

Newsbreak

Volume 21, Issue 2
December 2010

School Of Hands-off Technology

by Paul Michaud, Professor, School of Applied Technology

While we were talking about recent events in the School of Applied Technology, one of my colleagues suggested that we were moving towards a “School of Hands-off Technology.” We laughed, thinking this was a good turn-of-phrase, but then I started to think more about what has been happening in the School of Applied Technology.

When I started at the College, I was told that the differences between universities and colleges were the smaller classes, the closer relationship between students and teachers, and the hands-on, practical curriculum. In the programs I have been involved with, we have always prided ourselves on having a practical, relevant curriculum.

Consider some of what has happened recently in the engineering technology programs:

- ☒ Class sizes have increased
- ☒ Lab sizes have increased
- ☒ All first year courses have had the number of credits reduced from 4 to 3. (Some have suggested that students will be attracted to programs with fewer credits)
- ☒ Courses have had the number of teacher contact hours reduced from 4 to 3. This has been done by assigning a teacher only for the first hour of the labs.

“Teaching assistants”/technologists are supervising the remaining period of the lab.

- ☒ It is now common for the course lecturer to only teach some of the lab sections of the course. In some cases, the lecturer does not teach any of the course labs.
- ☒ Currently, with the combination of lecture teacher, lab teachers and “teaching assistants”, there are as many as 4 people involved in the delivery of one section of a course. (Just who are the students thinking of when they fill out the Student Feedback Questionnaires?)
- ☒ The union has been told that teaching does not happen in the labs and that teachers should deliver the theory and technologists cover the practical demonstrations in labs.
- ☒ The use of non-fulltime teachers is increasing as enrollment grows and as fulltime faculty who leave are not replaced.

Thinking about it, talking about moving towards a School of Hands-off Technology isn’t much of a joke.



Inside this issue:

Partial load	4	Labour Council update	8
Workers bear burden	6	The matter of degrees	9
Freedom of speech.	7	Teaching at Humber.	12

Who will look after our interests?

by Sylvia Ciuciura, Newsbreak Editor

Many of us received a phone call at home on the November 28 weekend from Smokey Thomas, OPSEU President. He asked each of us to calculate our wage loss, email our MPP, and support wage freeze protests. Are you planning to do this?

“*The decline of the self-destructive middle class*”, an article by Thomas Walkom in the Toronto Star, December 1, 2010, quotes a study written by economist Armine Yalnizyan for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The study shows that the top one per cent of the population, those earning an average of \$405,000, received more than 30 per cent of the extra income generated in the decade, 1997 to 2007.

How seriously have you analyzed your economic situation and the impact of a wage freeze? On the OPSEU website, there is a letter to send to your MPP on email

and a calculator you can use to determine the dollar amount that you would lose in a wage freeze.

The article by Walkom is also available on the OPSEU website at www.opseu.org

If we do not look after our own interests, who else will do that for us?

Probably no one. 🇺🇸



NewsBreak is a publication of the Humber College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 562, intended to provide information and stimulate discussion. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. All articles and letters should be signed, though in some circumstances the author's name will be withheld upon request. We encourage thoughtful discussion that respects human rights. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length, and clarity.

Articles reporting on union business will be signed and will include the author's position of responsibility in the local. Where an article has the author's name only, the views are those of the author. You may e-mail the editor: sylvia.ciuciura@humber.ca or drop materials at the Faculty Union office – H109, North Campus, ext. 4007.

OPSEU Local 562 Stewards and Officers

President - Orville Getz

1st Vice-President - Paul Michaud

2nd Vice-President - vacant

Chief Steward - Audrey Taves

Treasurer - Sylvia Ciuciura

Secretary - Robert Mills

Allan Bradstreet

Marek Czekanski

Allan Guttman

Janet Hollingsworth

Larry Horowitz

Pam Johnson

Rick Law

Donna Miller

Robert Mills

Bernie Monette

Joey Noble

Gene Rychlewski

Paul Suda

Yuri Sura

Board of Governors Faculty Rep - Franca Giacomelli

Local 562 Admin Assistant - Michelle Albert

NewsBreak Editor - Sylvia Ciuciura



E-mail to Editor

sylvia.ciuciura@humber.ca

Surface / Internal Mail

OPSEU Local 562

Room H109, North Campus

Humber College

205 Humber College Blvd.

Toronto, ON M9W 5L7

opseu562@yahoo.ca

OPSEU Local 562 Website:

www.humberfacultyunion.org

OPSEU Website: www.opseu.org





President's notes

by Orville Getz, OPSEU Local 562 President

Collective Agreement

The document is available on the Local's website at humberfacultyunion.org. OPSEU has sent the print contract out to tender and they should be printed in the near future. Hard copies will be delivered to all faculty mail-boxes once they have been received from OPSEU. We are anticipating they will be shipped to us in the next few weeks.

Children's Christmas Party

Once again, the Local has agreed to co-sponsor the children's Christmas party which will be held this year on Saturday, December 4th. We believe this is a worthwhile endeavor and hope that our members take advantage of this seasonal event. The Support Staff union and the Office of the President also play a major role in helping to ensure an enjoyable time for all Humber employees and their families.

SWF –Your Contract with the College

The SWF is your record of your assigned workload at the College. You should be actively involved in discussing your workload before your SWF is issued. Check your SWF to ensure that evaluation factors have not changed since the last time you taught a particular course. Also, be aware of student numbers in each class. You can ask for a student audit at anytime if you believe your numbers are inaccurate. If you ask for an audit, the college will do an official audit on November 1 and March 1. If there is a change which places you in overtime, you will be paid retroactively

to the beginning of the SWF period. Under a new section in the Collective Agreement (11.1 F2) if your student numbers total more than 260, you should be receiving additional assistance or additional hours should be attributed to your current 4 hours out of class assistance total. You should receive an additional .015 hour for every student in excess of 260. Check to make sure this is happening.

Benefits Coverage at Humber

All fulltime and partial load faculty need to be aware of the fact there is a process for changing your benefits coverage. The Joint Insurance Committee has confirmed that there is a rule which states that you must notify Human Resources of a change in circumstance, e.g., marital status, spouse losing their coverage, addition of child, within 31 days of the event happening. This is the time frame you must use if you wish to change any coverage under the benefits plan.

School Awards Nights

In November, the Local presented seven of the annual faculty union scholarships to students. We have 8 scholarships each worth \$500. These are presented on a rotating basis in the various schools each year in memory of former presidents of the Local and of faculty who have past away in the last year. Two of the 8 awards are specifically designated as the John Stammers Scholarship in the Business School and SCAPA. These awards are in memory of John Stammers who was killed on the picket line at Centennial College during the 2006 strike. 🙏

Partial load health benefit update

by Pam Johnson, Professor, School of Creative & Performing Arts



Although the union put forward several demands for partial load faculty, including an attempt to create some job security, the colleges offered very little to partial loaders in the new contract. The one exception is an improvement in access to health benefits.

According to the contract, partial load faculty will automatically be included in the extended health benefits they are entitled to unless they decline in writing. Also, their benefits will be automatically bridged to the next contract if it is within 6 months of the previous contract.

Under the terms of the collective agreement, the college benefits administrator must meet with all partial load faculty to enrol them in

the health benefits program and if faculty so choose, to enrol them in the optional benefits (paid for by the employee). If you are a partial load employee and you have not been contacted by the benefits administrator, what should happen?

If you have a break of more than six months between contracts, you can choose to pay for the benefits in this period and then be bridged to your next contract.

An excellent package of information about partial load benefits is available at the OPSEU 562 faculty website www.humberfacultyunion.org/contract/



Children's Christmas Party

by Elyse McKenzie, Public Relations student

This Christmas season is starting early. From 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 4th, Humber staff and their children will get a chance to celebrate the Christmas season at the annual Humber College staff and children's Christmas party. Sponsored by the president's office with generous support from Faculty Union Local 562 and Support Staff Union Local 563, the event offers all Humber staff and their families the chance to relax, be entertained, and celebrate the holidays together.

Organized by a section of the Public Relations certificate program, this year's party theme is "North Pole Rock n' Roll", and will

feature a variety of fun, "rock n' roll" themed activities for kids and adults alike. The event features craft tables and a gift room for kids, games, music and a delicious breakfast buffet, prepared and served by the elves in Santa's kitchen.

All Humber College staff are welcome to bring their families and children of all ages to the North Pole Rock n' Roll for a morning of fun and festivities. But make sure you've been good all year as there WILL be a visit from Santa!

Get your tickets today at both the North and Lakeshore campus bookstores!



Chief Steward's report

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward



The Winter SWFs are out, and I'm still marking essays and exams for the Fall semester. Non-stop busy!

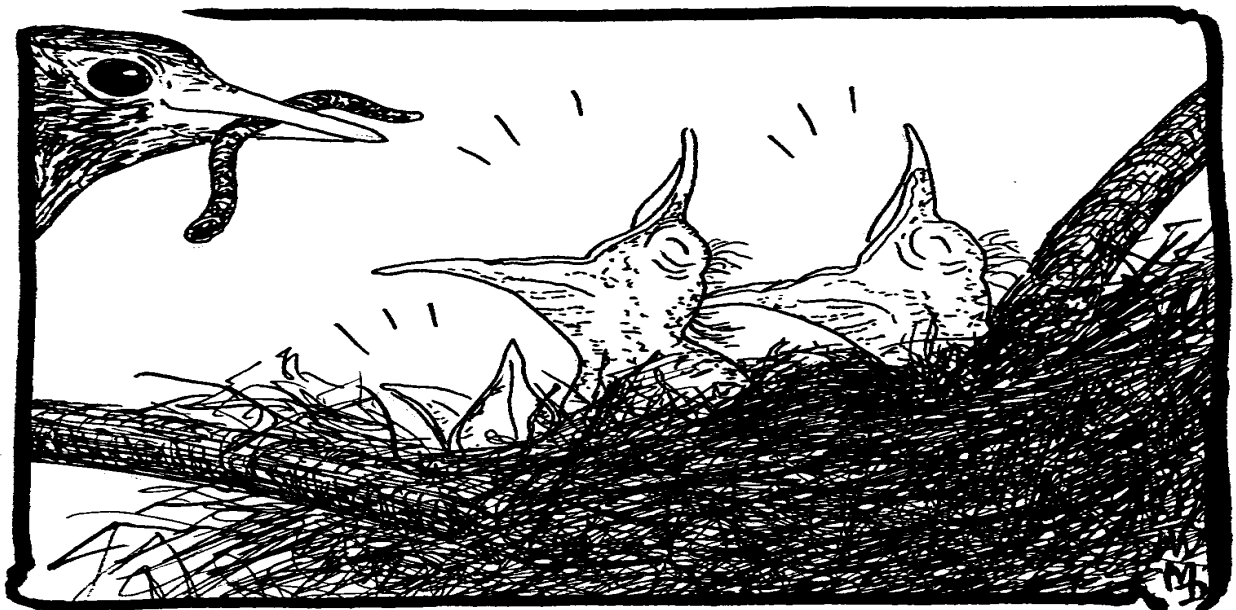
numbers. You may be entitled to an overtime payment.

Just a few comments as we head for the end of the semester:

1. Was your Fall SWF at 43 hours or more? If so, have a look at the student numbers on your SWF for each course and compare that to the number of students you actually had in your course as of November 15th. If you had more students in your classes than were entered on your SWF, ask your Associate Dean to recalculate your SWF with the November student

2. How does your Winter SWF look? Are you confused by all of the numbers? If your SWF doesn't accurately reflect your class preparation or evaluation time, you can change that. Workload issues can be addressed and resolved.

Please call ext 4007 or drop by H109 to discuss the above or any workload related issues at any time.



It pays to speak out!

Workers bear burden of provincial 'restraint'

by Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President of OPSEU



A \$35,000-a-year caregiver in a nursing home doesn't usually get much news coverage. She feeds our parents and grandparents. She helps them use the bathroom. She tries to enrich their final years. Sometimes she holds their hands as they die. None of this makes the news. It's behind the scenes, where most working people spend their days. But these days, if an arbitrator says a caregiver's wages should keep up with inflation, suddenly she's on the front page.

Under Dalton McGuinty's wage-freeze plan, our caregiver is supposed to take a two-year pay cut equal to the rate of inflation. At the normal rate, that adds up to 4 percent, or about \$1,400 a year. (This year, the cut is even bigger because of HST inflation). The premier says he "just can't believe" a lab technologist who is trained to diagnose 45 types of cancer doesn't want to take a pay cut.

Maybe he needs to look through the microscope and see what his wage "freeze" is really all about. McGuinty says cuts in real wages will protect services, save jobs and pay down the deficit. Sounds good – too bad it's not true.

The fact is, none of the money workers lose will go to any of these things. All of it is going somewhere else. When fully phased in, the savings from the wage freeze could reach \$1.8 billion a year.

Where is it really going?

It's going to fund the premier's \$2.4 billion-a-year cut to the corporate income tax rate. Every single dollar workers lose through the wage freeze will go to the profits of companies like the Royal Bank of Canada, Rogers and Imperial Oil. That's what my members can't stand.

The premier says Ontario needs corporate tax cuts. He says they will create jobs. This mantra from the Mike Harris days has only one purpose: to conceal a massive transfer of wealth from the pockets of working people to the bonuses of CEOs.

The facts about corporate tax cuts don't fit Dalton's version. In its 2010 *Competitive Alternatives* study, KPMG said Canada's "total tax index" was the second-lowest among 10 competitor countries. Toronto had lower taxes for business than all U.S. and European cities studied.

Between Parliament Hill and Queen's Park, we've had 10 years of corporate income tax cuts in Ontario. In theory, this should have boosted investment. In fact, the rate of investment has actually gone down.

In its 2010 budget, the federal government ranked cuts to corporate income taxes as the worst way to stimulate job creation. Federal economists said every dollar spent on these no-strings-attached corporate income tax cuts creates just 30 cents' worth of economic activity.

In contrast, "measures to help low-income people and the unemployed" boost the economy by \$1.70 – more than five times as much. Spending on infrastructure and public services ranked nearly as high.

The best path to a strong Ontario is to put money into the pockets of working people. It is to put money into child care and transit and post-secondary education. It is to feed and house people who can't find work.

Freedom of speech, Afghanistan and Palestine

by Fahira Eston, Professor, Liberal Arts & Sciences

He was denied entry into Canada a year and a half ago, labelled a terrorist supporter and financier with undesirable political views. George Galloway, member of the British Labour party and Parliament for more than 20 years, is back on tour with an anti-war message and reverence for international law.

In his speech at the York Islamic Centre on November 20, he addressed the audience with three main issues of political importance for all citizens of Canada:

1. Freedom of speech
2. Afghanistan military mission and its extension
3. Palestine and international law

First, after the immense effort by Canadian lawyers Barbara Jackman and Hadayet Nizami, the Canadian Court overturned Jason Kenny's decision earlier to ban Mr. Galloway from entering Canada and allowed Galloway to convey his political message. The judge concluded that Galloway was not a security risk but that it was Galloway's political views that the government did not want the public to hear, which is an insufficient excuse for denial of entry.

As all witness the current activities of the federal government, it is important to vigorously defend free speech. Galloway's example makes clear that this right to freedom is easy to abolish, and could be stripped from Canadians in the future.

His victory in our court is our victory as well.

Second, the Afghanistan military mission represents nothing but the old colonial

activities of the western nations and Galloway predicts it is doomed from beginning to end. He emphasized that the Afghan army was trained for the past nine years, and if it did not achieve desirable objectives, the probability of a triumphant Western ending in this mission is very slim. He said that even Alexander the Great was not able to succeed in his conquest of this land, and the prospects of victorious and continuous occupation remain very bleak. "The Taliban does not have any training, and it is doing okay!" George said. Unfortunately, 35 per cent of the trained Afghan army takes the back door to join the Taliban.

According to the polls, more than 70 per cent of Canadians do not support the extension of the Afghan mission and yet the federal government is ignoring the majority's will.

Third, Palestine is of vital importance because the United Nation's human rights declaration is violated and its future remains unresolved and must be considered urgent. Continuous ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population from East Jerusalem and the illegal construction of the Jewish settlements on the unlawfully appropriated Arab land is now supported by Canada's federal government. A monstrous separation/apartheid wall, standing at nine meters high and 450 km long, violates international law and denies Palestinians their right to dignity and equality by disallowing normal living and self-determination. Palestine appears as nothing more than an open prison for its displaced population.

continued on page 8

Labour Council update

Rob Ford's Toronto

by Pam Johnson, Professor, School of Creative & Performing Arts

Despite the fact the City of Toronto is currently enjoying a budget surplus, Rob Ford was swept into office as the new mayor on the promise of cutting waste. Ford has promised to cut thousands of public service jobs and privatize some services. Although it remains to see what he will actually do, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council is continuing to promote its campaigns for public services and a publicly funded transit system.

The Labour Council website sites ample evidence that privatization does not save money or provide better services. Labour Council is supporting a *Public Services for All* campaign and a *Keep the TTC* public campaign to counter the misinformation about privatization. For example, in every place that public transit has been partially or fully privatized cost have gone up and services have gone down. (See: keepTTCpublic.ca)

Ford has threatened to do away with the

city's fair wage policy.

The policy was put place in 1893 to keep construction employers and contractors from exploiting workers by paying them the lowest wage they can get away with. Many workers in construction were and still are immigrants in marginal circumstances. Construction employers, whether their workers are unionized or not, must be paid the industry standard. Ford wants to do away with this to encourage 'competition'. This is the slippery slope to destroying good jobs and good services.

For more information on Toronto and York Region Labour Council campaigns, go to www.labourcouncil.ca.

Columnist and author, Linda McQuaig, will speak about her new book, *The Trouble with Billionaires*, at the next Labour Council meeting on December 2. 🗳️



Freedom of speech, Afghanistan and Palestine

continued from page 7

Galloway reminded his listeners that Palestinians are not responsible for the atrocities experienced by European Jewry in WWII by Nazi followers. Palestinians instead have become the victims of colonial racist plans for subjugation and occupation.

The old rule “no justice, no peace” applies today and it seems that while Israel is talking of others wanting to destroy it, what we see is that Palestine is quietly being cut up and appropriated. Galloway is going coast-to-coast

to remind Canada what it used to be, the land of the free: free to live and free to speak, free to respect other nations and international law, and free to practice human rights for all.

Despite the beliefs of ordinary Canadians, the elected representatives in the federal government practice the opposite. Galloway asks why Canadians have allowed their country to become a subcontracted embassy to Benjamin Netanyahu. 🗳️

The matter of degrees

by RM Kennedy, Vice-President of OPSEU Local 558 (Centennial College)
and editor of Unfettered.

It seems these days that everyone wants a degree and every college wants to give them one. But how did we get to a place that community colleges could start offering degrees?

In Ontario, the proclamation of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act* in 2000 made it possible for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to authorize community colleges to offer applied degree programs. Ushered in by the populist right wing government of Mike Harris, this was the same act that allowed private universities to set up shop in the province.

To make sure that students aren't hood-winked into buying the educational equivalent of a "lemon," the Ministry established an arms length body called the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) to assess and approve proposed degree programs. Across the country, a patchwork of similar legislative changes has opened up the degree landscape. But do more degree options actually serve our communities and our students better?

The up-side

Depending on who you are, there are many benefits to having more degree options in Ontario.

For the government, it's simply cheaper. One study estimates that educating a degree student in a community college costs the province 60% of what it costs in a university setting. The reasons for this are obvious.

Full-time college professors are paid less and are required to teach more classes than university professors. We receive substantially less professional development time and funding. And the army of part-time college teachers that keep the system going are paid a

fraction of what their part-time brethren in universities are paid. Even on the level of physical space, it is a rare occurrence for a college professor to have a room with a door.

For the community college, it offers prestige and opportunity. Having a degree option potentially attracts higher profile teachers and students, and gives administrators fancier titles to put on their business cards. It can promote applied research and innovation, and open up new pots of funding.

And for the student, whose needs should be at the centre of all discussions, it offers greater community based access to a degree. Students can work towards a degree—which dramatically improves their chance of earning a higher income—while staying closer to the supports of home and community. Combined with the community colleges' considerable expertise in applied learning, and clear vocational paths, an applied degree is an attractive option.

It ain't all win-win

Despite the benefits, we have plenty of reasons to be cautious about degree-mania. Two interrelated issues stand out.

1. Accreditation.

First, there is the matter of whether or not applied degrees are treated equally and recognized alongside university degrees. An answer to this question is not so easily discerned.

Ontario's *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act* allows the term 'degree' to be used by approved institutions after PEQAB assures the quality of the program.

Continued on page 10

The matter of degrees

continued from page 9

“Assuring quality,” however, is not the same as *accreditation*. In Canada, there is no national body that oversees institutional accreditation. As a result, the defacto criteria for recognizing degrees has been based on whether or not the institution qualifies for membership in AUCC, the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada. AUCC maintains vigorous criteria for institutional membership including, among other things, a governance structure that vests academic staff with decision making power over academic affairs, and the guarantee of academic freedom for faculty.

Currently, none of Ontario’s colleges qualify for this membership.

Without accreditation, students face the risk that what they worked so hard for won’t be recognized in all arenas. For example, international schools, to which the student might want to transfer, often look to the AUCC membership list to determine whether or not a degree is legitimate. And, anecdotal reports suggest that Canadian universities, who don’t always look upon college degrees fondly, sometimes block students who want to pursue graduate studies. On both fronts, more research is required to know what is really happening on the ground.

Applied degree programs offered jointly with universities have some protection because the partner university has AUCC affiliation. However, the freestanding programs are more at risk of degree discrimination.

2. Academic control.

The second central issue, then, is the very reason why we can’t get AUCC membership: *because college professors are denied academic freedom and academic decision-making power.*

In summary, PEQAB recognizes the quality of college degrees because the faculty and standards in these programs are excellent. However, AUCC doesn’t recognize Ontario’s colleges because college management refuses to treat college faculty like academics. Professors are denied academic freedom, and are frequently deprived of even the most basic say over our curriculum and pedagogy. Just see Chief Steward Warren’s article in this issue about several Centennial professors who were not allowed to give their students an essay question exam because their manager arbitrarily decided it should be a multiple choice exam. This is exactly why AUCC won’t recognize us.

A bachelor’s degree, including an applied one, is not just a career path, but an experience of higher education that opens us up to the wider world. Students engage in professional training, but also in critical thinking, inquiry, and debate about the world at large and their place in it. AUCC rightly recognizes that this cannot be accomplished if the teaching faculty themselves don’t have academic freedom.

If colleges want to offer degrees then they need to pony up and provide the conditions for college professors to actually be professors. This is not just about money (though more money is needed for sabbaticals and research). It’s about giving academic control back to those to whom it belongs: academics. The what and the how of academic governance in Ontario’s colleges can be worked out collaboratively – but as we saw in our last round of collective bargaining, management wasn’t willing to even entertain the conversation.

Let’s hope for the sake of our students and our communities that this changes. 🙏

Up at the Board

by Franca Giacomelli, Board of Governors Faculty Representative



The October meeting involved the approval of 2 new programs (Bachelor of Commerce Degree – Finance and Bachelor of Commerce Degree – Supply Chain Management) and several information items. Both of the new programs were well received and approved by the Board. In last month's article, I reported that Humber had received Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) approval on the very first Bachelor of Commerce Degree offered by a college in Canada. These new degrees, when approved by PEQAB, will be the second and third such degrees offered by Humber. The information items included a student panel on pathways to degrees (7 enthusiastic students reported on very successful transfers from Humber diploma to degree programs), an update was given on degree level breadth courses, healthy cash flow summaries were presented for both Humber and the University of Guelph-Humber, and Rani Dhaliwal presented a good news report on the status of major capital projects.

Board members were invited to attend the Higher Education Summit (November 21-22) hosted by Colleges Ontario. In addition, new members were also invited to attend an orientation session. I attended both, but I have to be honest, I went in with the attitude that the orientation was really intended for new external members, and with my 29 years at Humber, there was probably not much that I would learn...I was wrong. Over 70 new board members from across Ontario attended the Governors' Pre-Conference Orientation. The orientation was a full and intensive day of learning. We were provided with a copy of the Resource Manual for Governors (200+ pages!) and the objectives for the day included the

roles and responsibilities of a college board member, advice on the college governance framework, an introduction to some of the issues facing the college system, a discussion on the sources of information, opportunities to network with peers at other colleges, and the opportunity to identify and discuss factors that ensure board effectiveness.

The Summit was a very professional conference (attended by over 900 participants) that concluded with the presentation of the Premier's Awards. On day-1 of the conference, I attended presentations on College Sector Operating Entities (a discussion of the Ontario College Application Service, CON*NECT Strategic Alliances, Ontario College Quality Assurance Service), Directors' Liability, CAAT Pension Plan, social media, why Canada is falling down on innovation, and the future of education in Ontario. On day-2, I attended the economists panel discussion, followed by presentations on marketing colleges (The Power of an Idea), what colleges can do to get their stories in the mainstream media, and what will the jobs of the future be? The highlight of the day for me, however, was the keynote address given by Peter Mansbridge entitled *Canada and Canadians in a changing world*.

The conference generated much thoughtful discussion on several reoccurring themes including helping students, diverse populations, Aboriginal youth, pathways for all students, college degrees, apprenticeship programs, and the one that seemed to come up most often was the skills shortage (Rick Miner's reports *People Without Jobs: Jobs Without People*). The Colleges Ontario web-site has links to presentation materials and I would be happy to discuss any details. 🇨🇦

Teaching at Humber

By Larry Horowitz, Professor, School of Creative & Performing Arts

Teaching at Humber College ITAL has been an adventure. It's not just eleven years mentoring over a thousand young entertainers but, also the varying facilities in which I and other School of Creative & Performing Arts teachers have worked.

When I first started, my under-grad classes were held in a former computer lab with enormous windows revealing our class work to the multitudes passing in the hallways. This North Campus room still had computer theft alarms that would occasionally go off, usually at the most inappropriate time.

The next year, I was moved to the basement level of a nightclub complex at Yonge and Eglinton. It was a strange place to maintain academic decorum because there were often club personnel setting-up (even vacuuming) during the last hour of my class.

Next, I was moved to The Lakeshore Campus where we worked in a renovated and ancient, former mental health facility. What I remember most was the single men's bathroom in that entire "Building D" and the basement storage room that I shared, as an office, with another faculty member. Two flights of stairs to the water cooler or office supplies.

At last came September 2010. My comedy program was scheduled to move to the new Birmingham Centre of Creative and Performing Arts & Media Studios. This place is a renovated hockey arena. We joked that our next move would be an abattoir or similarly dubious place and some of us were not terribly optimistic about Birmingham.

However, I was immensely impressed on my first day. It was clean and well-lit. There was food and security in-house. Numerous rest-rooms and a nice office space that almost made me giddy. I was happy.

But like any new facility there were follow-up issues. Most important to the planning was that the various rooms be sound-proofed. This was lacking. The studio floors and the building's air quality are also current issues. We are assured these are being addressed.

A couple weeks ago, I arrived at 7:00 a.m. and noticed the front doors had not been unlocked. The security guard had arrived late. When she finally did arrive we also found that the auto-handicap door was not functioning. Next week, management arranged to have the doors open automatically and a new security guard was on duty.

One dawn I unlocked my office and a bird swooped past my face and flew in circles round the room much to the frustration of everyone who tried to capture it. Finally, a gentleman from maintenance was able to grab the exhausted starling and escort it outside. Who knows what is still to come. Still, it is never wrong for faculty to insist on the very best facilities for their students and for themselves. I know I will not fail to bring valid concerns to management's attention each and everytime I must.

