

Contract negotiations are under way

On July 4, the OPSEU college faculty bargaining team sat down with the management team to kick off the 2017 round of negotiations.



“College faculty face a challenge this round, but the support of members will get us the change we need,” said union bargaining team chair JP Hornick. “Through the demand-setting process, members and delegates across the province sent a clear message that

it’s time for action to safeguard the quality of education in our public colleges, and to ensure equity for all faculty.”

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas said that members can take strength from the knowledge that they are facing that challenge with the backing of members from across the wider union.



“Your bargaining team is working to make real and substantive changes to address the issues facing faculty,” said Thomas. “Rest assured that you take on this challenge not just as the 12,000 members of OPSEU’s College Academic division, but with the support of all 130,000 members of OPSEU.”

To prepare for this round of negotiations, bargaining team members spent the last several months developing proposals to address the demands set by members. In addition, print and video materials have been developed to support the push for change, both to highlight the problems caused by the current direction of the colleges, and to offer another direction. These ideas have been gathered under the theme of Ontario’s Public Colleges at 50: A Better Plan.

The first two sections of this plan – one focused on the need to invest in the front lines to ensure equity for faculty, and the second looking at how changes to college structures could ensure collegial governance and academic freedom – are complete, with additional sections to follow over the summer.

The materials published so far, and those that will follow, can be found on the newly-developed bargaining website, available in English at www.collegefaculty.org and in French at www.personnelscolairedescolleges.org.

Watch this website for updates throughout bargaining, including blogs from team members, news from the table, videos and print materials that talk about the key issues, and more.

As Ontario’s colleges turn 50, there is an opportunity to set a path for the next 50 years that returns the colleges to their original mandate: to provide the education Ontario’s students need to succeed in a changing world.

Our opening presentation: a mandate for change

The following is the text of the college faculty bargaining team's opening presentation on the first day of negotiations. You can find a digital copy of this presentation, including the summary of 2017 proposals, at https://opseu.org/sites/default/files/union_exec_summ_initial_proposals_final-eng.pdf.

As negotiations proceed, we will provide members with information about the proposals we make to the management team, along with links to the language of these proposals. Information on this week's proposals will be coming in next week's bulletin.

College faculty enter this round of negotiations with a clear mandate for change from our members. Our faculty have passed a focused set of demands to address two major issues: the quality of education in the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs), and equity for all faculty. Our demand package reflects the concerns of faculty at all 24 colleges. These proposals align with the clear objective of the Ontario government to ensure fairness and better labour relations for workers, and a more robust college system for students that both reflects international standards and creates better pathways to careers and other post-secondary institutions.

The direction taken by the union membership at local and provincial demand setting meetings, in combination with the government's recent proposed changes to the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Labour Relations Act*, and the post-secondary systems, demonstrate the need for substantive change in our system to create a sustainable, high-quality system that can respond to and work for students, faculty, and Ontario over the next 50 years. College faculty recognize that the colleges have evolved from where we began in 1967. The collective agreement between the colleges and faculty must also continue to evolve.

The union's demand package is both responsible and realistic. We have proposed changes that currently exist in individual colleges and universities in Ontario, and in comparable systems in other provinces. Our aim is to achieve an on-time and reasonable settlement that is based upon the realities faced by the colleges today.

For students and faculty alike, the learning and teaching environment is paramount to a successful college system. Students require classrooms,

both face-to-face and online, in which dedicated, consistent faculty members have the ability to create and foster positive academic environments that provide the best opportunities for learning. Students need access to counsellors and librarians who can support and enhance their learning. Most importantly, they need to have access to faculty who can help them integrate their studies and skills into the work force and society. Meeting these critical student needs requires a stable complement of full-time and contract professors, instructors, counsellors, and librarians. It also requires a working environment that respects, fosters and enhances the working conditions of college faculty. Quality education cannot exist without equality for all faculty.

College faculty are both professional educators and experts in our respective fields. As the college system has changed, so has the role of our faculty. Our work increasingly resembles that of university professors, yet our greatest strengths are our connection to our students and our connections to industry. As our work has evolved, so has the need for stronger faculty involvement in the direction of the colleges to build on these strengths. This necessitates a system based on collegial governance. Bicameral governance ensures that strong fiscal management provided by college Boards of Governors is balanced by equally strong academic direction provided by faculty-majority senates. In this model – the standard for other post-secondary institutions in Canada and world-wide – faculty and administrators work together to balance operational and academic priorities. The result will be higher quality, greater student success, increased innovation, and stronger colleges.

The 2017 proposals: improvements and fairness for all members

Proposals to improve academic quality and to improve fairness for all members

- Establish academic freedom and collegial governance
- Strengthen intellectual property rights
 - The union proposes to improve the quality of education and training college students receive by enhancing collegiality through the creation of an academic senate.
 - The union proposes to implement academic freedom language similar to that in many university and other college systems.
 - The union proposes to clarify the responsibilities of faculty and administration in respect of the academic process.
 - The union proposes that the colleges adopt an intellectual property rights model that reflects customary post-secondary standards and practices.
- Improve job security, complement and layoff language
- Improve language for replacement and consideration
- Prevent the contracting out, privatization or outsourcing of faculty work in whole or in part
 - The union proposes to update Article 2 to update and enhance the full-time faculty complement.
 - The union proposes to limit contracting out of faculty work.
 - The union proposes to improve the creation of full-time positions by strengthening the language in that regard.
- The union proposes no layoffs during the term of this collective agreement, and structured discussions between the colleges and union locals in cases of financial exigency.
- Improve workload language to ensure that all faculty work is recorded on the SWF and that volunteerism is eliminated
- Improve workload factors to provide adequate time for academic work
 - The union proposes to update and clarify several provisions of Article 11 – Workload in line with the changing college environment. This will focus on on-line delivery methods, updated factors for evaluation, and clarification of the non-teaching period.
 - The union proposes to update the workload factors for consideration to reflect current post-secondary workloads for all faculty.
- Strengthen language to improve union representation of members working inside and outside the Province of Ontario
 - The union proposes changes to Article 32 to reasonably address the need to file union grievances.
 - The union proposes to update the list of arbitrators.
- Improve the salary grids and wages to better our position in relation to our comparator groups and to account for inflation
- Improve benefit coverage for all faculty
 - The union proposes fair and reasonable salary increases which will ensure that college faculty compensation is properly

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positioned in relation to the comparator groups - Ontario high school and Ontario university teachers.

- The union proposes realistic and equitable updates to benefits for all faculty.

Proposals to improve fairness for partial-load members

- Gain parity for partial-load faculty
- Improve partial-load job security
- Record and compensate total partial-load workload
 - The union proposes an equitable salary plan and benefits package for partial-load employees comparable to full-time faculty, and that they be compensated for all work.
 - The union proposes to improve contract opportunities for partial-load employees and the opportunities for partial-load employees to fill full-time vacancies.
 - The union proposes to enhance the partial-load employees' right to continue teaching previously assigned courses, and to improve seniority rights.

Proposals to improve fairness for librarians and counsellors

- Create a workload formula for counsellors and librarians
- Create workload and caseload limits for counsellors
- Establish ratios of librarians and counsellors to number of students
 - The union proposes changes to Article 11 to create and enhance workload protections for counsellors and librarians.
 - The union proposes that the class definition of a counsellor be updated to reflect changes to, and professional obligations of, those faculty roles.
 - The union proposes changes to the faculty complement to create an adequate number of full-time faculty for students.

To contact your CAAT-A bargaining team, please write to: bargaining2017@gmail.com

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