

THE LOCAL

OPSEU LOCAL 560 NEWSLETTER- APRIL/MAY 2021

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Contact the Local

Tel: 416-495-1599

Workload
Monitoring Group:
wmg@opseu560.org

All other issues:
union
@opseu560.org

When contacting the Local please use a non-Seneca email account. It helps us maintain the confidentiality and integrity of communications.

SHERIDAN COLLEGE KILLS ITS ACADEMIC SENATE

Seneca Barely Had One!

Thirty years ago, after numerous provincial government reports criticized the governance structures in the CAATs (Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology), the NDP administration forced each college to introduce "participative governance." Unfortunately, it neglected to specify precisely what that meant and allowed the colleges discretion to interpret it as they wished.

So, Seneca established an advisory Academic Council with elected faculty holding the majority. It was short-lived soon replaced by an Academic Council which was (and remains) appointed by management.

Sheridan College, however, has enjoyed

a meaningful "shared governance." As a prelude to the 2021 collective agreement negotiations, however, it shut down this apparently successful model in the face of growing demand for meaningful reform across the province. The authorities are angry at the gains we made in 2017, and intent on pushing back!

The Sheridan "experiment" embarrassed the employer. It showed that an authoritarian, undemocratic, anti-academic, unprofessional corporate model is neither the only nor the optimal way to run a college. The employer thinks it has unlimited power to do whatever it wants and has no interest in the faculty expertise--unless, of course, it is subservient to its own.

Statement by OPSEU/SEFPO College Faculty Division on the abolition of Sheridan College's academic senate

TORONTO, April 8, 2021 /CNW/ - As chair of the Divisional Executive of OPSEU/SEFPO's College Faculty Division, I am gravely concerned and disappointed by the Sheridan College Board of Governors' decision to cancel the only academic senate in Ontario's public college system.

At its root, this is a blatant and cynical refusal to work meaningfully with faculty as professionals to ensure that academic decisions are made in the best interests of students and education. It demonstrates again the urgent need for shared governance between administrators and faculty.

There was no consultation with faculty involved in the senate, and the college's report was clearly done with a predetermined outcome in mind. Nonetheless, there is no suggestion that the senate was not working – only a spurious claim that it was not compliant with legislation.

Ontario's college system is undergoing major and sudden upheavals. The massive shift to online learning, the push for microcredentials, and other changes to postsecondary education require that knowledge creators be part of facilitating innovation, while ensuring academic quality and student supports remain central.

Faculty are uniquely positioned to ensure colleges and college students are the engine that drives Ontario's economic post-pandemic recovery. Shared governance structures permit colleges to balance educational needs with budgetary ones, safeguarding academic quality, innovation, and student supports.

Postsecondary education cannot, and must not, just be a race to the bottom in reaction to fiscal concerns. Laurentian University should be a cautionary tale about the consequences of allowing administrators to circumvent faculty in decision-making.

Abolishing the Sheridan senate is clear evidence that college administrators are out of touch and anachronistic. Worldwide, shared governance is a core tenet of postsecondary systems. It must be

a part of Ontario's college system as we move towards standalone nursing degrees and increased research.

We believe the senate is legitimate. We believe it does respect the structures of the Board of Governors. And we believe that the board should be applauded if it commits to the successful senate model.

We call on the government to modernize college governance structures through a simple policy directive. Sheridan College is a truly shining example of college innovation and excellence. It must not be allowed to eliminate such a vital aspect of its successful education community.

R. M. Kennedy (Centennial College)



BEYOND THE PALE

*Howard Doughty, Steward
King Campus*

At Collin College, just 50 km north-east of Dallas, Texas, Humanities Professor Audra Heaslip just became the second professor to be terminated for undisclosed but dubious reasons in the past six months. She follows Suzanne Jones, a long time Professor of Education, who was offered a three-year contract extension last August, but had it revoked several months later. Jones was an officer with the college's Texas Faculty Association chapter. So was Heaslip.

Heaslip made two mistakes. First, she became an officer of her campus's fledgling chapter of the TFA. Then, in June, 2020, as Covid-19 case counts rose in Texas, she helped draft a resolution urging more online courses. Second, she spoke to the local media about it. The TFA acts like a union, but is not recognized by the college, as

Texas prohibits collective bargaining among public employees. So, there is no protection or grievance process for alleged dissidents.

Seneca was in this situation until 1972, when Ontario CAAT-A faculty voted to join what was then known as the Civil Service Association of Ontario Inc. Soon CAAT employees won the right to strike (as CAAT-S did in 1979 and CAAT-A followed in 1984. Soon, also, under the leadership of former college teachers, the CSAO transformed itself in name and in nature to become the effective Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

We should be grateful to those who fought for improvements and, for the example of OPSEU president, Sean O'Flynn - a former faculty member at Niagara College -

who was sentenced to 35 days in jail for supporting a Corrections Officers' wildcat strike. Their courage and determination should not be regarded as ancient history, but as an inspiration.

We do not suffer under the laws of Texas and the practices of its colleges, but maintaining and expanding our rights requires the same sort of commitment that got them for us in the first place.



Bargaining Update

Anna Ainsworth, 1st Vice President, Local 560

As you know, we are in the process of bargaining. It is a long process, with many moving parts. Firstly, we began by electing our bargaining team. Then we surveyed our members about what mattered to us. Next we held meetings at each of the 24 locals to ask our members what they thought was most important in this round. Then we held a provincial meeting, where delegates from each local were able to bring those demands to the team and rank them. The next phase will begin on July 2nd when we are legally permitted to begin bargaining. If you are a Labour nerd like me, check out the [Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008](#). It governs our bargaining process.

The main themes that emerged in this process are precarious work, workload, equity, and protecting academic freedom. I suspect none of us are surprised by those results. We have the best work in the world...but are often denied the ability to do it as well as we want because we are precarious and stressed out, or we are overworked and stressed out, or we face harassment and discrimination, or we are denied our expertise...we could go on. We are teachers first and foremost. Every one of us loves what we do, or we would not be doing it. But we deserve good working conditions. We deserve full time jobs. We deserve equity. We deserve safety. We deserve respect. So, we will head back to the bargaining table and bargain for those fundamental rights.

In solidarity,

1st Vice President
Anna Ainsworth

Stages of Bargaining

- November 20 - 21, 2020**
 - Pre-Bargaining conference; election of Bargaining Team
- January, 2021**
 - Provincewide bargaining survey of membership (with 4,471 responses)
- February 3 - March 12, 2021**
 - Local demand-setting meetings at all 24 CAAT-A Locals
- February 16, 2021**
 - College Employer Council sends OPSEU a preemptive extension offer with zero improvements to core issues
- April 9 - 10, 2021**
 - Final demand-setting meeting with delegates from all 24 CAAT-A Locals
- May - June, 2021**
 - Bargaining team drafts changes to the Collective Agreement based on approved demands
- July 2, 2021**
 - Earliest date that either party can give notice of intent to bargain
- July - August, 2021**
 - Likely period for continued bargaining
- September 30, 2021**
 - Expiry of current Collective Agreement
- October, 2021**
 - Earliest period at which a strike or lockout could be called

Source: [Bargaining Team Update April 2021](#)

PARTIAL LOAD REGISTRY

The Partial Load Registry is now open. All current and former Partial Load faculty should register.

Access the Partial Load Registry

President's Report

Frank Yee, President, Local 560

Dear members,

It has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic started and changed our home and work lives. We continue to see new issues related to COVID-19. We see new issues almost daily. It can be overwhelming and exhausting.

With negotiations for a new Collective Agreement this summer, it is important that we as members think about what the future will hold for the College sector.

The province wide Demand Setting Meeting took place on April 8 and 9 via Zoom. The process involved elected delegates from the 24 College Locals. The Bargaining Team (B/T) was given their mandate to negotiate the ranked demands with College Employer Council. The B/T will be publishing an official statement shortly to the membership.

With the summer term approaching, the issuance of Standard Workload Formula (SWFs) and Partial-load contracts is now in full swing. Full-time members should refer their SWFs to the Workload Monitoring Group (WMG) for review, if there are any concerns. For example, any Professional Development activities are to be arranged through mutual consent and agreement by the subject professor and their supervisor (Article 11.01 H3). You can get in contact with the WMG here (wmg@opseu560.org).

Partial-load members should also connect with the Lo-

cal if they believe that their rights under the Collective Agreement have been violated. For example, if you were not awarded a contract based on the Partial-Load Registry (A. 26.10 E) set out in the Collective Agreement, please contact the union for assistance.

The Local is also working hard to keep you informed on the College's policies and procedures that impact you. For one, the College's Harassment and Discrimination Policy—long overdue for an update—was rebranded and rolled out as the new Respectful Workplace Policy. The policy has many implications for how matters of harassment, bullying and discrimination are dealt with outside of the grievance process.

I argue that this new policy does not ensure a fair complaint process. I have strongly objected to it on the basis that it does not help address the systemic issues of harassment, discrimination and bullying at Seneca College. Presently, I am in the process of addressing this issue with President Agnew.

Finally, let's acknowledge our accomplishments! Over the past year, despite the incredible challenges and mounting pressures, despite the mental drain, despite the loss of normalcy, we have worked hard and overcome many challenges. Know that your Local 560 Stewards are here to help you, as we slowly and surely work towards a new normal.

In Solidarity,
Frank Yee

Would you like to contribute to *The Local*? We want to hear from you!

Please email Rose Perera at rose.perera@opseu560.org with your idea(s) and/or submission(s)

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Email:

union@opseu560.org

Local 560 Website:

www.opseu560.org

You may find contact information for a particular steward on our website at:

<https://opseu560.org/about-local-560/directory-of-stewards/>



Contact the Local

Email:

union@opseu560.org

rose.perera@opseu560.org

OPSEU Local 560

245 Fairview Mall Dr Suite
402, North York, ON M2J 4T1
416-495-1599