

NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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February 10, 2010

College faculty vote results too close to determine

TORONTO – Results of the vote by faculty in Ontario’s 24 community colleges on the employer’s last contract offer are too close to determine whether the offer has been accepted or rejected.

Faculty have voted 51 per cent to accept the employer’s offer, a margin of just 210 votes. Now at issue is the number of mail-in votes, over 300 ballots, which once received could change the vote results. Those results may not be known for up to 10 days or more.

Ted Montgomery, chair of the OPSEU bargaining team for the faculty, says that the union will have to get a clear determination of the final vote count before any decisions are made.

“Right now we do not have a clear and final majority either way,” Montgomery said. “Until we know for sure whether our members have accepted or rejected the employer offer, we cannot move forward.”

Montgomery said that if the offer is ultimately rejected, the union will then determine a new strike date and call on the Colleges to return to the bargaining table to negotiate a fair collective agreement.

“If rejected, we will ask the employer to immediately resume negotiations,” Montgomery said. “And, failing a negotiated contract, we will again urge the Colleges to submit all outstanding issues to binding arbitration.”

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas says if the eventual outcome is a rejection of the employer’s offer, a strike can still be completely avoided.

“We do not want any disruption to the students,” Thomas said. “We have maintained the position all along that if we can’t get an agreement, binding arbitration is how we want to proceed. If the Colleges don’t agree, then they and they alone will be responsible for jeopardizing the education of 200,000 Ontario college students.”

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