

# News Break

June 2008  
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## Members Remove Cap on Strike Contingency Fund

Among the items of business at the May 26 OPSEU 562 General Members meeting was a motion to remove the \$500,000 cap on the Local 562 Contingency Fund, so that the fund can continue to grow until it is cancelled or modified at a general membership meeting.

The motion was overwhelmingly supported, which means that the special 0.25% local dues levy, established in November 2004, will continue for the time being.

The guest speaker at the meeting was Jim Turk, executive director of CAUT, who spoke about the dangers and opportunities of the diminishing distinction between colleges and

universities. (For a summary of the key points from his talk, please see *Keep the best; beware of the worst*, on page 4.)

The other main item of business at the meeting was Local 562 elections.

### Acclaimed for the 2008—2010 term

President — Orville Getz  
2nd VP — Paul Michaud  
1st VP — Catherine Marrion  
Chief Steward—Robert Mills  
Treasurer — Aldo Papini  
Secretary — Audrey Taves  
Trustees — Wayne Sim & David Lockwood



Allan Bradstreet, Applied Tech; Donna Miller, Counselling; Audrey Taves and Pat Fors, Health Sciences, at the May 26 OPSEU Local 562 General Membership Meeting

# Mind the numbers gap

by Maureen Wall, NewsBreak Editor

“Mind the numbers gap” was the front page headline of the *NewsBreak* published last year at this time. Given the report that Humber has posted a \$23 million budget surplus for this year, that headline bears repeating.

The article accompanying the headline cited a number of figures—Humber’s significant budget surpluses and large reserve fund; hefty salary increases (10%+) for senior administrators; huge numbers of contract faculty.

In light of these figures, I posed the question, *when Humber seems to be in excellent financial health, why is it that . . .*

- *so many faculty are pressured (even bullied) to accept maximized workloads because “the program / school is financially strapped”?*
- *the number of full-time faculty hires has far from kept pace with student enrolment increases?*
- *the number of part-time faculty is steadily increasing?*
- *there is always ‘nickel and diming’ at the program and classroom level, while there seems to be money to spare towards the top of the ladder?*

A year later, my questions still stand.



**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 email the editor: [maureen.wall@humber.ca](mailto:maureen.wall@humber.ca) or drop materials at the Faculty Union office – H109, North Campus, ext. 4007.

## OPSEU Local 562 Stewards and Officers

President - Orville Getz  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President - Paul Michaud  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President - Catherine Marrion  
Chief Steward - Robert Mills  
Treasurer - Aldo Papini  
Secretary - Audrey Taves  
Sylvia Ciuciura  
Allan Guttman  
Larry Horowitz  
Maureen Hyland  
Rick Law  
Donna Miller  
Joey Noble  
Vidya Rampersad  
Gene Rychlewski  
Leo Smits  
Paul Suda  
Yuri Sura  
Maureen Wall

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# President's Notes

by Orville Getz, OPSEU 562 President

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## Report on Academic Divisional meeting

Delegates from the 24 Ontario colleges gathered May 31 and June 1 for the bi-annual divisional meeting. Local 562 delegates for the weekend, along with me, were Paul Michaud, Robert Mills and Maureen Wall.

### LTD Update

After much hard work on behalf of our members on Long Term Disability, we have managed to secure a second retroactive payment. This payment, approved at the divisional meeting, will bring those on LTD back up to 60% of their current salary step retroactive to September 1, 2007. This has certainly been a long battle to get our faculty members a benefit which they deserve and should not have been denied. The increase will take effect once management has been notified at the next Joint Insurance Committee meeting.

### Workload Task Force

This committee has finally been formed and will now start their work. At the request of management, the report deadline was extended from December 2008 to March 2009. This will still give the union time to develop our workload demands for the next round of bargaining, beginning in Spring 2009. All the

information which was collected during our study on workload after the 2006 strike has already been presented to the Task Force by the Union side. Management has yet to make a submission over this 2 year period.

### Drug card

This issue has been tabled by management at the last two rounds of bargaining. Though admin and support staff have a drug card, faculty have not accepted one in the past, as management could not guarantee that using it would not affect our current drug benefit plan to the detriment of our members.

The Council brought the matter to the Joint Insurance Committee and asked for agreement to bring in the drug card. The Council has now provided guarantees in writing that the drug card is only to provide an alternative form of payment and will not affect the definition of eligible drugs under the Extended Health Care Plan.

We passed a resolution at the divisional meeting to implement the drug card in accordance with the letter from the Council. This agreement for the drug card will now be incorporated into the next collective agreement in September 2009. ✍

## Summer union office coverage

Though the union office will not be staffed during the faculty vacation period of June 23 – August 22, Local 562 officers will be checking voice mail and email regularly.

If you have any SWF concerns or other questions during the summer vacation, please call extension 4007 and leave your message or email us at [opseu562@yahoo.ca](mailto:opseu562@yahoo.ca). We will

respond as soon as we can. Don't wait until your return on August 25 to contact us with an issue or concern, as this may be too late to deal with it effectively.

I wish everyone a very safe and happy summer vacation and we will see everyone upon your return on August 25. ✍

# Keep the best; beware of the worst

Jim Turk on opportunities and dangers of college/university mix



At our Local 562 General Membership meeting on May 26, we were fortunate to hear from Jim Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Turk told us that he has seen a real blurring of the distinction between colleges and universities across the whole country. He views this as a healthy development, which offers tremendous opportunity for faculty unions to build on the best of both college and university traditions. He cautions, however, that we must combat employer and government attempts to impose the worst of those traditions.

Here are the best and the worst as he outlined them in his talk.

## Best of college traditions

- Focus on teaching and on students
- Attention to educational relevance for the students
- Focus on meeting the needs of the community
- Workload language in our collective agreements
- Salary grids with a relatively flat structure (whereas salaries in university sector start quite low and rise to high levels only late in one's career, resulting in lower earnings over working life)
- Absence of hierarchical ranks

## Best of university traditions

- Firmly ensconced principle that academic decisions, such as curriculum, how students are assessed, etc. are made by faculty
- Governance through an empowered and faculty-dominated senate
- Principle that faculty-developed materials are their own intellectual property
- Recognition of scholarly work and service – usual expectation is 40% teaching, 40% scholarly work, and 20% service (includes committee, community and union work)
- Academic freedom in expression of views, approach to classroom work, methods of teaching and assessment
- System of tenure that provides real protection for academic freedom
- Institutional autonomy – academic decisions are made by the senate and can't be imposed by the government

As an illustration of what can happen if we lose the best and keep the worst, Jim Turk told us about what has happened at one B.C. college in recent years. The University College of the Caribou in Kamloops became Thompson Rivers University after the college president promised that he would not ask the government for additional funding if the college was given a university designation. After the college became a university, faculty gave up their workload language, and accepted university-style ranks - four ranks with 16 salary steps at each rank. 📖

(CAUT website - [www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca))

# Chief Steward's Corner

by Robert Mills, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward



## Ad Hoc Increase to Long Term Disability Payments

When a new collective agreement is signed, members who are on LTD receive an ad hoc increase to bring their incomes to 60% of the current salary. That is the only increase given to them. They do not receive any other increases that may occur over the life of the agreement. They lose money until the next collective agreement is signed.

In the past, most agreements have been for two years. However, our current collective agreement is for four years, so the loss of income for those on LTD over that period is even greater. Several LTD recipients have been challenging this.

At the Academic Divisional meeting on May 31 and June 1, we passed a motion presented by our Joint Insurance Committee reps to give those on LTD another increase retroactive to September 1, 2007.

The motion reads

*Be it resolved that there be a one-time adjustment to the LTD benefit, retroactive to September 1, 2007, to*

*bring the benefit level to 60% of current salary, and that this adjustment be without precedent and without prejudice.*

The motion will be taken to the Joint Insurance Committee for final approval. We understand that there is not a lot of opposition from the management JIC reps on this, since LTD is fully funded by OPSEU members, and therefore we hope the increase will occur fairly quickly. As well, there will be attempts in the next round of negotiations to get wording in the contract to avoid this problem in the future.

Thanks, in particular, to Humber LAS professor Steve Harrington for his efforts on getting this increase - by contacting Head Office and the College, and his help in giving us information to try to resolve the problem. His article on the issue, *Life on the Shoulder*, appeared in the May 2008 *NewsBreak*. We feel he had a large part to play in getting this second adjustment to happen. ☺

## Staffing grievances

We filed two grievances in the School of Health Sciences concerning the "clinical facilitators". In one, we are arguing for posting of at least 9 full-time positions, and probably more, on violations of the sessional 12 months in 24 time limits. The grievance has now gone to arbitration. The other grievance is regarding the classification of contract faculty working in clinical. It has also gone to arbitration. ✖



# Support Staff bargaining continues over summer

Excerpt from *Support Staff Bargaining Bulletin* #4 – May 21, 2008

The Colleges are crying poor as they always do around bargaining time, but let's be clear - they are just spinning a line. They had plenty of money to give themselves **generous** wage increases. (The average wage increase for college presidents was 32.5 per cent over the past three years - some got more than 50 per cent.)

And instead of planning their finances to create balanced budgets, they're aggressively creating budget surpluses. Don't get us wrong - we think balanced budgets are just fine, and running a surplus isn't a bad thing. BUT how can the Colleges say they don't have enough money to give us a fair wage increase?

Many of the Colleges pay lip service to us. They talk about the importance of our work and the contribution we make to the college system.

Those are nice words, and they're definitely true, but we're not seeing anything at the bargaining table that suggests they mean them.

Faculty are the public face of the college system and the work they do is very important, but make no mistake about it: Everyone needs support.

Anything the students need outside the

classroom is provided by us and anything the faculty need inside the classroom is provided by us. We make the colleges run.

College support staff want and deserve to be treated fairly and with respect for our contribution to Ontario's post-secondary education system. We expect to see that respect at the bargaining table and we won't accept less. . . .

College enrollment has increased by 44 per cent since 1990. All indications are that it is only going up. At the same time, the number of full-time support staff has only gone up 3 per cent. Our work is stretched beyond capacity and the demand on us continues to increase.



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## Part-Time and Sessional Workers Still Waiting

On April 29, a group of college part-timers came away from an intense day of lobbying at Queen's Park with a promise that the government would introduce legislation this spring to recognize their right to collective bargaining.

They are still waiting. We are all still waiting.

Are you listening,  
Mr. McGuinty?  
Mr. Milloy?





# Boardwalk

by Paul Pieper, Board of Governors Faculty Representative



## Good year for Board of Governors

**I**t always astounds me how quickly each year comes to a close, typically in a flurry of frenzied activity. For the Board it has been a very good year.

Concerning the Board, it has been a very active year with several innovations and significant undertakings. Of course the biggest news is that this was the first year with our new president, John Davies. From my Board perspective, he has performed very well, and because I was on the presidential selection committee, I am pleased that most faculty agree with the Board on the appropriateness of this selection. Most Humberites really appreciate John's high visibility at numerous college events and his very personable style.

The Board is better organized than it has been in years, with the major innovation being that it has instituted a standing Governance and Human Resources committee to increase the efficiency with which the Board conducts its business.

Although the average faculty will not notice much difference, one of the positive outcomes of the new committee is a very thorough search for new Board members which takes into consideration the need to have a broader community representation.

I cannot divulge who has been nominated, but there are some very interesting potential Board members. These are additions to an already impressive array of talented people who comprise the strongest Board in our recent history.

Our college is in an enviable position to the extent that we are in great financial shape.

Guelph-Humber was ahead of schedule in being able to pay back the initial investment. It has been both an academic and financial success. This year it will return an impressive \$4 million plus to be split between us and Guelph University.

According to our latest financial statements, which have just been approved for publication, we have again posted a significant budget surplus of approximately \$23 million.

While I agree with the need for our very active capital expansion plan, there are certainly many other priorities where this money could be spent: not the least of which is more full-time faculty. In my on-going conversations with our president, he assures us that he too would like to see more full time faculty.

There is little question that we need to expand our physical facilities and that currently there are some very favourable opportunities for us to strategically add to the very tight learning and office space that we have available. It has often been noted that Humber has one of the highest space utilization rates in the entire college system. Typically, it is a matter of striking the right balance.

I hope that you also had a successful and satisfying year. I am looking forward to celebrating the fruits of our labours as we finish the year with the up-coming convocation ceremonies.

Have a safe and interesting summer. ☺

Have a happy and  
safe summer.

Best regards,  
OPSEU Local 562  
Stewards and Officers



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