

THE LOCAL

OPSEU 560 NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2018

WHAT WE WON IN THE KAPLAN AWARD

On December 20th, in the midst of trying to wrap up the term and planning for the holidays, we learned that Arbitrator William Kaplan had rendered an award. As we rushed to our classes, we exchanged many a high five and lopsided grin, because Kaplan's award made clear that our cause was just. The award, by which we and the College will be bound for the next four years, until September 2021, includes many wins for us.

We gained:

- Academic freedom language;
- Improved job security and salary step progression for Partial-Load faculty;
- A provincial taskforce to investigate staffing complement, precarity, academic governance, intellectual property issues, and funding structures to ensure quality education;

- Recognition that accommodations increase workload;
- Requirement to negotiate equal pay for equal work under Bill 148; and a
- Committee to investigate the class definition of counsellors.

These are wins. But as you are all aware, these wins are incomplete. One serious concern—ending precarious employment—remains unresolved. The taskforce will make recommendations to the Ministry on complement, and we will need to be vocal in our demand for a ratio that changes the balance of contract work from 70-80% of our workforce to one that more closely resembles what British Columbia's colleges have won: 70% full time positions and only 30% contract.

For five weeks we vocally demanded change—let's keep the pressure on and win the change that we and our students deserve.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

During the strike many of us contributed photos, tweets, comments, and articles to the blog and newsletter, sharing our experiences and thoughts, connecting with each other.

We invite you to continue to reach out to your colleagues with submissions to this newsletter.

We would welcome articles, cartoons, photos, letters, poems, and other submissions on any topic that you wish to share with your union brothers and sisters. Please send any submissions to Anna Ainsworth, aainsworth@opseu560.org.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Please contact us if you have concerns related to workload, management, or students.

See page 2 for contact options.

OPSEU FILES CHARTER CHALLENGE TO DEFEND RIGHT TO STRIKE

On January 23, OPSEU filed a charter challenge regarding *Bill 178*, the provincial back-to-work legislation that forced an end to our legal strike. Our constitutional right to strike was violated by the Wynne government. Like similar cases in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, this case could have an impact on workers across the country. The right to strike is not only central to collective bargaining but is also protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. OPSEU 560 will continue to monitor this case as it works its way through the legal system.

AFTER THE STRIKE

by Anna Ainsworth

The end of the strike was a whirlwind, after more than 86% of us rejected management's offer. We learned the results of the vote on Thursday November 16th, had a few hours to revel in our astounding show of solidarity, before learning that we would be legislated back to work. And so, the following Monday, we were back.

The events occurred so rapidly that we were left reeling, without a sense of closure. So, let's take a moment to consider the consequences of the strike.

I have heard time and time again that the strike offered us an unexpected gift—friendship. The bonds that folks formed on the lines were forged in adversity and solidarity. We listened to each other, learned more about each other, and committed to fighting for

each other. Throughout this strike, we became a truer union. We built a community. Every day at work is now brighter and happier because of that community. I hope to read your stories of friendship and connection from the lines and after on the pages of upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Over the course of those five weeks, we surprised ourselves; as each week passed, we grew stronger. We taught each other hope and learned that social change may be hard but is possible if we stand firm. One of the most moving moments for me was to hear a colleague, in the wake of the 86% reject vote, say that for the first time in his life he believed in the possibility of social justice.

Every day I grew more and more proud of us, and what we are becoming. I am proud to call you my brothers and sisters. I look forward to standing alongside you as we keep fighting.

COMPENSATION AWARDED

Arbitrator William Kaplan agreed with us that finishing the last term required additional work and granted us compensation for that work in the form of \$900 for Full-Time faculty and \$450 for Partial-Load faculty. Please ensure that this pay was added to your January 25 paycheck. **If you have not received this pay, please email union@opseu560.org.**

This is historic because it recognizes for the first time that additional work demands were placed on Partial-Load faculty. It is disappointing, however, that the amount for Partial-Load faculty is merely half of what Full-Time faculty received.

Partial-Load faculty often work just as hard as Full-Time faculty (if not harder, as they often travel from positions at multiple colleges), and they deserve the

same compensation. Part-Time faculty, who also had to put in additional work to complete the term, received no compensation. We hope that they too can soon be unionized and have their work recognized.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

For the first time, Academic Freedom is part of our collective agreement. The language reads: "Every faculty member is able to exercise academic freedom in the performance of his/her duties. Academic freedom at the College includes the right to enquire about, investigate, pursue, teach and speak freely about academic issues without fear of impairment to position or other reprisal."

While the extent of these rights will be clarified through future

arbitrators' rulings, we hope that this freedom will foster academic integrity at Ontario's colleges.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- OPSEU 560 is planning a post-strike reception for members. Stay tuned!
- We are in the process of creating email listservers to keep fellow picketers in touch with their linemates.
- Ignite the Spark: A Workshop by Women for Women Organizing within Unions, Workplaces, Communities & Governments. *Presented by Toronto & York Region Labour Council.* February 10, 2018. 8:30 am - 1:00 PM www.bit.ly/IgniteSpark

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