



# the Educator

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*For Fanshawe College Professors, Librarians and Counsellors*

*Education is not filling a bucket but lighting a fire – W. B. Yeats*

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*Whitney Hoth*

**Welcome** back to another term. We're a little slow off the block this year, in part because we are now launching our new webpage ([www.opseu110.ca](http://www.opseu110.ca)), which I strongly encourage you to visit. The future of communication is digital, and the union would have been remiss not to update its webpage to serve its members as conveniently as possible. We welcome feedback about the new site, and members will find the new design facilitates two-way communication.

There is a feeling abroad in the college that our union-management relations have improved. It certainly seems that way to me, and it is something to be grateful for. The credit is shared between the union and management. Both parties have worked to create greater cooperation in the interests of our college community.

Serious disagreements remain, however. Our college administration is tempted by privatization schemes, which the union firmly opposes. We stand behind public education and resist attempts to undermine it. Technology we favor, but not technological displacement of human beings working with other human beings in direct relationships. If that is lost in education, no cost-savings and no efficiencies will compensate us as learners and citizens.

The articles in this issue address these and related concerns. **Frank Green** writes about our union's invitation to Bob Rae to review his 2005 **Report on Education in the Colleges**. **Fred Varkaris** gives us all a timely heads up about the new accreditation processes coming to Ontario colleges. **Michael Boisvert** explains the purpose and importance of union dues and why we need them at Fanshawe. **Thomas Barnes** writes about students and technology, which is an urgent issue for any teacher. Chief Steward **Mark Feltham** considers the union's 'protectionist' role in light of the still-not-forgotten TriOs debacle and its threat to job security and the integrity of public education. I provide a few reflections on the recent federal election. Finally, **Darryl Bedford** informs us about another inroad of privatization and what the union is doing about it. I hope members recognize their union is doing all it can to foster a positive and cooperative relationship with management on a broad range of issues while remaining always vigilant in defense of public education.

## THE RAE MEETING by Frank Green

*"(Education is) the first public good that a government can give a people."*

L.H. Lafontaine (1807-1864)



Bob Rae is the Bill Clinton of the North when it comes to explaining difficult political issues on television or in person. As well, his writing is engaging and unusually free of jargon -- e.g. (when warning of the dangers of public complacency about higher education): "we risk romancing mediocrity. From that embrace only decline will follow." (Rae Report, 2005)

So Local 110 made a good choice when it invited Mr. Rae to head a panel discussion at the London Convention Centre this year. The focus of the meeting was to examine the state of higher education in Ontario ten years after Rae made his report in 2005, with emphasis on the college sector (Full title: Rae, B. ONTARIO, A LEADER IN LEARNING: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, February, 2005. Available on Local 110's Web site.)

Education researchers Mary Catherine Lennon and Glen A. Jones and Local 110 President Darryl Bedford joined Mr. Rae on the panel. Close to a hundred individuals participated in the meeting, with representatives from



Conestoga, Durham, Humber, Lambton, and Mohawk. Niagara and Sault Colleges joining faculty, support staff and administrators from Fanshawe as well as OPSEU Board Members Len Elliot and Philip Shea, OPSEU 1st VP and Treasurer Eddy Almeida and a lone emissary from the University of Western Ontario. Retired London Free Press Editor Larry Cornies ably chaired the two and a quarter hour meeting which was roughly split between the panel presentations and questions from the attentive audience.

As members of Local 110 know, the local also commissioned an independent study entitled: **THE RAE REPORT IN RETROSPECT: A VIEW FROM THE COLLEGE SECTOR** authored by M.C. Lennon, M.L. Skolnik and G.A Jones. This report was available at the Convention Centre and is now available on Local 110's Web site.

This article does not attempt to supply precise minutes of the March 31 meeting, but rather to highlight the main issues raised by the panelists and audience members.

**FUNDING.** The Rae Report of 2005 contained 28 different but interdependent recommendations for change in Ontario's post-secondary education systems. The recommendations for an increase in funding for the sector and for greater access to the colleges received a favourable response from the McGuinty Government over the next few years, leading to an annual increase of 50,000 college students from 2005 to the present. However, according to the Lennon, Skolnik and Jones report, "As it was at the time of the Rae Report, Ontario

has returned to having the lowest funding per FTE (full time equivalent student) among the provinces.” At the meeting Ms. Lennon indicated that revenue per FTE is at or below 2005 levels.

**SWAMPING THE SYSTEM WITH PART TIMERS.** During her presentation, Mary Catherine Lennon indicated that college administrators had acted perfectly logically by hiring part timers at a much cheaper rate than full time faculty. This was the only way they could reduce costs in order to meet the demands of more students and higher costs, she reasoned. Her assertion did not meet with a favourable response from the audience.

In a reasoned and passionate question, Jennifer Boswell pointed out the injustice of well-qualified and dedicated part-time teachers, who now form the majority of faculty, receiving a fraction of the salary and none of the benefits of full-time teachers. This change has clearly affected the quality of education which the colleges are offering, since in many cases, the students have virtually no opportunity to consult the part-time teachers about their courses and any difficulties they might be experiencing.

In his report, Rae indicated that the most common complaint of students, aside from the cost of their education, was their lack of sufficient access to their teachers. Mr. Bedford underlined the point by pointing to the inseparable bond between teacher working conditions and student learning conditions.

Several other members of the audience voiced strong agreement with Boswell on this issue. Mr. Rae agreed that the predominance of part-timers was a problem, which was caused, in his opinion, by a simple reluctance to provide the necessary “moolah.”

Readers may recall that in 2007-8 OPSEU conducted an organizing drive in the colleges with both faculty and support staff part-timers. Although thousands in both groups signed union cards, no vote was ever conducted. According to Local 110 President and panelist Darryl Bedford, the stumbling block to holding a vote and unionization of the part-timers was the fact that the colleges’ founding legislation, forbade part-time employees from joining a union. (To give Rae his due, the first recommended action in his 2005 Report was A New Legislative

Framework. Of course that recommendation was ignored.)

**THE EMPIRE OF SILOS.** (The phrase comes from the Rae Report.) Under his second recommendation Rae states, “...require that colleges and universities recognize each other’s related programming to create clear and efficient pathways for students.”

The failure to adopt this recommendation has allowed immeasurable waste of money, time and lost opportunity to continue, as it has since the founding of the colleges when the relationship between college and university credits was not defined. The absurdity of the current situation was brought back again to this writer last September by a chance encounter in the Toronto airport with a graduate of a three year Fanshawe business program. He was going to live in Ireland to get a university degree since he could get more credit for his college education there than at any university in Ontario.

As the Rae Report stated, “It is simply wasteful of public resources to require students to repeat courses covering the same material because of an exaggerated sense of self-reference by any college or university.”

When a university refuses to give a student appropriate credit for his or her college courses, the additional cost to the student's family is a waste of both time and money. It is not surprising that only 5 to 8 percent of college students continue their education at university.

It is also a waste of taxpayer's money, since both colleges and universities are supported primarily by those taxes. The cost in frustration and lost dreams, as well as the loss to the economy of well-educated employees, is even more difficult to calculate.

Recent anecdotal reports suggest the emergence of new barriers between colleges and between colleges and universities. Partly this development can be attributed to the breakdown of old geographical territories for the individual colleges and the shrinking pool of students. In the absence of rational central guidelines, something of a lawless, "wild west" atmosphere is arising.

At the March 31 meeting, Rae stated that "if the universities are not willing to create clear and fair pathways for students, they should be forced to do so by legislation." His remark drew loud applause. (In the

humble opinion of the writer, if the universities were willing to do this voluntarily, they would have done so by now, some 50 years after the founding of Ontario's community colleges.)

Will the provincial government, which claims to be short of money for all sorts of programs, put an end to this unnecessary and heartless waste of time, money and talent? On a somewhat optimistic note, Mr. Rae opined that the current government seems to understand the post-secondary scene.

**MORE LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROBLEMS.** In the wake of the Rae Report, a brief influx of provincial money has led to a significant increase in the number of college students. Unfortunately, a high percentage of them experience difficulty handling college level courses and sufficient financial provision has not been made to provide the necessary resources to assist them. Ms. Lennon noted that the problem of under equipped students is severe both in colleges and universities. Mr. Jones agreed that while the Rae Report's concern for access was addressed, its

equal concern for quality got short shrift.

**LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY.**

The Rae Report recommended the setting up of appropriate measures to ensure accountability for funds. Unfortunately the McGuinty Government poured more money into the colleges before these mechanisms were in place which led to money that should have gone to increase classroom quality going towards new buildings and more administrators. (Darryl Bedford noted that at Fanshawe operating budget funds have been diverted into capital funds and used for new buildings.)

According to **OPSEU'S REPORT ON EDUCATION IN ONTARIO COLLEGES** (written by Kevin MacKay in 2014 and available on Local 110's Web site) there is now one full time college administrator for every three full time faculty members.

**PRIVATIZATION OF THE COLLEGES.** There was a short discussion of the dangers of privatization of the community colleges, with Mr. Bedford referring to the danger that it might be attempted "by stealth."

**STRAY RAE COMMENTS.**

When the audience applauded after he was

introduced, “I’m not used to this at an OPSEU meeting, it brings a tear to my eye.”

“It seems that nowadays, governments of all stripes are reluctant to raise taxes to provide the necessary services.”

In the context of the large numbers of part time teachers, “The growth of inequality in our society needs to be addressed.”

“Collaborative change in the college system is necessary.” This was echoed by calls for improvements in the colleges’ labour relations milieu.

Indicating his agreement with Lafontaine, “Education, not health care, is the most important part of public policy for the future of the country.”

“Local 110, OPSEU deserves great credit for sponsoring this discussion and the study.”

The audience voiced its agreement with this last statement by loud applause.

**Frank Green** served as Chief Steward (1976-1978) and then President (1978-1980/1982-1984) of Local 110

### ACCREDITATION IS COMING by Fred Vakaris



Accreditation is on its way during the 15/16 academic year and will change many policies, practices and processes at the College. The accreditation process will be different from the PEQAPA (Program Quality Assurance Process Audit) activities the college underwent in 2012/2013. During that audit, the process was more akin to “trust us...we are doing the right things,” and although the audit panel was provided with much evidence, a good portion of it

was anecdotal. We completed a self-study and when the panel visited the College they met with a number of students, staff members, faculty members and administrators to determine if what was written in the self-study was consistent with practice across the college. In comparison, during the accreditation process the college will need to provide “clear evidence that it has policies and practices in place to ensure it will meet these Quality Standards” (OCQAS, 2014). The shift from audit to accreditation is a move from quality criteria to quality standards and the question “to what extent...?” will be replaced by the phrase “expectation to meet.” In short, we’ll have to pony up and prove we have quality programs and

processes to support our students.

The Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) indicates that “Under the Accreditation process a college will have evidence to show they clearly meet all six of the Quality Standards in order to receive a decision of being fully accredited.” OCQAS goes on to state that to meet a standard, the majority of the elements within the standard must be met; so basically it’s all or nothing.

What does this mean for faculty members? The college needs to provide evidence that proves “teaching staff involved in the program: possess the combination of experience and credentials appropriate to, and required by, the program credential and the

*field of study; have the level of expertise and ability to provide the published learning experience; participate in reflective practice; undergo initial and continuing professional development to enhance their teaching expertise and to ensure currency in their subject matter; and, are oriented, coordinated, and evaluated.”*(req. 6.1) That’s a long list, and I’m not quite sure what a published learning experience is.

The other big change will be the college will need to show we are familiar with, and follow, “*current, accepted, evidence-based practices and research related to the quality of programs and student learning...*” and similarly, in requirement 4.2 professors are involved in “*...development and continuous improvement of teaching and learning strategies. Teaching staff are encouraged to engage in regular experimentation with new methods of teaching and learning that are consistent with best practices and research as found in current literature. These new methods are systematically measured and widely shared to support currency and relevancy of teaching and learning across all programs.*” Meaning we need to up our game; we

can’t rely on the same-old-same-old when it comes to teaching and evaluation practices. To delve into this a little deeper, the Quality Standards requirement 6.2 states the college must “*ensure that teaching staff execute their professional responsibilities; work within clear and well-structured instructional plans; provide prompt and constructive feedback to students; promote a positive attitude to learning for students*” and in requirement 6.1 that all professors “*participate in reflective practice; and, undergo initial and continuing professional development to enhance their teaching expertise and to ensure currency in their subject matter*” [emphasis added]. From my varied experiences here at the college, I would say that the vast majority of professors are conscientious in their teaching and strive to be the best educators they can be. Most create and follow lesson plans, evaluate appropriately and have moved away from putting students to sleep by lecturing for three hours straight to embrace better more experiential learning activities. But what of currency? The Collective Agreement (CA) indicates “The College shall allow each

teacher at least ten working days of professional development in each academic year,” (11.01 H 1) and that “Unless otherwise agreed between the teacher and the supervisor, the allowance of ten days shall include one period of at least five consecutive working days for professional development.” (11.01 H 2). To some extent I believe we should take responsibility for keeping ourselves current by staying informed of the many teaching and learning PD opportunities within the college, which are free to attend.

The requirement to maintain currency in our discipline can take many different forms. The following is taken from the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) which has oversight of our degree programs and outlines what is acceptable as evidence of the maintenance of currency. *In assessing faculty members’ currency and engagement with scholarship, research, or creative activity, the following may be considered, provided that these contributions are in a form (in a phrase adapted from Boyer) “subject to critical review and allowing use/exchange by other members of the scholarly community.” In all cases,*

*such contributions may take digital form. In general, the Board seeks evidence that faculty are intellectually engaged with developments in their fields, including but not limited to:*

- *publishing and/or reviewing professional publications in their fields*
- *participation and/or presentations at provincial, national, and international conferences, competitions, or exhibitions in their fields*
- *engagement with the scholarship of pedagogy in their fields*
- *participation in regulatory and accrediting association workshops, degree audits, or related work in their fields*
- *engagement in basic and/or applied research, labour market research, and/or related industry needs assessments*
- *application of conceptual knowledge to current practice in their fields, such as reports to industry or consulting work*
- *creative contributions to their fields through exhibitions or related forms*
- *development of case studies in their fields.*

In other words, being engaged with your discipline by sitting on boards, attending conferences and

workshops and the like qualifies as maintaining currency. Great, but who pays? I know firsthand PD budgets are miniscule given the number of faculty members in a school, but there are other pockets of money that can be drawn on. Employees of the college can take any course we offer for \$20 as long as a relationship between the course and your job can be established. If you would like to upgrade your credentials there are various monies available to help that process as well. Paid professional leaves of up to a year are also a possibility. There are other sources of money available from the Centre for Research and Innovation (CRI) to support all manner of research and innovation activities that can contribute to maintaining currency. All of this is a great start, but if the college is serious about PD, it will need to put more money toward keeping its employees current in their disciplines. Another challenge will be to capture all of these activities to provide evidence to accrediting bodies.

To truly embrace this process, which is indicative of the new reality of postsecondary education in

Ontario, our culture will need to change. The faculty performance development process has been revised to meet these requirements and will be implemented shortly. Other processes, practices and policies are also changing to reflect the changing postsecondary landscape and the changing requirements of the Ministry and the various associated agencies charged with ensuring “quality”.

What is the consequence of not meeting all of the accreditation standards? Fanshawe will wind up as a prestigious non-accredited institution, much like those of previous times found on the back of match-books.

The full accreditation standards can be found on the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service website [ocqas.org](http://ocqas.org) under the ‘Towards Accreditation’ tab.

#### **Note from the President**

Fred Varkaris is now serving as Chair of Building Technology. We want to thank Fred for his past service to the union as Chief Steward, and we congratulate him on his new position.

## Union Dues and the “Protection” of Workers by Mike Boisvert



The primary source of revenue for a union is dues collected from members. Union dues are used to fund the activities of the union such as bargaining, handling grievances, supporting health and safety work, conducting research, training members, and so on. Here, and at almost all of Ontario’s 24 community colleges, members pay dues to two entities: OPSEU central, and the workplace local. At Fanshawe, these are represented on your pay advice as deductions to “Union Head 110” and “Union Local 110”, respectively. All members of OPSEU, across all sectors of the economy, pay 1.375% of gross income to OPSEU central. OPSEU uses this money to pay for staffing, legal fees, grievance procedures, member education, campaigns and various other activities. A portion of these dues is rebated to each local on a quarterly basis to pay for local membership services. Local 110 also collects 0.3% of your gross income, and these dues are used to pay for local operations, to

purchase release time from the college for officers, and to grow the local’s contingency fund – used in the event of a strike or lock-out, or for other purposes approved by the elected local executive committee.

Union dues rates, whether central or local, are voted on by member delegates (for OPSEU central dues) or the members themselves (for local dues). With our local dues rate of 0.3% of gross income, the yearly deductions for an employee at the bottom step on the salary grid (\$60,548) and the top step (\$104,963) are about \$182 and \$315, respectively; the corresponding deductions to OPSEU central are about \$833 and \$1443. These dues are tax deductible for members.

Because dues are at the heart of a union’s ability to effectively carry out its duties to members, they are often the target of attacks by those who oppose unionism. Such attacks are sometimes directed at dues themselves; most recently, the tax-deductible status of union dues has been used to justify efforts to impair a union’s ability to function.

### **The Rand Formula, Right-to-Work, and Bill C-377**

The notion that employees who enjoy the rights and benefits conferred under a collective agreement should share in

paying the costs associated with administering and enforcing it was formalized legally 70 years ago, and in court rulings since.

In 1945, Canada’s largest workplace was Ford’s Windsor, Ontario factory. Production at the factory was declining as World War II came to an end, and the workforce was facing the specter of large-scale job losses. During bargaining the same year, the union - which had until then collected union dues monthly on a voluntary basis from 14,000 employees - sought concessions to improve union security; namely, that union membership be mandatory and that dues be automatically deducted from pay cheques and remitted to the union. These demands were non-starters. Negotiations broke down and workers went on strike. The federal government of the day assigned arbitrator Justice Ivan Rand to the case. Rand rejected the notion of mandatory union membership, but argued that because all workers in a workplace benefit from the union negotiated contract, all workers - not just signed members of the union - should pay union dues. In addition, Rand ruled that union dues would be deducted from pay cheques and remitted to the union. The automatic collection of dues from all employees *is*



the Rand Formula (sometimes called “automatic check-off”).

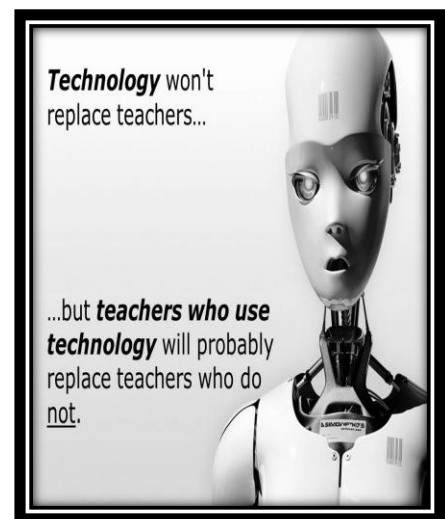
The Rand Formula often elicits cries of “forced unionism” and has compelled several right-of-center governments to help “protect” workers from having to pay dues by legislating regulations that ban automatic dues check-off. In roughly half of all U.S. states these “right-to-work” laws encourage free-riders, workers who benefit from collective bargaining without sharing in the costs associated with bargaining and enforcing agreements. The right-to-work trial balloon has been floated in this country in recent memory. Former Ontario Conservative party leader Tim Hudak, for instance, expressed plans to campaign on right-to-work legislation and an alteration to the Rand Formula, though he would abruptly abandon those plans, before eventually resigning as party leader following defeat in the 2014 election. Elsewhere in the country, Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall, has mused about exempting certain groups of workers (e.g. “young people”) from the automatic check-off, and has previously attempted legislation that has been struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada for violating workers’ freedom of association.

Union dues are at the centre of another effort to “protect”

Canadians, this time Canadians’ right to know how union funds are spent. Bill C-377 (An act to amend the Income Tax Act – requirements for labour organizations), which has received Royal Assent and may soon become law, requires unions to disclose to the government the details of any financial transaction over \$5000 as well as the details of any investment funds operated by unions; in addition, it requires union employees to disclose how much time they spend on political activities. The stated rationale for the Bill is that, because union dues are tax deductible and represent a significant cost to the public treasury (somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500 million by government estimates), the public has the right to know how unions spend members’ dues. Instead, the intention of the bill seems to be to bury unions in clerical red-tape, thereby limiting the time and effort available to provide service to members and enforce collective agreements. Many critics of the bill have noted that (1), provincial tax laws already regulate unions’ disclosures to their members, and (2), no other organization that receives tax benefits or taxpayer funded subsidies is being required to make the same detailed disclosures; not charities, not corporations, not churches, and not dues collecting professional

associations. If C-377 is intended to provide transparency for organizations that receive tax benefits or taxpayer funded subsidies, then why aren’t any other organizations covered by the bill? Why, indeed?

At the time of writing this, Justin Trudeau’s Liberal party has won a majority government. During the campaign, Trudeau positioned himself as the progressive choice for Canadians, asserted his belief in the important role of unions, and declared his intention to repeal C-377 on the grounds that it represents a “direct attack on Canadian workers”. Let’s hope Trudeau makes good on his promise. Doing so would offer unions some real protection.



## Our Cyborg Students by Tom Barnes



Tell me if this sounds familiar. You're in front of a class explaining a difficult concept, and you look up to check your students' level of engagement only to find many of them clicking away at their mobile devices.

Some of them might be Googling the material, some of them may even be taking notes. Some of them are most certainly texting friends or Facebooking. It's tough to tell which.

When you put something important on screen, a due date or a definition, some students raise their phones to snap a quick pic. Near the end of class, you book an appointment with an eager student, and she records it in a calendar app.

There's no other way to put it: they're cyborgs. Cyborgs in the truest sense because they're cybernetic organisms, continually engaged in feedback loops between their brains and

their mobile devices. For digital natives, those born in the time of the internet, this is normal. Their phones are a part of their bodies. Their adolescent and adult selves have always been wired into a virtual matrix of constant connectivity, stimulation, and distraction.

But let's continue with the scenario. On the way to a departmental meeting, you feel a buzzing in your pocket. It's your partner reminding you to pick up groceries on the way home. While you've got your phone out, you might as well look at the weather forecast for the weekend. And since the thing's on anyhow, you check last night's scores or scan a recap of your favourite show. (Be careful. Don't bump into that vending machine.) And here's a short clip of the latest political gaffe (did he *really* say that?).

A few minutes into the meeting, you get a notification from the official Star Wars Twitter account: they've just posted some new images from *Episode VII*. You slyly scroll through them while nodding along with the speaker to feign attention. (It's not just me who does that, right?)

Uh-oh. It's happening to you too. Even though you're a digital immigrant, born and raised before the time of the internet, you're becoming a cyborg as well, ensnared just as our students are in the webs of digital media and communication.

There's no denying it. The internet, the World Wide Web, and their attendant technologies have had as much effect on human society as Gutenberg's printing press once did. Even more so. Whether we're young or old, our personal and professional lives will be, for better or worse, forever technologically conditioned. (Google "the internet of things" if you really want a sense of where things are going.)

Canadian author Michael Harris, a digital immigrant himself, starts with this proposition in his book, *The End of Absence: Reclaiming What We've Lost in a World of Constant Connection* (2014) and wonders if future generations will remember what it was like to live in a world before digital technologies and virtual environments. The answer is probably not. He therefore argues it's vital to our success as a species that we make a point of

remembering so that we might ensure subsequent generations can effectively navigate an increasingly complex world.

Seems like quite a task. The good news is, he argues, we're in a unique position in time: there are still those who do remember what it was like without the internet's constant demand for our attention.

Consequently, Harris believes digital immigrants have a moral obligation to champion the practices of disconnection, contemplation, and critical thinking while we're still in the early days of this seismic shift. To support his call to action, Harris cites ample research that suggests internet technologies are having irreparable effects on human memory, our attention span, public opinion, our concept of authenticity, education practices, and even our dating rituals.

Harris is right. We should aim to make digital natives recognize the full extent of their immersion in the world of virtual technologies. In fact, getting them to read his book would be a good start. An attentive read would help to defamiliarize their daily life by revealing the massive technological

transformations that have come to shape their experience of it. As digital immigrants, we're able to recognize how much we've been integrated. Digital natives may not have the same kind of perspective.

As teachers, we have a truly unique opportunity. We have a forum that provides us with access to over one hundred different individuals, most of them digital natives, on a weekly basis. While it might not be part of your curriculum to encourage students to reflect on their own behaviour (though that's certainly an important learning objective of the college's general education courses), perhaps broaching the subject through discussions of cell phone use and classroom management could be your entry point into the larger discussion about their relationship to technology. By helping students see the value of disconnecting from the virtual world, if only for a short period of time, you might be able to enlighten them and free up their attention for the duration of your class at the same time.

But here's some advice if you do have this conversation: it's counter-productive to categorically declare mobile devices inherently negative

or detrimental technologies. And it would be disingenuous—unfair to the students and to the technology itself. In fact, start by affirming the positives. We can collapse space and time and communicate with anyone around the world in a matter of seconds; we have access to the sum total of human knowledge, more or less, at our fingertips. That's pretty incredible. Only then will students give you the latitude to show them how these technologies in turn shape their behaviour.

Aim to show your students that their phones are just like any other technology: they can be used productively or they can be abused with impunity. We need to tell them that, as Harris puts it, "Every technology will alienate you from some part of your life. That is its job. Your job is to notice." They need to know why Harris would argue that "we must remain as critical of technological progress as we are desirous of it." Only in recognizing these elements of technological development will digital natives begin to work toward Harris's ultimate goal for them: digital literacy.

I've attempted in the past to ban mobile devices in class. It

never works. What students have available on their screens is, to them, just as important as what I'm trying to teach them. But instead of being continually frustrated with a failed cell phone ban, maybe it's our obligation to understand why it's doomed to fail. A good place to start is with students' objections to such a policy, which are always impassioned and strident. "That would be like cutting off my arm!" they say. And they're right.

And so I think we digital immigrants are morally obligated to not only raise digital natives' consciousness about the effects of technology, but also to attempt to really understand their relationship to current technology. Sure it may be foreign to us (though as we've already seen, it's becoming normalized even for us digital immigrants), but that's all the more reason we shouldn't dismiss it. We can't hold them to the

same standards we were once held to—they are not the same as we once were. Just as we asked our parents' generation, and as they surely asked theirs in their own time, millennials simply want to be understood. We need to attempt in good faith to understand them. Why? So that, ultimately, we can empathize. It's up to us to cultivate our own literacy when it comes to recognizing their unique social experience.

#### In Defense of Union Protectionism by Mark Feltham



Most readers will likely recall the proposed partnership between Fanshawe and TriOs College. The College announced this partnership in spring 2015, but subsequently, canceled it. We believe this was due to substantial concern expressed within the College community and strong opposition from OPSEU Local 110. The ostensible reason for this partnership was that

the College wanted to expand into the GTA. Certainly the Union has no problem with expansion-- we would be delighted to support an expanded operation, provided that such an expansion paid good wages, provided good benefits, and assigned reasonable workloads.

One of our mottos in the 110 office is that "you educate; we advocate." In order to advocate on your behalf, one of our tools involves Freedom-of-Information (FOI) requests to the College for details regarding its operations, initiatives, and expenditures. During the TriOs debates, we submitted an FOI request for details regarding this initiative, and

we received quite a lot of information, including copies of emails from inside Fanshawe's administration. Readers who wish to read the full file can visit our office and do so; however, one particularly striking line has stuck in my mind for months, and this line has provided the title for this essay. The line was this: one person expressed disappointment that the TriOs deal collapsed due to "union protectionism"-- something which, in the mind of this individual, was not a good thing.

We, on the contrary, are proud of our efforts to *protect* your jobs. We are proud of our efforts to promote good wages, good

benefits, and reasonable workloads. We are proud to resist attempts to send your work elsewhere, especially to a private, non-unionized employer. As your Union, *protecting* our members is our central role, our essential

mission, our basic job. Indeed, our only mission is to advocate for you, and this advocacy requires vociferous opposition to any attempt to give your work to someone else. Indeed, in this regard, we are deeply committed to

*protectionism*. We do not apologize for this commitment. We celebrate it.

We hope that others will be as honest about their motivations.

### Real Change Now! *by Whitney Hoth*



The federal election is finally finished. In the weeks ahead there will be microanalysis galore, and it will be interesting to see what factors created the red wave. Was youth turnout significant? Was social media promoting strategic voting decisive? Did anti-Harper animus steel the resolve of NDP leftists to vote Liberal as the least of evils? Has Trudeau-mania found second-generation fulfillment in Pierre's handsome son? All of this, and more than this, went into the mix that turned out the Tories and brought back the Grits. Yes, but now what? Not much, I suspect.

Our lumbering ship of state will tack left a bit while it churns relentlessly toward denationalizing globalism, like most liberal democracies.



Increasing corporate tax rates, the most serious redistributionist proposal in the campaign, went down with the NDP. Conventional wisdom has it that Tom Mulcair miscalculated badly by insisting on balanced budgets, which was too wrenching a pull to center-right for the NDP faithful. Maybe so. The irony is that a modest increase in corporate tax rates would almost certainly have allowed the NDP to deliver on its social promises and still balance the budget. If you want to run government without increasing government revenues, you run deficits, as the Conservatives did until they approached an election campaign, and as the Liberals will certainly do despite their proposed tax increases on the wealthy. The Conservatives for



most years of their tenure ran deficits, but they brought down corporate tax rates and kept them down. Conservative principles are flexible when it comes to deficits but iron solid when it comes to taxes. Of course, the Conservatives were simply continuing the Grit's already established approach of tax-cutting for corporations.

The Liberals now promise infrastructure projects. Infrastructure projects will make corporations rich. They will put people to work in the short run, and infrastructure can spur economic growth, but it's basically government pumping money into corporations by public borrowing. It can work. Keynesianism is not the dead dog Chicago-school economists have claimed, but it does not

significantly alter the distribution of social wealth and is designed to achieve general social improvements without significant social change. In contrast, taxing corporations at higher rates would represent significant social change, but that proposal was side-tracked by the niqab, the audacious Liberal embrace of deficits, and the fantastically photogenic Trudeau family.

Angry Tom wasn't much of a campaigner. He had a fixed smile like a painful rictus and none of Trudeau's physical vigor or even Harper's slightly disconcerting alien poise. He was outmaneuvered on the niqab issue, and he talked too much about balanced budgets, as if they were the real goal instead of the result of a bold redistributionist proposal. In all the hype about Real Change, an NDP victory would have meant Real Change. Maybe it's change we couldn't afford. The shock to markets of a government taxing corporations rather than running deficits may have invited global discipline, which Canada can no longer withstand now that its once robust commodities sector is no longer running at full tilt.

The Liberals claim their tax hike on the wealthy will generate approximately 3 billion in revenue yearly, which they acknowledge will be offset by their tax cuts for the middle class. In other words, as to

revenue, a wash. Estimates for revenue generation through increases in the corporate tax rate are, of course, relative to the increase proposed. One sympathetic NDP economist's estimate suggests 1.5 billion annually is generated for every percentage point increase. A rate increase of 3% nets 4.5 billion. Over four years, that's \$18 billion, a tidy sum. Of course, the rejoinder to any proposal to tax corporations is some version of the globalism threat: (1) corporations will evade the tax by moving work out of Canada, or (2) they will drop productivity and reduce employment. This argument assumes national governments are essentially helpless dependents on global capital markets and can do little if anything to discipline or curtail their free activity. Certainly no recent government in Canada has tried. It might be reckless to test it, which is what raising corporate tax rates amounts to, but it would certainly have represented Real Change.

Real Change from the Liberals? I doubt it. Still, there is some ground for hope. It was said of Franklin Roosevelt that he had a second-rate mind but a first-rate personality. I think that may hold of Justin Trudeau. He is not nearly as intelligent as Mulcair, nor Harper, but he enjoys the political game and is happy with himself. He appears confident, optimistic, friendly, and anxious

to work. He will have advisors who are also managers, but he may be able to sell their complex policies as extensions of his own personality, which is a gift of great politicians like, well, Ronald Reagan, alas!

Magic thinking is a big part of politics, especially in democracies. People crave change for its own sake and look for leaders who promise to deliver it. Personalities are more important than policies for most voters, and most of us want glamour if we can get it. Justin, son of Pierre, looks like he can deliver. If enough people feel uplifted by his affirmative rhetoric, things might really get better.

Harper ended badly with race baiting nonsense and backyard bar-be-ques with the Ford brothers. The sound of money thrown on tabletops with the slogan "that's not change, it's real money," is straight from the playbook of Sarah Palin. Harper held his base in the election, but that base has always been only a powerfully integrated minority, and now the majority of Canadians has reacted against it and chosen, I suspect, the appearance of change over its substance.

## Hot Zone: Ride Into The Danger Zone? by Darryl Bedford



Over the summer Fanshawe made an usual, perhaps unprecedented, move for a public college by purchasing the shares of a private for-profit company: Hot Zone Training Consultants.

Hot Zone, based in Cambridge, provides health and safety training. Fanshawe already provides health and safety training through a certificate program and through customized contract training. In Peter Devlin's announcement, it was stated the acquisition of Hot Zone was designed to enhance the existing operations of Fanshawe in the field of health and safety training.

Fanshawe's legal counsel provided a more detailed description of the company:

Hot Zone was founded in 1997 by Peter White, a career firefighter who retired earlier this year as a Captain in the Toronto Fire Service. Mr. White has developed the safety training modules and hired all of

Hot Zone's employees and vendors, including those who deliver the training to Hot Zone's clients.

Hot Zone currently has three full-time employees including Mr. White, and one part-time employee (less than 24 hours per week). Hot Zone also currently employs five persons and retains three contracted vendors who are typically full-time firefighters who provide training to clients on a casual, as-needed, basis.

Through a freedom of information request, your union has learned that the purchase price was \$1,684,000. The terms of sale do allow for a "retention adjustment" of that price should current revenues not continue. One should view this purchase in light of the approximately \$8 million in cuts required to balance the college's budget.

Fanshawe has confirmed that although they own Hot Zone and will receive the profits, they somehow claim Hot Zone employees are not Fanshawe employees.

This development should be of grave concern to all Fanshawe employees, union or non-union. Many of us have been given the mandate to create "new" services with the goal of expanding the college or possibly replacing "underperforming" programs.

Yet if Fanshawe can start new initiatives and programs by simply purchasing an existing corporate entity, the administration can effectively do an "end run" around Fanshawe's people any time it sees fit.

What if Fanshawe were to purchase North American Trade Schools or Trios College? Hot Zone is the thin edge of this wedge.

It is with this concern that OPSEU requested the assistance of the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to determine the status of the Hot Zone employees. We're asking the OLRB to apply the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act to help us determine which of the Hot Zone employees are faculty and which are support staff workers.

Our legal counsel wrote that the fact that Fanshawe chooses to conduct some parts of its operations through a subsidiary is not a barrier to having the staff included in one of the OPSEU bargaining units.

Although we think that our action is important to protect Fanshawe's workers from the "danger zone" of having operations redeployed to a subsidiary, there is more to it than that. It sounds like a number of Hot Zone employees have benefited from union membership, including as firefighters. They will know why

union protection is important, particularly during a period of transition. They will know why pensions are important and why it is important to maintain active membership by having all

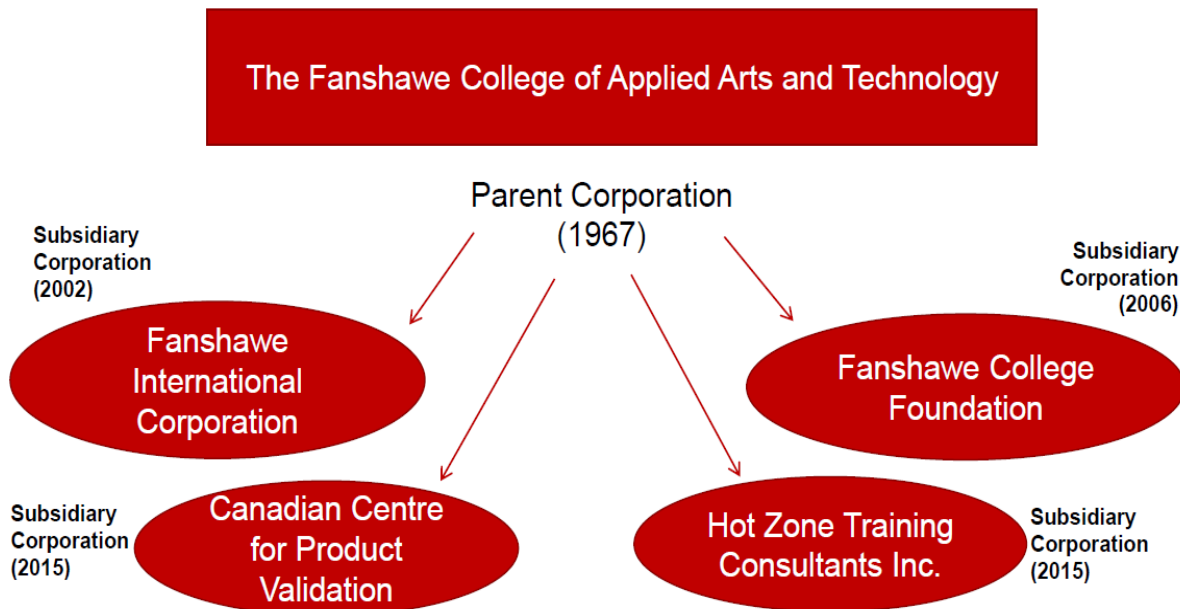
college operations participate in the plan.

So, let's grow the Fanshawe family by welcoming the Hot Zone employees into the fold. Education workers need to stick

together. OPSEU Locals 109 and 110 ready and willing to represent them.

To the workers at Hot Zone I say, "Welcome. We're here for you."

# Fanshawe Corporate Structure



Slide provided to the Fanshawe College Board of Governors as part of their orientation, clearly illustrating that Hot Zone is a Fanshawe subsidiary.

**NEW APPOINTMENT: Kathleen Dindoff elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President OPSEU LOCAL 110**

