

Council Conseil

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

January 9, 2009

To: Part-Time Academic and Sessional Employees

I am writing to you to provide a further update on the Ontario Public Service Employees Union's (OPSEU) application to unionize part-time and sessional faculty at the colleges. I am the Executive Director of the College Compensation and Appointments Council. The Council is responsible for negotiating collective agreements on behalf of the colleges. This is the third letter the Council has sent to you on this matter. Our earlier letters can be found on the Council's website at www.thecouncil.on.ca.

Vote Scheduled

The Ontario Labour Relations Board has scheduled a secret ballot vote on OPSEU's application to represent part-time and sessional academic employees. The vote commences on Monday, January 19, 2009 at Algonquin and St. Lawrence Colleges and ends on Thursday, February 5, 2009 at George Brown College. You may exercise your right to vote at any college on the day the vote is held at that location. The voting schedule has been posted at your college. In addition, we have posted the full voting schedule on the Council's website at www.thecouncil.on.ca. Please review it to ensure you are aware of the options you have to exercise your voting rights on this important matter.

You Get to Decide

You will be asked to decide whether you wish to give OPSEU the right to represent you in your future relationship with the college. The union wants you to join their union. You need to decide whether you want to or not. That's up to you. Our role is to provide you with information you may find helpful in making this important decision.

Wages

Currently, Ontario college employees are among the best paid in the country. This is despite the fact Ontario colleges receive the lowest per-student revenues in Canada.

A union, when attempting to recruit new members, promises to increase wages. In reality, a union can't really promise increased wages. Wages are negotiated with the employer. The outcome of negotiations is dependent on what the employer can pay, its financial situation and how its current rates fit within the marketplace.

The current economic climate in Ontario is challenging for all sectors and in particular, difficult for the colleges. Without improved funding, it will be difficult for colleges to offer significant wage increases to employees. Nothing the government has said to date makes us optimistic that colleges will obtain improved funding in the near future.

Your Relationship with the College

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.

The Role of Part-Time and Sessional Faculty

You may be surprised to learn that when OPSEU bargains the collective agreement for full-time faculty, it consistently attempts to restrict the colleges' ability to hire part-time and sessional employees. The colleges have always resisted OPSEU's attempts to restrict the use of part-time staff and sessional employees because we view your roles as critical to the success of our academic programs. We value the expertise and experience that part-time faculty and sessional employees bring to college education and training.

Before deciding how to vote, you may wish to ask OPSEU how it intends to reconcile its opposition to the hiring of part-time employees at colleges with its plans to represent part-time faculty in bargaining.

Union Dues

OPSEU 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 receive approximately \$2 million annually in union dues from college part-time and sessional employees. You may wish to consider whether the union will provide appropriate value for this employee contribution.

Every Vote is Important

Whether you choose to join a union or not is up to you. But it is important that you vote. Every employee affected by this issue should have the right to be heard.

Sincerely,



Don Sinclair
Executive Director
College Compensation and Appointments Council