

President's Message June 2014: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*



You may recall a story we ran in the March 2013 issue of *The Educator* "**WMG under Attack.**" Fanshawe management had reduced the number of meetings and the hours allowed for the committee members to do their work. As we wrote at the time, the committee's ability to do its work and look out for members was severely compromised.

I'm pleased to report that there is a settlement and the issues around the Workload Monitoring Group (WMG) are resolved.

As with any settlement, there was give and take. We didn't get everything we wanted but overall we're happy with the outcome. One should never be afraid of principled compromises.

However, in order to get there, we had to be prepared for "battle." We spent some money to purchase release time for the WMG committee members. We filed grievances. We had to go to Workload Resolution Arbitration for two members of the committee. We had positive outcomes but we had to fight to get there.

OK, arbitration is not a "battle" but by definition it is a confrontational process. You need to gather the facts and have your arguments ready if you're going to defend your position. And you

take that position as a union so that you can defend and protect the rights of your members.

If a union has any hope of avoiding arbitration, it is important to prepare for arbitration. Your "opponent" is only going to be hesitant to go to arbitration if they believe you are ready. If they see you as weak, they may be tempted to steer every dispute to arbitration.

When it comes to these processes it is not about "winning" or "losing." It is not about management being the "bad guys" either. Dialog and cooperation are great. We hope that happens.

But no matter what, it all comes down to the work of the union: protecting the rights of our members. It requires hard work. We do this work as local officers, committee members, and stewards because we care. We care about quality education. We care about students. We care about our members.

Bargaining is no different. As I write this column, provincial collective bargaining with the College Employer Council is beginning.

We need to be prepared for anything and everything that could happen in bargaining. When I say "we" that includes **you**! All of us as faculty members need to be ready. That may be as simple as reading newsletters such as this one, and staying informed. Know the issues. Stay engaged.

Some you may be thinking "but, I don't want there to be a strike." As with arbitration, only a high level of preparedness can avert disaster. We are here to bargain a collective agreement. Your Bargaining Team doesn't want there to be a strike either.

However, we have to be prepared should talks break down. Your Local has a significant contingency fund to be used in the event of a lockout or strike.

The bottom line is this: If we aren't prepared to stand behind our bargaining team, the eventual outcome is not in doubt. Our members will see "takeaways" in their working conditions. The Council will see to it.

Should there be a strike vote, it will be important to send a strong message. A solid majority on a strike vote sends the message that we as faculty are ready and willing to support our Bargaining Team.

The collective bargaining process, although not perfect, is the only major tool we have available to stand up for what we believe in as college faculty. It's the tool by which we can support quality education and gain academic freedom. It's about supporting our colleagues through improved job security.

There will be a vote of some kind during bargaining. We just don't know what type of vote it will be: a strike vote? Or a ratification vote? Or will there be a forced vote on the employer's last offer?

It will be important for you to monitor your private e-mail account as August winds down and the deadlines near. Our job is to provide the information you need to make wise choices, no matter what direction collective bargaining takes this summer.

I'm prepared. The Bargaining Team is prepared. Your local officers are prepared. So... can we count on **you**?

Darryl Bedford

IN THIS ISSUE



I have taken over the editorship of **The Educator** from Jennifer Boswell who did so much to make it one of the best newsletters in Onatrio. I hope to continue this tradition with the contributions of our members in Local 110.

Whitney Hoth

<i>President's Message</i>	Page 1
<i>The Plight of Part-Time Workers</i>	Page 2
<i>Brace for Bargaining</i>	Page 2
<i>What Are You Doing After Work?</i>	Page 3
<i>Hudak and the Union Conservative</i>	Page 4
<i>Marx Speaks French</i>	Page 5-6
<i>A Voice for Contract Faculty</i>	Page 6-7
<i>In Defense of Online Education</i>	Page 8
<i>Bike to Work</i>	Page 9
<i>The Case against Multiple Choice Testing</i>	Page 10
<i>Bargaining Chart</i>	Page 11
<i>OPSEU Chart</i>	Page 12

The Plight of Part-Time Workers in the Colleges

Some people welcome part-time work because it suits their needs or preferences. Part-time faculty hiring is sometimes appropriate for specific functions at the college, and the Collective Agreement recognizes this. However, part-time employment is precarious and unprotected relative to the work of full-time and partial-load faculty.

OPSEU attempted to organize the 20,000 part-time workers in the college system in 2010 but failed. Currently, part-time workers lack union protections enjoyed by their full-time and partial-load colleagues.

We have not forgotten our part-time colleagues, and OPSEU has resolved to try again to extend union benefits to part-time faculty. Part-time workers need protection, too, and if we are able to secure them some of the rights and benefits of their full-time and partial-load peers, we may see an increase in full-time and partial-load hires.

We hope to reform an employment caste system that denies part-time faculty the rights and advantages enjoyed by others doing the same work.

Brace for Bargaining

We are in a bargaining year, and bargaining always means the possibility of a strike. It is reasonable to anticipate one and begin planning. Faculty should start thinking about how to manage on reduced income for about a month. We all receive strike pay, and it helps, but it's only fractional relative to salaries, and saving in advance is sensible. We have no insight now into the probability of a strike this year. In the 40 year history of college collective bargaining, we have had only 3 strikes, and each of them was resolved within 3 weeks.

The structure of collective bargaining provides many incentives for the parties involved to achieve a negotiated settlement. That's why the process works, but it can only work because the possibility of a strike is always present to help everyone concentrate on negotiated compromise. Striking is a last resort, and we hope for a negotiated settlement. If we do strike, it will be because our union bargaining team could not secure a negotiated compromise consistent with their obligation to protect the rights and interests of the membership. Sometimes, regrettably, a strike is necessary.

Key concerns in bargaining this year include such issues as privatization, academic freedom, online deliveries, hiring, and wages. Each of these is important, and some are vital. We have recently seen in the proposed Trios/Fanshawe partnership just how important and pressing the threat of privatization has become in the college system. Our college rejected this privatization scheme, but there will be other such proposals here or elsewhere in the college system unless we secure contractual guarantees restricting them. Your bargaining team is working to achieve this. In doing so, the bargaining team promotes both job security and the integrity of public education. Member interest in this case also serves the public interest.

Yes, the perennial issue of a wage increase is on the table again. Some members feel this issue is less urgent than issues related to working conditions, professional integrity, and job security. However, we all continue to see the ongoing concentration of wealth at the top in Canada. We regularly hear about enormous salaries and bonuses paid out to financial managers and corporate executives, only less extreme than those raked up in the United States. Inflation does not stop for teachers, and clearly the inflationary forces stoked by financial riot at the top have to be offset somehow. Wage increases generally mean we hold steady relative to cost-of-living. Our salaries have remained competitive, but it would not take too many years of no or inadequate increases to bring us suddenly down.

The bargaining process is complicated. We have provided a chart on page 11 of this issue showing the sequence and steps. As bargaining proceeds, we will provide our membership with regular updates.

What Are You Doing after Work? Being Retirement Ready

I am still not sure how they got my email address. Perhaps it was my guardian angel.

In the midst of all the chaos, fear of the unknown and the bureaucratic jungles that came with preparing for my retirement, there came an invitation to join a day-and-a-half course offered on the weekend by local volunteers from **CURC**, the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada. Right from the beginning it was a combination of "down home" hospitality and hard-nosed facts.

I soon realized there would be more than just showing up. Once I had confirmed my attendance (Oh by the way did I mention it was free?) one of the three facilitators, Elaine McMurray sent me homework to do. If I was to get the most out of the workshop, then I needed to collect some information, such as my latest CAAT pension statement, my present monthly expenses, and my estimated monthly expenses once I retired.

The learning objectives were designed by those who had walked this path before me and who knew how I was feeling and what I needed to know:

- Have a general knowledge of the range of issues to be considered in planning retirement.
- Have a set of major goals for retirement, in consultation with a spouse or partner where there is one. (Oh did I mention your spouse or partner could attend for free as well?)
- Know what questions to ask to gain the knowledge needed to pursue the goals set. (This was so helpful when I met with HR, my financial advisor and when I went looking for the best fitting health care benefit plan.)



- Know where to seek the answer to questions. (Now I have a very valuable and long list of people, places, phone numbers, emails and web sites that will help me through the coming jungles.)

All these objectives were achieved and with flying colours.

Our course agenda also included sections on Finances:

1. Income from workplace pension plans, from the government (OAS and CPP) and paid work.
2. How to calculate our "net worth" by having us review our assets, liabilities and tax breaks and credits for retirees.
3. How to calculate our retirement income, our retirement expenses (Glad I did my homework) and elder financial abuse.

And we learned about so much more. Through presentations, group work and lively discussions we covered life retirement goals, issues for women in retirement, changes in our personal and working relationships, activities and leisure time, our emotional and mental health, elder abuse, legal planning (including powers of attorney and wills), and grappling with the question of our changing

identity and who we would be in retirement and beyond.

Each participant received a treasure in the form of a "participant manual," a true survival guide covering each topic in depth (no charge!).

What I cannot show you on paper is the energy, the devotion, expertise and the compassion of our three facilitators. Perhaps I can give an example. On our first day, a few questions were raised that the facilitators did not feel they had the expertise to answer correctly. They created a "parking lot" list of these questions. When we arrived the second day, there were handouts waiting for us with the answers. After a long first day these amazing volunteers went home, called lawyers, researched web sites and even consulted with union presidents to bring us the answers.

I am most grateful to our three volunteer facilitators Elaine McMurray CUPW retiree, Mary Ellen McDermott CUPW retiree, and Heather McMichael OPSEU retiree and to the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada who make these workshops possible. It was a "no brainer" for me to decide to join CURC. No, membership is not free but a bargain at \$20.00 per year.

If you are looking to help yourself and others plan for retirement then please consider what CURC has to offer. The web site for CURC, Congress of Union Retirees of Canada is www.unionretirees.ca.

Anita O'Keefe, M. Ed., CCC, RSW,
Counsellor and Counselling
Coordinator
Counselling and Accessibility
Services



Hudak and the Union Conservative

Approximately 25 to 30 percent of Ontarians routinely identify themselves as Conservatives in voter polls. It is reasonable to assume a similar percentage may exist among members of OPSEU. There is nothing inherently contradictory about being both a Conservative and a union supporter.

One of the principal tenets of conservatism is individual responsibility for prudential management of income and capital. Conservative economists since Adam Smith have celebrated the 'rational agent' acting in accordance with principles of enlightened self-interest.

If you are a union member and derive the advantages of competitive salaries, health benefits, and a secure pension from your membership, it is consistent with conservative principles of enlightened self-interest and individual responsibility to protect them.

Some free-market purists might suggest unions are a drag on the entirely unfettered dynamism of market forces, but that argument was also made against child labor laws and the Ten Hours Bill. That variety of free-market extremism has generally been rejected, at least in North America. Most moderate economists now accept that unions are one of many legitimate checks on market action.

All this brings us to Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC he currently represents.

Hudak has been a vocal proponent of Right-to-Work legislation. He has since backed away from this position, reportedly at the urging of his own party, but the genie is out of the bottle.

Right-to-Work laws are American-style root-and-branch anti-union legislation designed to undermine existing unions and discourage new ones. It is radical and divisive proposal.

Right-to-Work laws allow individual workers to opt out of union dues while still receiving the benefits of union representation. That approach evidently violated Canadians' traditional sense of fairness, and a compromise between workers' choice and union rights now operates in Ontario known as the Rand Formula (1946), which requires workers who receive the benefits of representation to pay for it.

Hudak proposes to scrap Rand and substitute punitive labor laws which originated in the southern United States. It is no accident that anti-union legislation is most firmly established in the one-time Confederacy. The contemporary understanding of Right-To-Work is customarily attributed to one William Ruggles of Dallas, Texas. Canadians sometimes show sympathy for American political and legal practice, but they have not ordinarily shown great enthusiasm for emulating Texas. Right-to-Work has only gained ground in a few Northern states where union membership was already weakened.

Even in the United States, Right-to-Work is recognized as ideological extremism, which is something Canadians generally avoid, including Canadian conservatives prior to the advent of the hard-right PC.

Challenging unions is one thing, but a deliberate legislative attempt to

destroy them is something else. That is what Right-to-Work amounts to, and although Hudak has since backed away from the phrase, he has shown his hand and revealed a penchant for radical and reckless legislation.

The Progressive Conservatives under Hudak have also confirmed their intention to assign all new public sector workers to a new Defined Contribution (DC) pension plan instead of the current Defined Benefit (DB) plan.

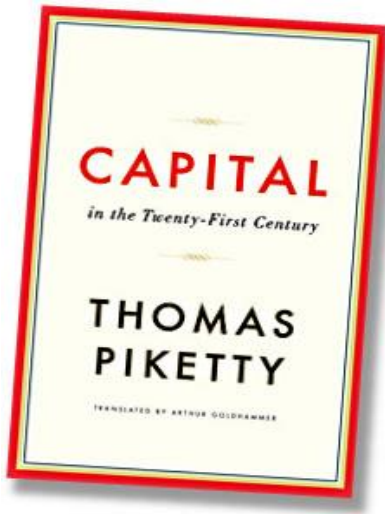
This forced change would not only deny new hires the substantial advantages of our defined benefit plan, it would also undermine the stability of our existing plan by cutting off the flow of new entrants – another radical and reckless proposal.

Hudak is no conservative, at least as Canadians have traditionally understood the term. On labor issues, he is less a Tory than a Tea-Party Republican. The Conservative Party that had room for Red Tories like Bill Davis is not The Conservative Party under Hudak that now looks to Republicans in the United States for positions on labor and taxation. On labor and pension issues, Hudak is a dangerous radical.

Union members do sometimes vote Conservative, and there are conservative issues and policies quite independent of union concerns that may recommend themselves to individual union members, but Hudak has made his threat to union members so immediate that a vote for his party is difficult to reconcile with any reasonable and responsible assessment of appropriate self-interest.

Marx Speaks French

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, the Belknap Press of Harvard University (2014), 683 ps.



By the celebrity standards of our time, Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014) is a phenom. It has been reviewed broadly and repeatedly in sensational terms in almost every major newspaper and magazine in North America. Amazon cannot keep up with the demand for it, and locally, every copy at *Chapters* is sold out or on reserve. All this for an academic press book selling for \$40.00 Canadian!

The last time an avowedly serious book sold like this was when Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History* (1992) briefly dominated the big ideas market. Dependable Margaret Wente has written a breezy and superficial review column about Piketty in the *Globe & Mail*, confirming that even day-workers in the media biz are tuned in. Why? What is behind this sudden mass enthusiasm for a 683 page book on economics replete with scatter charts, statistical tables, and 685 endnotes? Fortunately, I can tell you.

Piketty's book is a political weapon designed to further a particular agenda.

It provides a thoroughly researched compendium of evidence for the prosecution in the case against late-phase Capitalism. It unashamedly rehabilitates what was most useful in the Marxist critique of capital accumulation and establishes it on solid ground. No wonder it is creating a storm.

The specter of Marx returns dressed in academic finery and suitably domesticated to haunt the Chicago School economists who were convinced he was finished. Shorn of its cranky utopianism, the resilient and relentless Marxist expose of capitalism's tendency to concentrate wealth is revived by Piketty to inspire terror in the ranks of conservative think-tank economists. Witness Daniel Shuchman of the *Wall Street Journal*, whose review of Piketty's book is a hyperventilating complaint betraying something very close to genuine fear, and rightly so.

Moderately left-leaning economists like Paul Krugman are promoting Piketty with gleeful euphoria as the prophet of a revived *political economics* replacing the self-styled *scientific economics* of corporate apologist and enablers. In economics, claims of objectivity and inevitability have long covered political positions that are now abruptly exposed as contingent and changeable.

Much of Piketty's book is eminently readable, which is one source of its rapidly expanding influence. Any ordinarily intelligent person can read it with profit, and this readability is essential to the book not merely a happy accident. Piketty is restoring communicability to economics because

he believes economics is not fully separable from the world of lived experience and pedestrian good sense.

For Piketty, economics is mostly about political preferences and choices existing historically, not timeless relationships analogous to the laws of physics. True, there are long stretches in the book where a non-specialist will be lost, but the general drift of the argument and its applications remain clear. No one has yet persuasively impugned Piketty's data assemblage. Attacks on the book have been largely *ad hominem* and have avoided engaging the evidence directly. The tone and intensity of resistance so far reveals mostly frustration.

What are Piketty's major claims? There are several. Each is clear and profoundly significant. I will hazard a brief summary of a few, but no one should lose the pleasure of reading the text directly.

(1)

The dynamics of capitalism are inherently conducive to the progressive concentration of wealth. Over time, in the absence of extrinsic variables, capitalism will create dramatically bifurcated income inequity. The rich will get richer, the poor, poorer, and the chief determinant of economic class will be generational inertia. Exceptional abilities may contribute to upward class mobility, but the composition of the wealthiest class will be largely independent of creative abilities or prowess. Inheritance will consolidate income advantages and accelerate accumulation. Think of a large snowball rolling downhill indefinitely.

(2)

Return on capital investment tends to outstrip economic growth. All boats may rise for a time, but eventually the hydraulic metaphor fails, and the wealthiest continue to pull away even if growth stalls, and even within limits, if it shrinks. The apparent exception to this pattern evident globally after World War II is a comparative anomaly no longer in force. Aggressive war-time taxation, direct destruction and disruption of accumulated wealth, and social policies born of war-time solidarities, inhibited the free operation of capitalism. Now, especially following the de-regulatory market-friendly neo-conservative/neo-liberal regimes of the 1980s and 90s, we have returned to pre-war capitalist norms.

(3)

Capitalism's tendency toward radical income divergence may contain the seeds of its own destruction. If not through revolutionary violence, as the

Marxists envisioned, then by fundamental social destabilization leading to pervasive systems collapse. A helpful gloss here can be pulled from Ronald Wright's 2004 Massey Lectures series *A Short History of Progress*. Wright attributes the cause of previous civilization-wide collapses to the tendency of complex hierarchies to draw resources to the top of the social pyramid. Eventually the pyramid inverts; the base can no longer sustain the top-heavy structure, and the system simply topples – a brilliant metaphor for what Piketty envisions as possible unless the dynamics of capitalism are disciplined politically.

(4)

Piketty has several prescriptions for political discipline of capitalism. One phrase he uses to explain his chief proposal is sensationally provocative: 'confiscatory taxation.' Given the current political debate in North America, increasingly strident even in Canada, his language is shockingly

incendiary. Piketty's 'confiscatory taxation' is counterpart and counterpoint to fighting phrases like "right-to-work" from the hard, and progressively hardening, right. Piketty foresees a probable intensification of income disparity in the near future and progressive social strain and disruption as a sequel. His book is an instance of what it predicts, a major installment in the ongoing brief against unregulated capitalism and its neo-liberal/neo-conservative orthodoxy.

A fight seems to be building. At present, it's a war of ideas.

Agree or disagree with Piketty, his book is firmly lodged on the *New York Times* Best Seller List and is being read and praised by opinion makers and policy planners. It will have effects. Even the most devoted free-market advocate will have to admit and admire that whatever else the book is – *it sells*

Whitney Hoth

A Voice for Contract Faculty – (First Article in a Series)



I find myself compelled to speak for a marginalized group to which I do not belong. The group I'm referring to is contract, or non-full-time college

faculty: part-time, partial-load, and sessional.

Back in my university days, I learned that people should declare who they are before presuming to speak for others: I am a full-time faculty member at Fanshawe College, which means I am a member of a privileged minority in the college system.

The majority of my colleagues in Ontario colleges and universities are now contract faculty. It's a misnomer to call all of them part-time, because many work full-time hours, or even more. Although contract faculty are now the backbone of the labor force in higher education, they are unable to speak openly about the multiple

injustices they face due to their vulnerability as precarious employees.

This article is the first in a series dedicated to giving a voice to contract faculty. Part-time, partial-load and sessional faculty can contact me in confidence about their concerns, experiences, ideas, and suggestions for columns. We want to hear from you and will faithfully communicate your needs and perspectives.

The enforced silence of so many of the dedicated people teaching in Ontario colleges today must be addressed. A regular column in a public venue is one small step. I intend to speak and report plainly to promote collegiality, equality, and fairness.

I will draw frequently on a recent Vanderbilt University publication *Equality for Contingent Faculty: Overcoming the Two-Tier System* (2014) which contains essays by many long serving part-time college faculty in both the United States and Canada. These essays offer a useful foundation for discussion about the condition and challenges of contract academic workers.

For now, let me list a few of the inequalities faced by college faculty working from contract to contract.

- reduced pay for the same work as full-time faculty
- no pay for hours outside of the teaching contact hour
- last minute class cancellations or assignments
- few opportunities for professional development
- no opportunity for paid professional leave
- little or no influence over course assignments
- invisibility with respect to the official brand of the college
- reduced sick leave entitlement
- no academic freedom
- reduced protections / inability to grieve*
- no job security*
- no seniority*
- no retirement benefits*

The last four items above must be qualified to reflect the situation of contract faculty in Ontario colleges. If you are partial load in an Ontario college, you belong to a union and have the right to grieve, but the risks involved in exercising this right limit its effectiveness. Partial load faculty lack the job protection of their full-time colleagues and remain vulnerable. The union would not counsel anyone to put livelihood at risk, so effective protections for contract faculty remain limited.

We have recently seen some improvement in protecting seniority and job security for contract faculty. In the last round of collective bargaining, we secured course assignment priority for partial load employees who have accumulated 10 months of service in the previous 4 years. (Collective Agreement: Article 26. 10D).

Unfortunately, asserting a right to a course assignment may be difficult for a partial load employee. Many partial load faculty depend on maintaining a favorable relationship with their chair or program manager, and may fear claiming their rights will lead to future problems.

In addition, this right is limited to only a minority of long serving partial load faculty. The great majority of contract faculty have no protections whatsoever. This lack of job security remains a stressful and debilitating fact of life for almost all contract faculty.

Union representatives to The CAAT pension recently fought hard and won the right for part-time, partial-load and sessional employees to join the pension plan immediately upon hire. However, I've spoken to a few partial load employees who need every penny of their salary, and who cannot afford to contribute to the plan.

There have been some undeniable advances in job security, seniority and retirement benefits, but they apply to only a few. Those on contract remain vulnerable, no matter how long their service. We have been able to increase benefits and pay for a few, but the fundamental precariousness of working life for contract faculty persists.

Some part-time and contract faculty don't desire full-time work, but the majority do. Regardless, all contingent

faculty are subject to the inequalities of a system favoring full-time faculty.

The normalization of contingent hire in Ontario colleges is part of a pervasive change in labor management in North America. Keith Hoeller, in his article "The Academic Labor System of Faculty Apartheid," lists the many titles now used to identify college teachers who work on contract for minimal pay and benefits: adjunct faculty, lecturer, non-full-time, instructor, and associate professor. Ontario now adds part-time, partial load, and sessional faculty.

More recently, the term "contingent" faculty has gained traction. This term derives from the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL)*, an organization started in 1996 made up of contingent academic workers from Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

The dramatic term "faculty apartheid" is unfortunately apt for this entrenched, institutionalized system of inequality and second-class academic citizenship.

In my regular column in *The Educator*, I will explore this issue in detail with the welcome contributions of my 'contingent' colleagues. Your contingency is a category of employment only.

Jennifer Boswell

* <http://cocalinternational.org>

Partial-Load Bargaining Team
Teleconference
Wednesday, June 11, 7:00 PM
Email bargaining2014@gmail.com or call
Local Office: (519)452-4205

In Defense of Online Learning



Recently, I became the coordinator for online learning in the Lawrence Kinlin School of Business. I am very excited about this opportunity because I believe in online learning. I'd like to share some of my enthusiasm with you.

First, online is a great way to meet students where students are, and to communicate in a way they want to communicate. Many students, as we know, will do much better in classrooms, labs and workshops, and we need to continue to offer these options for these students. But for other students, online might be their only shot at changing their lives. They are the students who can only study part-time, or who may be distant from campus, or who are students raising families. They are students who did not do well in current "the system", or as Anya Kamenetz has called it, "the century long experiment in industrialized education" (Kamenetz, 2014).

These people are often stuck, even trapped by the circumstances of life. I believe part of our job is to give those potential students opportunities and another path.

Secondly, we know how to do this. There are a few rules for excellence in online delivery. Here they are:

1. Design online courses that guide the student through course material in interesting and engaging ways, while creating opportunities for online professors to interact with their students. Redesign them often to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

2. Allow online professors to use the freedom from content delivery to engage directly with their students and get to know them. There is a lot more individual interaction in an online course, and this gives us an opportunity to know our students particularly well.
3. Create effective online assessments which challenge the student, reinforce learning and help the online professor to know who needs help.
4. Empower the online professor to use their knowledge, experience and wisdom, to guide their students through the learning process.
5. Make the learning experience great. As the late Maya Angelou said: "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." (Angelou, 2012)

Thirdly, we are well into the third millennium now, and online learning is just one of the many emerging forms of knowledge transfer. We all go online to find solutions to problems and expand our learning. I think we would be hard pressed to find some nugget of information that exists at Fanshawe College, but does not exist somewhere online and can be accessed for free. We don't own the information, but we can structure it better than Google can. As #4 above suggests, we are now guides in the enchanted forest of learning.

Finally, there is the work and the jobs. The work will not go away with online teaching, nor will it become a crushing time burden. There are two jobs that need to be done well (from a faculty perspective). Surely, we can find a way to build this into our collective agreement. First, we need excellent course designers who are prepared to

experiment, learn about what it really takes to make a good online course, and share best practices. Second, we need experienced and knowledgeable faculty to engage students, so that they will learn, prosper and tell their friends. Online is one of the greatest opportunities we have to expand our student enrollment and ensure continued, even expanded, employment for everyone at Fanshawe College.

The whole world wants to come to Fanshawe. They just don't know it yet.

Jim Johnston, B. Math, MBA

Darryl Bedford, President of OPSEU Local 110, comments:

Online learning has its place in colleges. To ensure quality education, faculty should be given the right to determine the modes of delivery that best suit the curriculum and most importantly the learning needs of their students. Our members are the experts. Online teaching is important teaching and I agree it should be covered in our Collective Agreement as our work.



I am opposed to "right to work" legislation because it does nothing for working people, but instead gives employers the right to exploit labor.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Bike to Work!



Bike to Work Week was May 26 - 30, with Bike to Work Day on May 27th. My Partner and I rode our two wheeled transportation that day and intend to try to ride to work twice a week during the summer.

More than half of the North American population lives within five miles of their workplace, making cycling a realistic and fun way to get to work. With increased interest in healthy, sustainable and economic transportation options, it's not surprising that, from 2000 to 2011, the number of bicycle commuters in North America increased by more than 47 percent.

A bicycle is considered a vehicle under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act so one must obey all the rules and laws of the road. Helmets are required for all persons under the age of 18, but highly recommended for all. Try to stay on the roads and travel in designated bike lanes that are becoming available in most urban areas in Ontario. London has many bike routes and scenic bike paths.

JC
John Conley
Worker Member Co-chair JHSC
London Main Campus

A map of these is available from London Tourism at Dundas and Wellington or bike shops (First Cycleworks, First St.), running stores, London Public Library or online here:



<https://www.london.ca/residents/Roads-Transportation/Transportation-Choices/Pages/Bike-and-Walk-Map.aspx>

If it is just a little too far to ride your bike to school, consider taking the bus part of the way. London Transit offers bike storage on the front of most buses for no additional charge. The London Transit ATU Local 741 driver will be very happy to show how to attach your bike to the apparatus. Bicycle storage is available by locking your bike to the many bike racks around campus. There is also a new secure bicycle compound between B and D buildings. It is a secure fenced in area

that is key locked and has bike racks contained within. It has a security camera that is monitored/recorded 24 hours a day. The cost of parking your bike is ridiculously low, \$5 a term with a \$20 refundable key deposit. This is

available through the Parking Office, D1018. Please do not bring your bike into the building or office areas.

If you think, "Hey, I don't want to be all sweaty from riding to school and then go to class," there is an available option

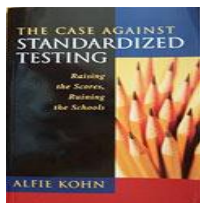
for you. You are encouraged to use the change rooms and showers located in the rear of washrooms A-1032 (Men's) and A-1036 (Ladies') in A building. Please bring your own towel and soap as well as a padlock to secure your clothes in the change room lockers while in the showers.

So if you want an invigorating and adventurous way to start and end your day, try riding your bicycle to work!



Reflections on Multiple Choice Testing

The Case Against Standardized Testing,
Alfie Kohn, Heinemann, 2000



Do you know the poem “Mending Wall” by Robert Frost? Two neighbors in the poem meet in the spring to mend a stone wall dividing their properties. One neighbor insistently repeats his father’s saying that “Good fences make good neighbors.” The narrator of the poem wrestles with the truth of this claim. Why do good fences make good neighbors? In the words of the poem, “Before I built a wall I’d ask to know/ What I was walling in or walling out,/ And to whom I was like to give offense./ Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.”

Like the narrator of Frost’s poem, I am often forced to operate from claims that I have only superficially explored. For example, the claim that competition in education, like on the hockey rink and in the corporate world, leads to productivity and progress. It is now spring time in Ontario, and I will ask you, like the narrator in the Frost poem, to wrestle with two related claims often repeated: 1) Standardized testing holds both the teacher and the student accountable, and 2) Multiple choice testing is good.

As a teacher, I have read a great deal on the subject of education, especially what is wrong with education. I have been teaching – (in various capacities and in various environments and on different continents) – for over twenty years now. At this point, I have formulated some opinions about education. It is at such points in one’s career that one should wrestle with the views of heretics. Heresy?

Today, orthodox education is education based on the business model. It is hierarchal in structure; it is top-down. It has a kind of creedal formula, too, a formula that will not permit heretical views to be a part of the

community. What are the hallmarks of this creed? One mark is the claim that standardized testing holds both teachers and students accountable. Another is that multiple-choice testing, which generates a lovely scientific and progressive testing number, is good. These claims, I submit, are similar to the claims about fences in the poem by Frost. These claims are worth exploring. When is it good? How is it good? For whom is it good? These questions should be insistently posed, and answers should be provisional, not settled once and for all time, but subject to review.

The utility of some kinds of testing is worth exploring. How, you may ask me, do I plan to do that? I could offer a brief summary of a text, disingenuously construct some straw man, and then promptly demolish it. I have a different approach. I thought I’d invite you to read the work of a heretic, to read it with an open mind.

Whose work? Alfie Kohn. He is an award-winning author; his work questioning the value of competition was given an award by the American Psychological Association. I read his book, *No Contest: A Case Against Competition*, and it is excellent. However, another one of his books, *The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising the Score, Ruining the Schools*, is the one I am recommending to you. It is a short work written in a question and answer format. In his section entitled “The Worst Tests”, he writes:

“... not all tests are equally bad. The least useful and most damaging testing program would be one that uses (1) a norm-referenced exam in which students must answer (2) multiple-choice questions in a (3) fixed period of time – and must do so (4) repeatedly, beginning when they are (5) in the primary grades” (Kohn 17).

Not all of his five points have relevancy for us, but points two and three, which he ranks in order of importance, do. Multiple choice testing is ubiquitous in education today. It is much loved, for it generates an objective number, and we love numbers. It is easy to grade, and we need to reduce grading time

to improve efficiencies. Who wants all this multiple choice testing? Who or what is behind this kind of assessment? Like the speaker in the poem, I wish to put a bug in your ear: Something there is that does not love a multiple choice test.

Increasingly, our culture is a culture of distrust. Our big systems and structures – political systems, judicial systems, health care systems, educational systems – are often viewed with distrust or outright hostility. Consider how our society thinks of and talks about politicians or corporations.

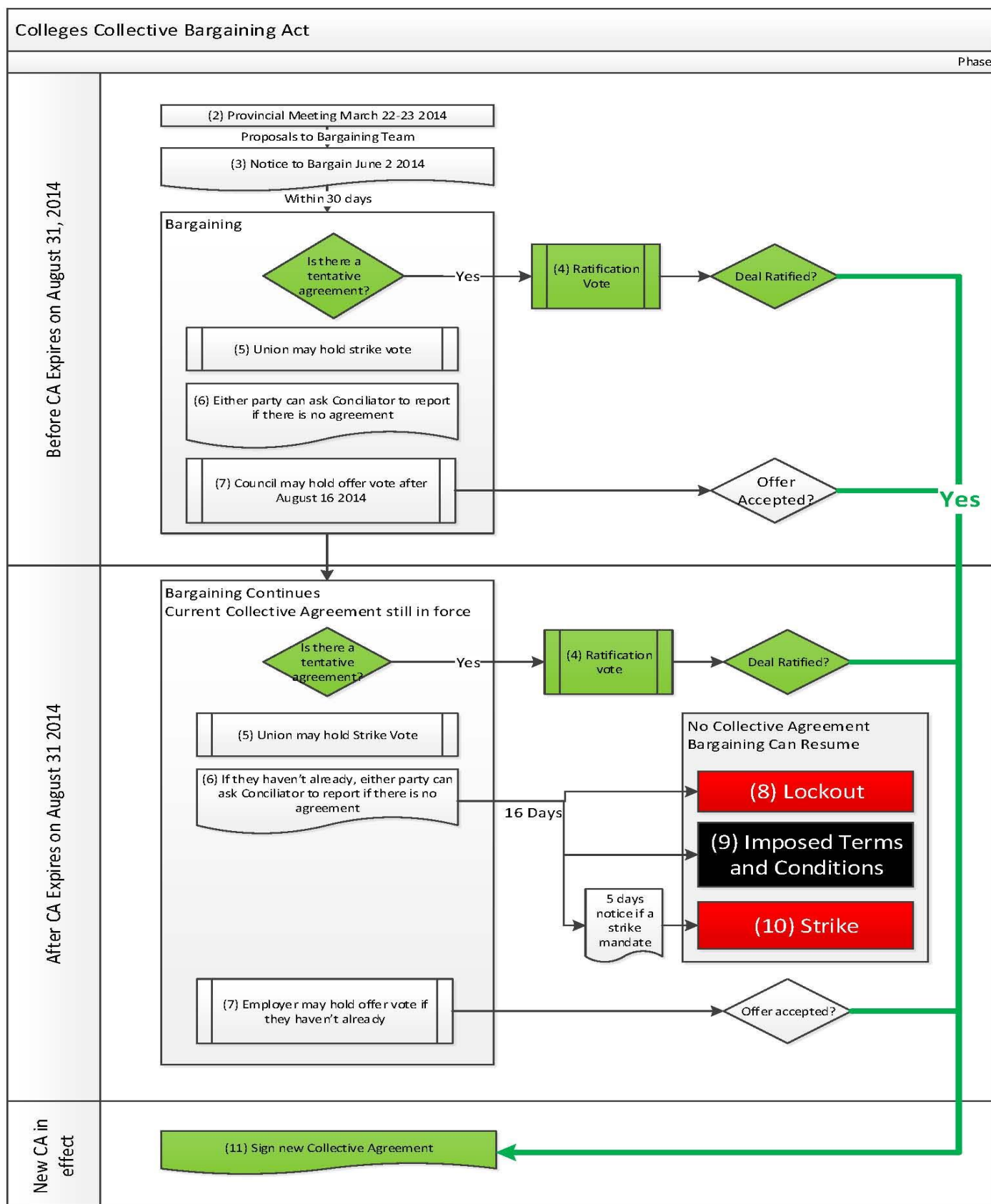
Do you recall the public discourse when Dexter Manley, the former NFL linebacker for the Washington Redskins, a graduate not only of high school but also of college, confessed that he was functionally illiterate? People began murmuring. What is being taught by teachers? What is being learned by students? Accountability became the new mantra. We need more evidence, statistical evidence, and more monitoring. Teachers need to be monitored and held accountable. Students need to be monitored and held accountable. How? Tests must be employed.

If you feel the desire to marshal a case for multiple choice testing, for greater accountability and more monitoring, then I would invite you consider my appeal in light of the tests to which you have been recently subjected. Consider the form, function and utility of multiple choice testing in the light of FOL testing. Surely, by now, you have been subjected to a battery of FOL multiple choice tests: WHIMS, Musculoskeletal Disorders Awareness, Respect in the Workplace, Accessibility Training for Educators, ad nauseam ad infinitum. Good tests make good teachers and good students? Cui bono?

To paraphrase Frost, something there is that does not love multiple choice testing! Want to know more? Read Kohn’s little book.

Tony Gremaud

Darryl notes: Also see the HECQO website for information about AHELO proposals to introduce standardized testing to Ontario.



Nothing left to cut

Ontario is dead last in public program spending

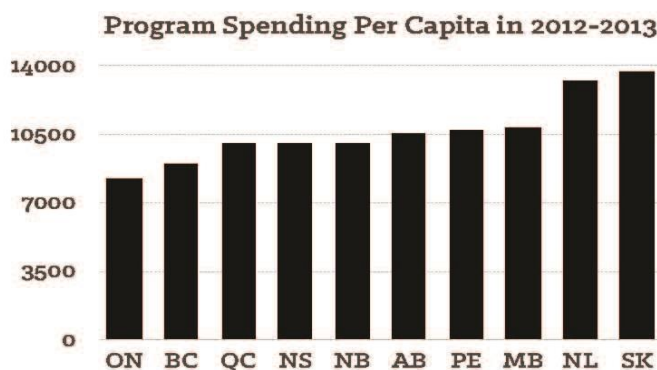
In this Ontario election, all three parties are talking about cutting program spending.

PC leader Tim Hudak says he'll fire 100,000 public employees and cut the provincial deficit by \$8.5 billion in one year. Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals say they'd keep cutting until the deficit is gone and find an extra \$1.25 billion in unbudgeted savings over the next three years. And NDP leader Andrea Horwath says she'd cut \$600 million in government "waste."

Are public dollars being misspent? Sometimes. Government pays more than it has to when private companies deliver IT services, medical lab testing, highway maintenance, and other services. Government pays more when it pays private-sector interest rates and profit margins for infrastructure projects like hospitals and gas plants.

But does Ontario spend too much on public services overall? For that question, the answer is **NO**.

Ontario spends less per capita on government programs than any province in Canada, the Ministry of Finance says. And not by a little: by a lot.



Note: Due to differences in accounting standards, figures may not be directly comparable. Sources: 2012-2013 Provincial Accounts and Statistics Canada

In 2013-14, Ontario spent \$8,598 per person on government programs. British Columbia spent \$8,979. If Ontario spent at B.C. levels, we've have an extra **\$5.2 billion** to spend on public services and infrastructure.

And other provinces spend even more. Last year, neighbouring Manitoba spent \$11,128 per person on programs. If Ontario spent at Manitoba levels, we'd have an extra **\$34.4 billion**. In other words, **we could pay off the current deficit and still have \$21 billion to spend on:**

- › health care
- › schools
- › transit
- › post-secondary education
- › safe communities
- › housing
- › child protection
- › women's shelters
- › supports for people with disabilities
- › drinking-water testing
- › food security
- › environmental protection

...or any of the other important needs that are going unmet in this province.

Ontario's public services are desperately underfunded. The people who provide those services are asked to do more with less every year. It's time Ontarians knew it: *our public services need proper funding, **not** more cuts.*

Question for Politicians

- Q** As you probably know, Ontario spends less per person on government programs than any other province in Canada. What is your plan to increase funding to public services to adequate levels? If you plan instead to cut public services, which ones will you cut, and can you explain how those cuts will affect our community?

**I'm
voting**



opseu.org/vote2014



Ontario Public Service Employees Union
100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8