conseil de la rémunération et des nominations dans les collèges

December 15, 2008

To: Part-Time Academic and Sessional Employees

I am writing to inform you, on behalf of the College Compensation and Appointments Council (The Council), that OPSEU has filed an application with the Ontario Labour Relations Board on Dec. 2 to certify part-time and sessional employees at all of the Colleges in Ontario. The Council is constituted to centrally negotiate labour agreements for the Colleges.

It is expected a secret ballot vote will be held beginning in January. You are one of the employees OPSEU is seeking to represent.

As a possible member of the bargaining unit there are some important issues to consider.

1. Regardless of how many people vote, all part-time and sessional employees will become OPSEU members if more than 50 per cent of the people who cast votes support the union. Depending on the vote turnout, a relatively small number of people could make the decision for everyone. For example, there are approximately 10,000 employees in the proposed bargaining unit. If only 1,000 of those employees come out to vote and more than 500 vote in favour of the union, the union will represent the entire 10,000 employees.
2. Even if you did not previously sign a union card, you are eligible to vote. Indeed, it is important for all employees to vote, to ensure the final result reflects the wishes of employees.
3. If you have previously signed a union card, you may still choose to vote against the unionizing of your workplace. The vote is a secret ballot and no one will know how you voted.
4. When employees are represented by a union, the employment relationship is fundamentally altered. An employee's terms of employment are governed by the collective agreement between the union and the employer. The employer is no longer able to deal directly with the employee when determining such things as hours of work or wages. A collective agreement generally reduces the level of flexibility an employer has to fashion terms of employment to meet the specific needs of an individual employee or its operations.
5. A union funds its operations by collecting dues from employees. Generally a union collects dues from all employees in the bargaining unit, regardless of whether the employee is actually a member or not. OPSEU's current dues structure requires an employee to pay approximately \$100 per semester. It is estimated that if the union is successful in this application, it will annually receive approximately \$2 million in union dues from college part-time and sessional employees.

This vote is important. We would urge you to obtain as much information as possible concerning the issues so that you can make an informed decision.

We will strive to continue to provide you with information about the union's application and the vote, including the dates and times once that has been confirmed. Please be certain to check your email regularly during the next few weeks. As well, you may wish to check the Council's website, www.thecouncil.on.ca, for more information. For general information on the pros and cons of unionizing, you may wish to look at www.labourwatch.com.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Human Resources Director at your college.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Don Sinclair', written in a cursive style.

Don Sinclair
Executive Director
College Compensation and Appointments Council