

CAAT- part-time workers campaign

The part-time academic and support staff workers in the college system have been waiting for justice since October 2008! The College Employer Council has been putting every roadblock possible in the way of allowing part-time workers to exercise their right to form a union and bargain collectively. It has been more than two years since part-time academic workers cast their votes to join OPSEU. CAAT Academic and Support Divisional Executives as well as OPSEU leadership have called on this government to intervene. We want them to open the ballot boxes and count the votes now! This year we targeted our own employer. We thank all those who took part in the rally.

Health and Safety Training in the Colleges

On May 10, 1994, CAAT-A, CAAT-S and the Colleges entered into a tripartite agreement around Health and Safety training (Central Agreement for the Delivery of the Health and Safety Core Certification Program for the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology). Specifically, the three parties agreed to use instructors approved by the Workers Health and Safety Centre, as the sole provider of the training. It is important to note this agreement was NOT part of any negotiated collective agreement settlement.

The name of the training was changed to Certification Part One and Two in the early 2000s. Everything else about the training remained the same. However, the Colleges have argued that this name change was sufficient to make the 1994 agreement null and void.

CAAT-A disagrees with the Colleges' interpretation. The letter did not stipulate an end date, thus it is our interpretation that no one party can determine the agreement null and void. As noted earlier, this agreement was reached outside of a collective agreement. We stated that the colleges could not use the Collective bargaining process to put an end to this agreement. The council has agreed to further discussions.

Ontario budget does not touch quality of education

In the recent Ontario budget, McGuinty announced that 60,000 extra spaces would be slated, a third of these for the Colleges. Yet there was nothing in this budget about hiring faculty to accommodate additional student spaces and nothing about additional funding to go into the classroom to ensure quality of instruction.

Instead we have to deal with the continued reality of Ontario College classrooms where chronic under-funding of the system has meant cuts in departments and programs; hiring freezes for full-time professors and at the same time more and more reliance on part-time and sessional instructors; the largest class sizes in the country; and the worst student-to-faculty ratio.

Students and parents are carrying the burden of the cost of post-secondary education, and we must join ranks with them in our fight. Ontario students pay the highest tuition in Canada and owe almost \$2.3 billion to the Ontario government and millions more to banks and private financial institutions.

Ontario budget cont.

It amounts to privatizing our system with record high levels of student debt, a reduction in quality and for many the outright denial of access to higher education. The Ontario government budget is just one more sign that the McGuinty government wants to pretend that they are supporting education, but at the same time they are pushing us into a corporate model, a cheap labour province. We must ask ourselves: what kind of Ontario do we want?

Bill 168

Recently, the **Health & Safety Committee** requested information from each of the locals; specifically the committee was looking for changes to college policy regarding bullying and harassment; training around Bill 168; and grievances launched on the basis of Bill 168. Attached please find the summary of this information to date.

OntarioLearn

According to *OntarioLearn's 2010 Annual Report*, it is "a consortium of 22 colleges devoted to the development and delivery of high quality, accessible, online learning opportunities." (p. 1) We have grave concerns about these claims. For example, while they boast a retention rate of 89% (p. 7), their retention rate is defined as "...the % of students who were [merely] assigned a final grade."

To begin the process of addressing our concerns, OPSEU researcher officer Manzur Malik has written to each of the colleges' Information & Privacy Officers with an FOI request. (Each union president has received a copy of the letter.) Some of the information sought included the names and status of OntarioLearn faculty; courses being developed and offered; money given to OntarioLearn; and breakdown of revenue from students' fees.

The range of OntarioLearn activities from college to college is enormous. Again according to their Annual Report, "hosting activities" registrations ranged from a high of 15,171 registrations at one college to a low of 0 at another. This "variance...is attributable to a confluence of factors which may include available financial and human resources and timing." (p.4) This kind of jargon explains nothing and hides a great deal. Check out the full report at the following:

<http://www.ontariolearn.com/reports/OntarioLearn-Annual%20Report09-10.pdf>

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