

Newsbreak

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Will change in labs reduce student learning?

By Frank Mee, Professor, School of Applied Technology

A trend is emerging at Humber College that should be a serious concern to all; course lab components in the School of Applied Technology are no longer staffed by faculty. They are staffed by support staff or non-faculty contract employees. Management will view this as a great idea as it will provide cost savings! Some money may be saved but money should certainly not be a major consideration.

Learning in a hands-on environment

The biggest problem with this new structure is that the support staff looking after these technology labs are not allowed to teach as the teaching function is restricted to faculty, so a major component of lab learning time may be converted to simply some sort of “busy time”. Since the community colleges were first conceived, the learning in a hands-on environment has been celebrated by all, especially industry. Having faculty in the lab - to direct activities, apply the classroom theories into the practice, demonstrate equipment and techniques, and correct problems through analysis and problem solving - was an integral part of learning.

College pays a reduced rate

The learning will not take place or at least will be severely diminished in the new structure,

not because the support staff looking after the labs are not able to teach but because the college and the collective agreements prevent them from performing the teaching tasks needed. And the college pays them at a much reduced rate.

Teaching takes place in labs

What the support staff actually are to do in the labs has not been clearly defined. Experience indicates that as conscientious employees, they indeed direct activities, pull from the theoretical, demonstrate equipment and techniques, and correct problems through a problem-solving approach. If students are learning in labs, this is accomplished through the direction of whoever is overseeing the lab. It is “teaching” no matter how you spin it! Teaching and learning takes place in the labs.

For the same level of learning to occur as in years past, the teaching/learning that is not going to happen in the labs must be transferred to the faculty-taught component of the course. Lecture time has not been increased to accommodate this and as well, faculty will be forced to demonstrate many hands-on tasks to students in a non-hands-on manner.

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What is our role in course changes?

by Sylvia Ciuciura, Newsbreak Editor

As faculty, we have expertise in developing courses, delivering curriculum, evaluating learning and in dealing with a variety of issues related to students. At various times, we fulfill different roles with our students, - teacher, guide, parent, career counsellor, monitor, and others. Students ask our opinion on many different aspects of their life.

What is our role when course content changes or course delivery methods change? Would we be consulted when the number of hours that we see students in a course is going to change?


Is there any formal mechanism for this type of change? Is there informal consultation?

It appears, from changes to courses in the School of Applied Technology, that such changes

were made without consulting the teachers of the courses.

What would happen in your school if the number of hours you teach the student was reduced. Would you be consulted? Do you think that you should be consulted?

Without any formal process in place, you may be consulted but there is no requirement for that to take place. Does Academic Council or some other group have a role to play here?

If you have some thoughts on this issue, let me know. 



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.

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President's notes

by Orville Getz, OPSEU Local 562 President

Collective agreement

At the end of June, the Ontario Labour Board (OLB) ruled that OPSEU must sign the new Collective Agreement. The union had argued that the new agreement format should include all the clarification comments which management had included in the final offer document which was ratified by the members in March. The OLB ruled that these comments could be deleted. The document is now available on the Local's website at humberfacultyunion.org. Hard copies will be delivered to all faculty once they have been formatted and printed by OPSEU.

New hires

As result of union staffing grievances, the college agreed to 49 new fulltime faculty hires. Most of these individuals were hired for the fall semester with the remaining few hires to be completed in January. As student numbers continue to increase, we are already planning our strategies for fall 2011 faculty hire requests. Now is the time for new hires and indeed all faculty to be vigilant when reviewing your SWF. An audit of your student numbers can be requested at any time during the semester. Also, are you doing the work you were assigned or has your assignment changed since the semester began? If you need help understanding your SWF, or if you have any concerns, please contact the Union office at extension 4007 to set up a time for discussion. SWFs for winter teaching are due on November 19.

Meeting on OPSEU consultation with the provincial government

On Monday, September 13, the OPSEU Executive Board held a special meeting with all OPSEU Local Presidents of the Ontario Public Service, the Broader Public Service, the Colleges and Chairs of all equity committees. The purpose of the meeting was to decide whether or not to engage in consultations with the province and our employers around the government's policy to implement a two year compensation freeze. After all day discussions, the following OPSEU Executive Board Motion was passed: Be it resolved

1. that OPSEU engage in the consultation process for all groups present except the OPS Corrections: and be it further resolved
2. that OPSEU reaffirms that it will continue to conduct bargaining as usual, that no framework agreements be made without the approval of the respective bargaining units to which the agreement would potentially apply and that OPSEU centrally will reject the government's zero and zero wage proposal and
3. that OPSEU accelerate and intensify the campaign against government public service wage cuts and
4. that OPSEU work with other unions and labour bodies and community groups to co-ordinate campaigns against public service wage cuts.

We will inform you of further developments as they occur over the following months leading up to the provincial election next fall. 🇺🇸

WiFi and children's health

By Fahira Easton, Professor, Liberal Arts & Sciences

On August 24th of this year, at the University of Toronto, Barrie Trower gave a lecture on the history of microwaves and their side effects on people's health.

Barrie Trower, physicist, worked for decades for the British Secret Service. As a retired intelligence officer, during his working years, he was actively engaged in collaboration with spies who used stealth microwave weapons in their professional activities. He collected data on leukaemia and other sicknesses developed by the individuals working for the American Embassy, a facility that was also being pulsed with microwaves by the Russians.

He emphasized that the proliferation in the usage of microwave frequencies - WiFi in schools with small children, as young as four years old - could instigate a variety of problems in the later years of children's lives.

He mentioned health hazards that include child leukaemia, brain tumours, genotoxic effects (DNA damage and micronucleation), a variety of neurological diseases, fatigue, vision problems, headaches and chest pain.

For some adults, the usage of Wi-Fi could initiate the following health problems: neurological effects and neurological disease, dysregulation of the immune system, breast cancer in men and women, miscarriage, nausea and ringing in the ears, as well as some cardiovascular effects, electrohypersensitivity (EHS), poor short-term memory, sleeping disorders, inability to concentrate, anxiety, dizziness.

Certainly, the most vulnerable are our children, who should be fully protected from exposure to the microwaves, due to the fact that they are physiologically as well as neurologically immature. Children's immune systems take eighteen years to develop and

certainly being exposed to the microwave radiation increases the risk of carcinogenic diseases and other neurological side effects.

Barrie Trower decided to speak out, emphasizing that governments are not willing to inform the general public on safe exposure to Wi-Fi technology and microwave radiation. He said that there is **no** safe level of exposure to Wi-Fi technology for children. Research findings on this topic, coming out decades ago, indicate governmental unwillingness to address this issue with an appropriate level of importance and urgency. He wants the public to be educated about this important issue, and he said that governmental entities are afraid of lawsuits if they admit hazard effects to the public.

Coming out to speak to the general population, free of charge, is another example of his commitment to serving public cause, and building a better and safer world for our children.

If you wish to check on the data of cell phone towers near you, who owns them, as well as how many antennas may be located in your neighbourhood, please visit the following URL: http://www.ertvu.org/steven_nikkel/cancellsites.html

This URL will help you examine existing exposure levels to electro magnetic radiation, keeping in mind that the level or intensity of the transmission is directly related to the health problems that could result.

You could as well get more info on <http://www.magdahavas.com> and <http://www.safeschools.ca>

Do not let your dependency on the speed of technology divert you from this significant issue. Your children's health and yours are most important. 🇺🇸

Chief Steward's report

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward

We are all well into our fall courses and have finished midterm marking. As you go about your work, please keep in mind that your workload should be reflected in your SWF. If the two don't match, come and chat with me to discuss your options.

Our new collective agreement What's different in workload?

1. Evaluation changes on the SWF

How are you finding your workload this fall? Is the time allotted on your SWF for evaluation really enough to do the work? If not, please keep track of how much time you are actually spending on the evaluation in your courses.

Then either address the discrepancy with your associate dean right away and ask for an amended SWF OR bring those notes to your next SWF discussion with your associate dean. Our new collective agreement has two changes that deal with this issue:

- A) the requirement that your associate dean meet with the teaching group and discuss evaluation factors before the SWFs are prepared (Article 11.01 E3) and
- B) a new SWF column for "Additional attributed hours" has been added to the evaluation portion of the SWF, allowing for recognition of additional time needed for evaluation. So, if you find your evaluation is taking longer than you have been allotted by the evaluation factors, more time can be given in this column. But you have to ask for it (Article 11).

2. Teaching more than 260 students

If your total number of students this semester is over 260, you have the right to request more time on your SWF for out-of-class assistance (Article 11.01 F2).

These changes have resulted in the need for a revised SWF form – adding a column for additional evaluation time and an automatic

totaling of student numbers. We should see this revised SWF form for the Winter SWFs.



3. Modified workload arrangements

This article (11.09) is new and allows for up to 20 per cent of faculty to work without a SWF. Human Resources have told us that Humber has no intention to use this provision. So please let us know immediately if you are approached to participate in this type of arrangement.

Faculty survey follow up

The faculty survey results suggested we, your local union, need to find ways of reaching out and learning more about individual faculty concerns. We will be arranging small meetings by school or program this fall as a way of addressing this need. Watch for announcements about these meetings, then join us to raise and discuss the issues that matter to you.

Grievances and arbitrations

New grievances:

1. An individual grievance has been filed related to interference in offering employment as a result of the individual filing a grievance. This grievance has now been referred to arbitration.
2. An individual grievance has been filed related to the inaccurate representation by HR during a workplace injury incident.

Awaiting arbitration dates:

1. an individual grievance related to failure to protect private medical information,
2. a union grievance addressing the release of salary calculations to the union,
3. a union grievance addressing the release of accurate staffing lists,

4. an individual grievance on sessional rollover (make the position full-time based on time limits in the collective agreement), and
5. a union grievance on staffing in Health Sciences

Current arbitrations

1. Union Grievance – Health Sciences
A staffing grievance related to overuse of sessional faculty has been merged with a staffing grievance during an arbitration hearing and will be dealt with at an arbitration scheduled for several days in March, 2011.
2. Union Grievances - Health Sciences
An inappropriate classification of Partial Load faculty as sessional faculty.
3. Union Grievance - Applied Technology
Re support staff teaching. Has been withdrawn. More information in the next Newsbreak.

CWMG referrals

1. Referral regarding accommodation
The CWMG heard a referral regarding lack of response to accommodation requests. As the CWMG was unable to come to a decision, the matter has been referred to a WRA (workload arbitrator).

2. Referral regarding inadequate preparation time

This referral was based on lack of preparation time related to the adoption of new computer software. The professor had been allotted no additional preparation time to learn the software or incorporate it into the lectures. This was resolved with the addition of an additional one hour/wk on the back of the SWF.

Workload issues can be addressed and resolved. Call ext 4007 or drop by H109 to discuss any workload related issues at any time.

Question for the Chief Steward

Do I have to post office hours?

Answer:

Faculty in some schools are again being told they must post office hours for their students. Management does not have the right to require this. Article 11.01F1 states “The teacher shall inform his/her students of availability for out-of-class assistance in keeping with the academic needs of students.” While posting office hours may work for some faculty and

some students, and you are certainly free to use this method of informing students of your availability, posting office hours may not be very effective. Personally, I find that posting my timetable, on blackboard and beside my office door, and then advising students to contact me by email to set up an appointment is a much more effective use of both my time and my students’ time. This meets the students’ need for access as well as my need for flexibility for meetings etc.

Winter SWF’s due November 19

When you first receive your SWF, review it carefully.

1. Does it accurately reflect the work you do?
2. Are the courses and sections correct?
3. Are the correct preparation factors correct?
4. Do the student numbers on the SWF approximate the expected numbers for the course?

5. Do the evaluation factors reflect the types of evaluation identified in the course outline?

6. Have you been given credit on the back of the SWF for any other assigned work – curriculum development, mentoring, professional development?

Remember, if it is not on the SWF it is not assigned work.

Key factors in student retention & learning

By Audrey Taves, Chief Steward

At an Academic Council meeting in April 2010, there was a very interesting presentation by students regarding their experiences with applied learning. The presentation was given by students from two schools – Health Sciences and the School of Social and Community Services. It was very noteworthy that of the six students who spoke, all six identified that what had made their experiences in placement so successful in terms of learning was a faculty member (either in the placement in nursing courses, or as an advisor in the social work program). Both groups spoke of the importance of the continuity of the faculty member to their learning and of how the faculty member applied the learning in the classroom to practical situations. Comments such as “having the same teacher through several semesters was great, amazing”; my teachers were “so supportive”; and “the close relationship with our supervisors [ie. college professors] helps to get us where we need to be through their support and suggestions”.

In terms of student learning and success, the words of these students speak volumes of the importance of faculty - faculty, that is, who are available to them, knowledgeable about the program, able to relate theory to practice. In other words, full-time faculty members. The message was clear – that the availability of committed faculty was key to their learning and success.

Where do faculty fit?

Yet, in the 2009-10 Report on Humber’s Strategic Plan presented earlier in that same meeting by Michael Hatton, Vice President Academic, when the issue of student retention and engagement was discussed there was little mention of the faculty in the strategies for success. Indeed, an increase of 74 full-time faculty over two years which barely replaces faculty who have left, was lauded as exceeding

targets for hiring. How can a 4 percent increase in faculty numbers this year address the 20 per cent increase in student numbers over the past two years?

Where is the applied learning?

It is also significant to note that all six of the presenting students spoke about the importance of their practical experience, and their applied learning, with phrases such as it’s “great to put your knowledge to practice”, it “gives you confidence”. Interestingly, three of the six students specifically mentioned that they “came to Humber because of the field work and lots of it”.

These students’ comments about the importance of getting to know the faculty and the interaction between lecture and lab fly in the face of what is happening in practical classes across the college today. Most conspicuously in Applied Technology, where first year students who in the past would have one professor for a two hour lecture and then the same professor for a two hour lab – are now having to deal with two or three different people for the same four hours of the course. Some of these people are not professors, have not had time to confer with one another, and the lab “person” may not have any idea what was covered in the lecture. How would students in this new situation describe their learning??? How many of them will come back into the second year of the program? What effect does this have on student retention?

It sounds as if the hands on, application of theoretical concepts in the practical setting, type of learning that was the original mandate of the college is being short-changed. In favour of what?

Yes, lab courses with their smaller class sizes and equipment come at a cost but surely, Humber’s reputation as a quality school is more important than making a profit. 🚫

Building what lasts

by Larry Horowitz, Lakeshore Campus-at-Large Steward



Teachers are on the front lines; experts in their particular fields and the mentoring of students. It is imperative that college administrators consult and reconcile with faculty about all aspects of the courses they teach. Despite their best intentions, administrators are detached from much of the classroom process. They control the college's design and destination, the funds and facilities, the promotion and politics. But, we are the teachers, by definition. At the very least, we must have a full share in determining curriculum and course outline, subject matter and sustainability, evaluation and essentials.

My carpenter is a fine tradesman. He learned his craft through years of experience and first-hand involvement. Even though I hire him, pay him and evaluate his work, I don't presume to tell him how to do his job. His own view of the details is more focused and

viable than mine. He knows how best to utilize his expertise to attain quality results. In fact, I hired him based specifically with confidence that I'd have a responsible, capable individual working for me. I also understand that micro-managing will only hamper his ingenuity and resolve.

Teachers work to construct skill-sets and build intellectual capabilities that last their students a lifetime. The motivation to do so comes from deep within each teacher. They must have a defining hand in the course design details in order to give their proteges a lasting foundation. Their legacy demands it. The administration needs to have faith in their faculty so both administrators and faculty can feel unlimited faith in our students' futures. 🚀

Will change in labs reduce student learning?

Continued from page 1

In addition, because the support staff are not allowed to perform teaching duties, they will not perform any preparation or evaluation tasks. These duties will be the responsibility of the faculty. Not such a problem if faculty are given the attributed times on the SWF, but the lab sections now don't even appear on the SWF and there is no mechanism to place them on the SWF form for this to happen.

There are other concerns as well: Is the transfer of lab material to the lecture time considered a major revision of the course and will a "NEW" course factor be given?

Will there be additional work created by the needed coordination of two and perhaps more

persons involved in the delivery of a course, and even more importantly, will the different lab sections provide consistent learning?

And finally, there seems to be no process in place to evaluate which courses will be identified and restructured to this new format; it seems to be whenever a few SWF hours need to be saved.

There is no formula that I know of that can accurately equate dollar value to learning quality and the savings realized in this new structure will not improve the learning experience for students. On the contrary, I believe learning quality will be diminished. 🚀

Increasing participation in society

A focus on disability awareness and action


By Jim Jackson, Professor, Liberal Arts & Sciences

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law. Under this legislation, the government of Ontario will develop mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in daily living. These standards will apply to both private and public sector organizations across the province and Ontario is planning to reach a goal of being accessible to all people with disabilities by 2025. According to Statistics Canada, 15.5 per cent of Ontario's population has disabilities and this number is expected to increase as the population ages.

However, who are the disabled? What are the most common types of disabilities found in our society? The data from the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*, by Statistics Canada, illustrates that women make up 63 per cent and males make up 37 per cent of the disabled population 15 years of age and over. Interestingly, as the population ages, more females than males continue to be disabled. For example, 65 per cent of the women and 35 per cent of the men aged 65 years and over are disabled. Unfortunately, for this senior age group, significantly more women (58 per cent), than men (42 per cent),

need help with everyday activities but do not get any assistance. Furthermore, almost half (42%) of people with disabilities live in Ontario.

What is the most common type of disability? According to the survey, the most common disability is mobility. About 43 per cent of the people between 15 to 64 years of age, and 47 per cent of the people 65 years of and over, have mobility problems. The following list illustrates the rank order of the types of disabilities (from second to seventh) found in our society: agility, pain, hearing, seeing, psychological and learning.

People with disabilities are entitled to government regulated assistance programs that may enable their full participation in society. Some people with disabilities may not be aware of the available services, or are concerned that they may be stigmatized for using these services. For example, of the 452,150 people with learning disabilities, 10 per cent of those who need help are not receiving it. Hopefully, the AODA legislation will improve awareness about disability in our society so that more people with disabilities can get some financial assistance which would enable them to participate more fully in society. 

Local Executive Committee Meeting:

Thursday, Nov. 4, 2010

Doris Tallon Room, 3:30 pm — 5:30 pm

You are invited as a guest to the LEC meetings which are the first Thursday of the month. Let us know that you are coming so we have enough food and space. We will also email you the agenda and minutes of the last meeting. Call Michelle at ext. 4007 or email michelle.albert@humber.ca

Greetings to new faculty

A warm welcome to our colleagues who have joined the full-time ranks over the past academic year. Quite a number of these faculty are not new to the college, but have been working on contracts for some time. We're pleased to have them with us on a more permanent basis.

Applied Technology

Marcin Kedzior
Zaiba Mian
Dragos Paraschiv
Richard Zoltek

Business

Ionela Bacain
Steve Bang
Stanley Faria
Kathryn Filsinger
Alain Londes
Rose Ann MacGillivray
Lynn McAuliffe
Norma Ouellette
Karen Schucher



Creative & Performing

Arts

Peter Cook
Paul De Jong
Dixie Seattle

Health Sciences

Sheila Boamah
Wendy Ellis
Franklin Gorospe
Mary Ellen Nicholson
Elana Ptack
Kim Sears

Hospitality, Recreation & Tourism

Amanda Baskwill
Shonah Chalmers
Kristan Lingard
Francisco Rivera
Konrad Weinbuch
Sarah Wilkinson

Student Services

Geri MacDonald

Liberal Arts & Sciences

Jennifer Ball
Prasad Bidaye
Daryl Culp
Renee Griffiths
Bernard Ho
Michelle Jordan
Irene Lee
Pearline Lung
Kim Robinson
Kate Zhang

Media Studies & Information Technology

Alison Bruce
Marilyn Cresswell
Umer Noor
Ravinderpal Singh
Jeff Winch

Social & Community Services

Charlotte Serpa
Doug Thomson

Up at the Board

by Franca Giacomelli, Board of Governors Faculty Representative

In 1981, the year that I started teaching at Humber, there were blue boards (a few might remember those), then green boards, black boards and most recently, white boards and software named Blackboard! I have spent most of my adult life up at a board. I am the new Faculty Representative on Humber's Board of Governors, replacing Paul Pieper who has done an outstanding job of representing us for twelve out of the past fifteen years! During his time on the Board, Paul provided us with thoughtful, interesting, and relevant articles under the title Boardwalk. My column has a new name, but my intention is to continue to update faculty on what's up at the Board.

For those who don't know me, I am a professor in The Business School. Over the years, I have taken advantage of many opportunities to get involved in the Humber community. The most significant is probably my 11 year involvement on Academic Council (four years as Chair). I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to represent faculty on the Board and I attended my first meeting as a Board member on Monday, September 27. I am one of seventeen Board members (13 external members plus one representing each of the following constituencies: administration, support staff, faculty, and students). Also, new to the Board this year are Audrey McKinney (external member), Wanda Buote (administration), and Varun Verma (student).

I have attended several Board meetings in the past, some as a presenter and others as an observer. I would like to remind faculty that the Bylaws state that all regular meetings of the Board are open to the public as observers

and I encourage everyone (especially those who have never attended a Board meeting) to exercise this right. (The Bylaws for the Board of Governors are available on the Humber web-site under Office of the President, Corporate Information.)

The first order of business at the meeting was to fill the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. As per the Board's Bylaws, the Governance and HR Committee is asked to bring forward recommendations to the full Board for the two positions. As a result, Rainer Beltzner was elected Chair and Joan Homer, Vice-Chair.

Once Rainer Beltzner was installed as the new Chair, he took over what was a good news meeting. Humber is doing very well (as we heard at the President's Breakfast) and this was supported by several presentations including: the Multi-year Accountability Report which was due to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by September 30; the enrollment update was very positive with most programs showing very strong and better than projected numbers; the degree development update celebrated the very first Bachelor of Commerce degree offered by a college in Canada, as well as the removal of the word "Applied" from three of Humber's degrees; the property update outlined successful completion of and progress on several projects; and the Board approved the launch of the Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign.

My first impression was great and I was very impressed by the knowledge and commitment of the Board members. I look forward to representing you. 🇨🇦

In memory of Pat Fors

This past summer we lost a great person, teacher and friend in Patricia Fors. Pat taught nursing at Humber for 25 years and just as she was retiring in June, she was diagnosed with melanoma. She died just a few weeks later.

Pat was a faculty union steward for Health Sciences for many years. In her role as steward, she worked as an advocate for the faculty she represented. After she stepped down from the role, she continued to work to support other faculty, especially those new to the college.

Pat was always a strong advocate for her students, speaking up for them individually when problems arose, and for nursing students as a whole when she felt program and/or curricular changes were not in their best interest.

You have most likely read of the initiative by faculty, staff and students in the nursing program in the School of Health Sciences to honour the many contributions Pat made to Humber and her students by establishing a memorial scholarship in her name. We would like to encourage you to make a donation in memory of Pat by using the form in the

September 30th issue of the communiqué.

Pat truly made Humber a better place through her presence and her work here. She is greatly missed by many and will not be forgotten. 🙏



Canadian Labour International Film Festival

The festival takes place over two weekends, November 13-14 and 20-21. All screenings are free. The location is Innis Town Hall at the University of Toronto, near St. George and Bloor.

The festival welcomes entries from amateur, professionals and student film makers. They consider all genres from animation to works in progress. Cash prizes are awarded in many categories .

They partner with organizations friendly to those who do work, those who represent workers, and those who advocate on behalf of workers.

Last year, they had stories from as far as Japan and Pakistan as well as some closer to home like Welland, Toronto, Whitehorse and Windsor.

You can check for updates on their website www.labourfilms.ca