

The Abuse of Part-Time Faculty at Fanshawe College

Special Edition/*The Educator*/OPSEU Local 110

A Warning from Seneca College

Seneca College administrators David Agnew and Joy McKinnon have recently announced they will drastically reduce the number of partial-load faculty at Seneca. The largest college in the system will be staffed primarily with part-timers, sessionals, and a dwindling remnant of full-time faculty. This provocative action appears to open a second phase in the planned elimination of secure employment in the college system. In the early 1990s, the ratio of full-time (FT) to non-full-time faculty (NFT) in the Ontario college system was approximately 80FT/20NFT. 25 years later it has fallen to 30FT/70NFT. Full-time faculty are being systematically phased out, and now partial-load are evidently next. What has happened at Seneca can happen here, and we are already moving in their direction. If we do not push back, the colleges will become command structures staffed almost exclusively by contingent workers.

Seneca College and Fanshawe College, like all Ontario colleges to varying degrees, exploit the labor of part-time faculty. The practice, sanctioned by law and condoned by government, undermines education, disserves students, and damages local communities. Part-time faculty are paid a fraction of what their full-time and partial-load colleagues receive for comparable work and are paid significantly less than part-time faculty in the universities. They have no protections, no security, and little prospect of improving their condition. Many are consigned to a permanent and growing underclass working in fear for low pay and no benefits. Our part-time colleagues are dedicated and conscientious. Some of them welcome part-time work, but a growing majority are part-time involuntarily. They would prefer partial-load employment and opportunities to apply for full-time; both prospects are now increasingly remote and may soon disappear.

Colleges claim they cannot afford to hire full-time and partial-load. Fanshawe College, however, plans to redirect \$25 million out of its operating budgets over the next five years to support capital projects. Fanshawe College **does** have the money to hire FT and PL but siphons this money off for other purposes (see highlighted sections of chart on pg. 4). Operational funds, which could be used to hire faculty, are instead allocated to subserve high-profile infrastructure projects. This practice is not isolated to Fanshawe College and is a contributing cause of the current hiring/funding crisis.

We believe the Ministry should investigate and curtail this practice because students, as well as teachers, are negatively affected. Students deserve teachers who are treated as professionals with reasonable pay, benefits, and protections who can be fully invested in their teaching and who are treated with dignity and respect. Instead, money is bled from students' tuition and/or matching

government grant to support building projects often entirely unrelated to their program of study. In one example at Fanshawe College, significant resources have been devoted to a single building serving a small number of students in a handful of programs. These projects are built on the backs of part-time teachers and with money pulled from students' pockets in the form of 'allocated' tuition dollars and/or government grant.

Part-Time Then and Now

Part-time teaching in Ontario colleges, once a rite of passage for aspiring full-time teachers or an opportunity for retirees to use valuable lifetime skills, has become instead a desperate lottery generating revenue by offering up increasingly rare full-time positions at ever longer odds. A vast contingent workforce of involuntary part-timers is not what the founders of the college system envisioned. The *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* (CCBA) used to exclude part-timers from union representation, but the act has now been amended to allow part-timers to organize for collective bargaining. We must actively support them in their quest for dignified working conditions, benefits, protections, and representation.

If the colleges insist on hiring part-time, they should at least hire partial-load, which respects the dignity of employees by providing competitive pay, benefits, and the right to representation. The occasional use of part-timers for special purposes is one thing, but deliberate exploitation of supposedly temporary workers over multiple terms is abusive. At Fanshawe College, frontline managers are routinely pressured to hire part-time over partial-load, although hiring part-time increases workload for them and their support staff colleagues, contributes to crowding, and costs them and students good teachers who cannot make ends meet on only one or two classes.

No one should be without some say in how her work is managed, especially if the work is considered professional. We want this fundamental right extended to part-time faculty. Partial-load have some (not enough) protections, but part-time and sessional have none. Full-time faculty need to make common cause with their partial-load, part-time, and sessional colleagues and reject this two-tier cast system, not only because it is morally wrong, but because the durability of their own positions are undermined by the existence of poorly paid unprotected workers whom management will use as a cost-cutting option to underfund, and finally abandon, public-service education.

Many full-time faculty members recognize the current hiring situation as inequitable and want to change it. What can they do? They can speak **to** and then **for** part-timers who cannot speak for themselves because they are exposed to reprisals. They can befriend their part-time colleagues and show solidarity with them in their struggle. If they work as coordinators, they can resist the practice of hiring part-time and sessional instead of partial-load. They can pressure their union to explore representation for part-time faculty and better conditions for partial-load.

Reach out to your part-time colleagues. Extend them your support. If you are a full-time faculty member, protected by your union, you enjoy the privilege of standing up for the integrity of your

profession and can advocate for protecting part-time, increasing partial-load, and providing opportunities to apply for full-time. The provocative actions of these Seneca College administrators must not stand as a precedent for what the Ontario college system will become. We must join with our part-time colleagues to ensure they have the power to protect themselves, and with that power, combined with the power of their partial-load and full-time colleagues, we can work to defend the interests of students and the integrity of public education.

Officers of Local 110

President's Message: Are You Ready for This?

The slogan for the OPSEU College Faculty division is "We're here for you." The public relations intent of the catch phrase is that the word "you" is meant to refer to our students. However, like many other taglines, it can be read another way. The "you" could be the citizens of Ontario as colleges are an integral part of our communities and the economy.

Or it could refer to our faculty members. The problem is, at least legally, we're not here for all of you. Our bargaining unit includes full-time and partial-load faculty and thanks to some artificial divisions in the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*, part-time and sessional must be in a separate unit.

Elsewhere in this edition you will learn about how Seneca College has transferred work from partial-load to part-time and sessional. This has happened at Fanshawe College through the years.

We've also seen all non-full time faculty denied the right to participate in various activities, denied the right to know what is going on in their academic department, and denied compensation for any work outside the classroom.

It is time to act. You may recall that we've tried to organize part-time and sessional faculty before. It's time to try again. This union must be a voice for all faculty members. In the interim, colleges can voluntarily agree to include all faculty in the bargaining unit.

To forward the goal of organizing all college faculty, your Local put forward an amendment to the CAAT Academic bylaws at the OPSEU College Faculty Divisional meeting last month. I'm pleased to report our motions were adopted. Organizing all college faculty within OPSEU is now a priority and goal of the CAAT Academic Division.

Whatever it takes, as long as it takes: we must do this. When the organizing drive starts, we'll need you to engage your colleagues. We know that some faculty are not looking for full-time positions. However, full-time or not, college jobs should be good jobs. It's time for those of us with good jobs to be advocates for creating more good jobs in our community. We will need your help. Are you ready?

Darryl Bedford

The chart below is reproduced from page 4 of the **Board of Governors Capital Plan Report – Meeting #531 – October 23, 2014**. Added highlights indicate the redirection of **operating funds to capital reserve**.

Five Year Capital Plan September, 2014
Schedule A

Capital Reserve* (April 1, 2014)		6,200,000
Sources of Financing		
a) Government Support	7,520,000	
b) Fundraising/Donor Support	48,550,000	
c) College Operating	25,100,000	
d) College Working Capital / Third Party Financing	57,450,000	
	138,620,000	
Less: Planned Capital Projects		
	% completed	
e) Building Infrastructure, Renewal and Site Services	49%	5,090,000
f) Classroom / Lab / Office Renovations	18%	25,540,000
g) James N. Allan Campus Renovation	21%	4,000,000
h) Food Service Upgrades	1%	2,480,000
i) Centre for Digital and Performance Arts	93%	1,410,000
j) Fanshawe Aviation Centre	42%	5,050,000
k) Wellness/Fitness Centre	0%	21,470,000
l) London Downtown Projects	0%	65,890,000
m) London Psychiatric Hospital (IO)	0%	7,690,000
		138,620,000
Capital Reserve (March 31, 2019)		6,200,000

Capital Reserve* – is an allocation of the Accumulated Operating Fund that enables the College to provide for future capital improvements as defined in Board Policy D-10 (Financial Condition). [Note: Capital includes things such as land, buildings and renovations.]