



Humber College Faculty Union

FACULTY BULLETIN

February 8, 2006

Strike Vote 80.4% in Favour

In the highest ever strike vote ever in Ontario's colleges, faculty have voted 80.4 % in favour of a strike on March 7th if we do not reach a fair settlement before that date. At Humber, 67% voted in favour of a strike. The message to management could not be clearer.

"The Rae Report clearly outlines the need for quality improvements in the colleges. Quality is linked to improvements in the workload formula, but management just says 'No' to the faculty team's proposals for improvement," said Ted Montgomery, chair of the bargaining team. *"I hope this strike mandate will impress upon this employer the need to bargain a fair settlement."*

What Happens Now?

Further talks are scheduled for February 15 and 16. The strong strike vote gives our bargaining team more power at the table. A settlement now depends on management's willingness to table a fair, reasonable and responsible offer. We must also ensure that students, the public, and the government understand our workload and staffing issues.

In the meantime, strike preparations begin. Bargaining may continue right up to the deadline. We'll keep you informed. You can also check www.opseu.org and our soon-to-be-launched local website – www.humberfacultyunion.org.

There is much work to be done! We need people ASAP to take a turn staffing the information tables Local 562 will set up at both campuses to communicate our issues to students and support staff. Please contact Maureen Wall, Local 562 President, at ext. 4007, or one of the other Local officers or stewards to get involved.

What Should You Do Now? Turn Up the Heat!

All faculty members, their families and friends can contribute to obtaining a fair settlement and avoiding a strike on March 7.

The McGuinty government has been making high profile announcements about the Quality Improvement Fund for colleges and universities. This additional funding is tied to recommendations in the Rae report that the colleges hire more full-time faculty and support staff and make other changes that directly improve students' education.

But so far, college admin are not willing to use the quality money for collectively bargained improvements, i.e. improvements that faculty have a direct influence over. At Humber, for instance, admin said they might spend quality fund money on things like a new entrance on the college and a new commons or learning area. Quality?

Between now and March 7, you can make a difference by e-mail or telephoning your M.P.P., Dalton McGuinty, or Chris Bentley, Minister of Colleges and Universities. Tell them that the McGuinty liberals will squander the post-secondary good will they want to achieve if they allow college admin to force a province-wide faculty strike rather than addressing our well-documented workload concerns.

For e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for MPPs, McGuinty or Bentley, go to www.ontla.on.ca or for direct links go to the College Student Alliance website – www.collegestrike.com.

If There Is a Strike

The *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* states that in the event of a strike, all bargaining unit employees are on strike and can not be paid. All academic work that we are involved in ceases. This includes field practice, clinical placements, CE classes, on-line activity, curriculum development, tutoring students, or assigning work to be completed independently during a strike.

The principle is simple. Withdrawing our labour by striking is a last resort. But once a strike has been called, anyone engaging in the “struck” work is strikebreaking, thereby potentially prolonging the strike and causing more hardship for everyone, including the students. If any college permits such activity, they are subject to penalties of up to \$25,000 a day under the CCBA.

Humber admin has said that all daytime classes and programs would be suspended during a strike. This includes classes at Guelph-Humber. CE Work: The Union’s position is that CE work by bargaining unit employees is included in the strike. OPSEU will take action against any college that requires or allows bargaining unit employees to do CE work during a strike.

Strike Pay: All signed-up full-time and partial load members of OPSEU who participate in strike duties can collect OPSEU tax-free strike pay of \$125 per week plus \$20 per week for each dependant. The Local 562 reserve fund will be used to double the strike pay to \$250 per week plus \$40 for each dependant.

Benefits: In 2004 if there had been a strike OPSEU would have covered all Sun Life benefits. We don’t yet know if that is the case this year, but will let you know as soon as it is confirmed. In the meantime, it is best to delay or reschedule dental appointments you have scheduled during the period of a potential strike.

Pensions: Though neither you nor Humber pay into the pension plan during a strike, you would not lose any entitlement you have earned. You would have the option to buy back credits for the period of the strike. For the purpose of calculating service, any month in which there is one day at work counts as a month of service. This means that if a strike began March 7th and ended before the end of April, both months would count as service.

What Can You Tell Your Students?

The message to students is that we hope to achieve a settlement before the strike date of March 7th. If students ask about the possibility of losing their year, tell them that the College Relations Commission is required to inform the government if they feel the students’ year is in jeopardy during a strike. This happened during the 1984 and 1989 strikes. Faculty were returned to work, the semester was extended and monetary compensation was ordered for faculty who made up the time.

Direct students to www.collegestrike.com, the provincial College Student Alliance site.

Strike Preparation Meetings

All members of OPSEU 562 should attend, even if you can’t attend the full meeting. Be sure that you are fully informed of the arrangements if there is a strike beginning March 7th.

Lakeshore

Wednesday, March 1

3:30 – 5:00

Small Cafeteria - A170 (aka the Blue Room)

North

Thursday, March 2

3:30 – 5:00

Community Room

Please complete the attached OPSEU MEMBERS PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM and bring or send it to H109. The form is required for Strike Pay and will provide us with up-to-date contact information. We suggest setting up an outside email account if you don’t have home email.