

President's Message

by Prof. Jonathan Singer

I hope that your school year is off to a good start. This year will be defined by change and opportunity for us as a Local.

Our "change" takes the form of new faces in the Local executive. Firstly, we bid a fond farewell to Larry Olivo, our Chief Steward of many years. Larry has served tirelessly to assist countless faculty members in various grievances. He eloquently defended the rights of faculty in many different forums, including the Workload Monitoring Group, and he was quite simply the best President that Local 560 never had. His "retirement" is likely to see him appointed to the position of Small Claims Court judge in York Region.

We're extremely fortunate to have Prof. Frank Yee (in Police Foundations at King) step up to take over as Chief Steward, and to replace Larry on the Workload Monitoring Group. Frank brings energy and conviction to

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General Membership Meeting: Oct 20

AGENDA

- **Budget Amendment**
- **Mobilization**
- **Contract Negotiations Update**

Dragon Pearl Buffet Restaurant
865 York Mills Rd (just west of Don Mills Rd)
5:30 for dinner, meeting at 6 pm.
Directions: <https://goo.gl/maps/czHi3r8TwfD2>

Free parking, child/eldercare reimbursement, refreshments to suit all dietary needs.

All full-time and partial-load faculty are invited to attend. Part-time and Sessional faculty are welcome to attend as guests, space permitting.



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Grievance Update—More of the Same

by Larry Olivo

The College may call itself one of Toronto's Top Employers but you wouldn't know it from the various grievances our members have been filing, as they react to ramshackle bureaucracy and certain bumbling supervisors.

At Seneca@York, two faculty members found themselves subject to attempted discipline because of their students' work. After the professors had followed all prescribed procedures and vetted student projects before they were publicly aired, the students unfortunately made changes after the review, resulting in a presentation that was sexist and otherwise violated guidelines of good taste. There was no way that the faculty members could have known that the project had diverged from what they had approved, yet the College levelled disciplinary letters to the faculty nevertheless – letters that the College was compelled to withdraw following a grievance.

However, the college then tried to do indirectly what they could not do directly. Having withdrawn the disciplinary letters, the supervisor in question then tried to file a “non-disciplinary letter of counsel”, which again implied negligence or wrongdoing on the part of faculty who had at all times adhered to established processes or protocols. The faculty members have grieved these latest letters, and an OPSEU Grievance Officer will be representing them in arbitration.

Miguel Lameiro, formerly chair of the Centre for the Built Environment [CBE] and then briefly chair in International Business, has left the college. During his short, tumultuous tenure, various faculty from the CBE were lining up with complaints and grievances, as well as workload complaints. We wish Mr. Lameiro well, and are happy to note that a degree of stability has returned to the CBE.

Another area that has seen faculty turn to the Complaint and Grievance procedures stipulated in the Collective Agreement is the Counselling department, which generated at least 3 grievances this winter, all of which we have managed to settle.

The college, while prepared to spend upward of \$164,000 on legal fees for college lawyers, is nevertheless prepared to nickel-and-dime faculty. During the first part of 2016 we had one grievance where a PhD's credentials and work experience were downplayed so that his starting salary was ludicrously low, even where the program needed PhDs in order to maintain Ministry standards. They should have been paying above grade (as one might suggest occurs in the case of Seneca managers, to judge by the Sunshine list), but instead sought to devalue this professor's credentials.

Similarly, we also had a partial load faculty member who had steps taken away arbitrarily by payroll. A grievance was filed and is currently on its way to arbitration.

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(Continued from page 2) - Grievance Update

The college has also taken to creatively using new formulas covered in the smokescreen that is i3 to change the way sick days are used to top up pay, when faculty are on a reduced load for health reasons. There are at least two grievances concerning this issue, and both are now scheduled for arbitration.

And not to be outdone, the Labour Relations department of HR abruptly diverged from past practice for calculating time purchases for reducing the teaching load of union officers—a practice that had been in place since the '80s. On the Winter 2016 SWFs of three Union officers, after the Union had purchased a reduction of teaching hours, the College proceeded to reassign “new” teaching hours to those officers. This had the effect of nullifying the purchase and essentially charging the dues-paying members of Local 560 for hours that were not ultimately reduced from the officers' workloads. Both the Union and the officers affected have referred to arbitration the college's attempt to unilaterally re-write the collective agreement.

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the position, and he has already proven himself an effective advocate for faculty at King Campus and Partial-Load issues.

We also benefit from some new faces: We're pleased to have Harvey Kaduri (in ICT at S@Y) take over as 1st Vice-President, and to welcome Blair Richardson (SCA at S@Y) as a new steward. Each of them (along with our returning stewards) has stepped up to help their colleagues communicate their needs and learn about their rights.

Serving your colleagues as a steward helps to demonstrate through action the powerful principle at the heart of Unionism: We're in this together. For that reason, I encourage you to consider contacting union@opseu560.org, to learn if your area has vacant steward positions.

The importance of stewards—and the communication they facilitate—will be particularly highlighted this year, as we enter bargaining for our new Collective Agreement. That's the “opportunity” that this year represents for us as a Union Local.

In October, our elected Local delegates will meet with delegates from our OPSEU counterparts at Ontario's other 23 public Colleges, to elect a bargaining team. Following that, the members of the bargaining team will travel to each College, as each Local selects and ranks its priorities for the new Collective Agreement. A final “demand-setting” meeting in the spring will provide the bargaining team with a set of priorities to be pursued during negotiations, each of which originates at the Local level.

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Why Grieve?

- It maintains the force and effect of the Collective Agreement.
- It reminds the employer that we stand up for our rights.
- It ensures members are treated fairly.
- It can set precedents for future bargaining and arbitration decisions.
- It clarifies murky areas of the Collective Agreement.
- It is the problem-solving, dispute-settling mechanism provided by the Collective Agreement.
- It prompts a more detailed investigation of a situation.
- It can improve labour relations.
- It is the member's right to pursue resolution of an unjust situation.
- It helps to keep the same injustices from happening to other bargaining unit members

A Valedictory Note

By Larry Olivo (retired)

In 1980, I received a call from Howard Doughty, now in his 47th year at the college and firmly ensconced at the top of the faculty seniority list. He knew I wanted to get out of law practice and back to post-secondary teaching, and told me of a job suddenly open at Seneca. I applied and the rest is history. If Seneca management rues the day I was hired, they can thank Howard Doughty.

Becoming a steward as soon as I was off probation, I became closely involved with Local 560, as alternately, Vice President and Chief Steward, working with Presidents Ted Montgomery and then Jonathan Singer. This involvement gave me a front row seat for what I sometimes refer to as “The Seneca Follies”.

Looking back, I realize there are some matters that required constant attention then, and still present problems and issues that we must continue to be vigilant about. The Follies are ongoing.

The biggest problem is the impact that management has on the work we do.

When the college first opened, its management was drawn from secondary schools and local boards of education. These individuals did not appear to understand the values that operate in the post-secondary sector, but they did understand and value the business of teaching and learning.

That no longer seems to be the case—college managers are increasingly drawn from areas having little to do with post-secondary education, and they increasingly see the world expressed only in the context of an Excel spreadsheet, or worse, as some kind of marketing operation. Their numbers grow constantly, with job titles that seem to have little to do with post-secondary education.

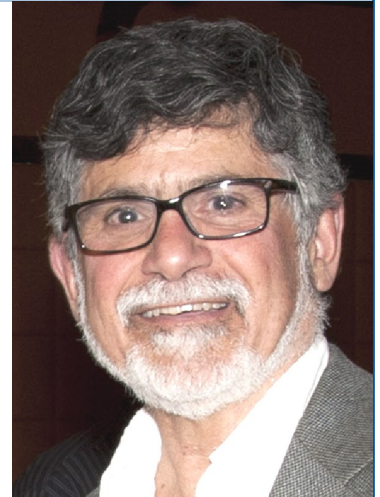
Much money now goes to marketing—the creation of a Potemkin village, where everything is rosy until you look more closely. When you do, you find a professorial proletariat with many contract teachers who have no job security, no benefits, and pay that is not far off the minimum wage. Full timers, when hired, are nicked and dimed on their qualifications to put them as low as possible on the salary grid. More and more the college looks like some kind of educational assembly line. To keep numbers up, these managers continue to lower educational standards, so they can suck in as many students, a.k.a. basic income units, as possible.

And they try to persuade us that all of this is just great, with their “Toronto’s Top Employer” nonsense, a designation that is not won on some kind of merit-based competition, but simply by purchasing the title.

So, what is to be done? From a perspective of 35 years in dealing with these issues, it is clear to me that faculty as a group through the faculty union need to continue to use grievance machinery and the workload complaint process to challenge every attempt by college management to erode quality education. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. It is also the price of maintaining quality education for our students.

Secondly, be ready to push for contract changes that will improve the quality of education and treat faculty with proper respect. This year, we will start negotiating a new contract for September 2017. There will likely be a focus on academic freedom as a basis for improving quality education with job security for faculty, and preventing further erosion of quality education. Management will say they have no money for this. Our answer is: reduce the ranks of management, and put resources into teaching and learning.

And we can do it. When Ted Montgomery retired, I refused to run for President as I thought we needed new blood to ensure that we have competent leadership in the future. You have elected an energetic, knowledgeable and creative union team. And I will continue to be around to offer advice and assistance to them in the coming years.





Contract Faculty Day of Action

September 28, 2016

Show your support for Fairness for Contract Faculty by participating in the Day of Action on September 28, 2016.

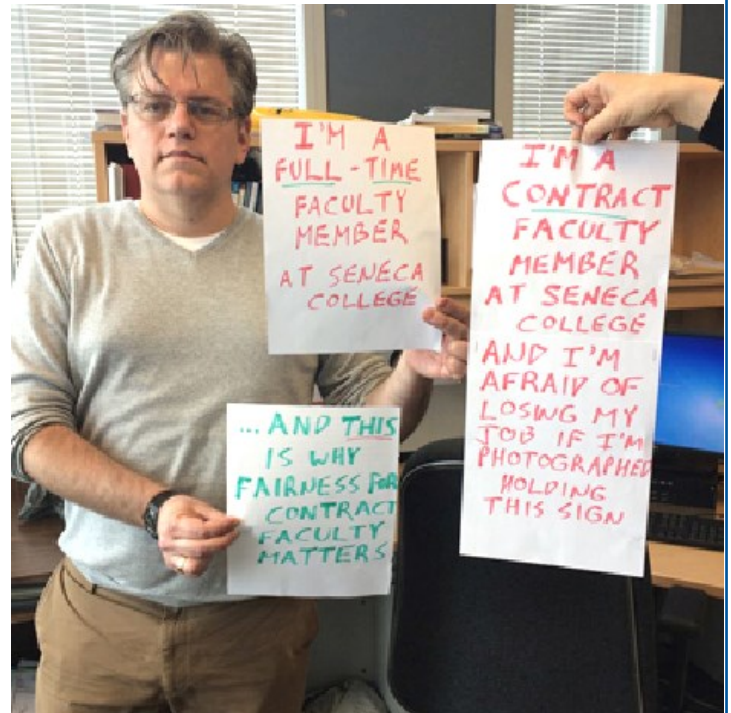
WHY

1) Contract faculty jobs are precarious and insecure. Contract faculty do not receive pay and working conditions equal to their full-time counterparts even though they teach the same courses and have the same qualifications. AN ESTIMATED 70% OF COLLEGE FACULTY ARE CONTRACT TEACHERS.

2) To provide quality education, all faculty jobs need to be good, secure jobs. FACULTY WORKING CONDITIONS = STUDENT LEARNING CONDITIONS.

HOW

- Send a photo with a message of support: info@contractfacultyforward.ca
- Wear a 'Fairness for Contract Faculty' button on September 28
- Participate in the Seneca College Contract Faculty support activities
- Spread the word on Social Media: #Fairness4CF #precariousPSE #contractfacultyforward
- Sign up at <http://contractfacultyforward.ca>



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Local 560 needs your talents to help accomplish member-driven training and communication initiatives.

We seek the expertise of members (or supporters) who have the following skills:

- Graphic Design
- Basic Animation
- Radio and Television Production
- Familiarity with Print or Online Media Sources
- Translation (Arabic, Cantonese, Farsi, French, Hindi/Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Russian)
- Copy Editing
- Social Media

To volunteer, please contact Barbara Paterson at bpateron@opseu560.org



Seneca's Academic Decline, as Reflected in KPIs

by Jonathan Singer, Local President

In 2012, two events shaped the future of Seneca College: The 2012-17 Academic Plan was implemented, and Joy McKinnon began her (recently ended) tenure as Academic Vice-President, wielding decisive power over the implementation of that Plan.

And indeed, while the Academic Plan boasts such promising goals as “Committing to Teaching Excellence” and advocating such Core Literacies as “Written Communication”, “Ethical Reasoning”, and “Critical Thinking”, academic decisions made in the last five years have considerably undercut the quality of the classroom experience, our academic standards, and the skills that our graduates take into the workforce.

To account for this contradiction, we must recognize that since 2012 Seneca students have unwittingly been the subjects of a radical experiment: the idea that the quantity and quality of the classroom experience could be reduced, with no harm to the overall educational experience of the students, thanks to an increased emphasis on “supports” outside of the classroom.

Some examples of calculated, deliberate erosion of our students' instructional experience or our academic standards over the last five years include:

- Reduced teaching hours for core subjects, over the objections of faculty;
- Class sizes of up to 70, preventing the hands-on, individual attention from faculty that is the soul of College education;
- Field placement instruction taken out of the hands of faculty and given exclusively to part-time support staff;

Key Points

According to Provincial reports, during Joy McKinnon's term as Seneca V.P.-Academic...

- Seneca's student satisfaction rate dropped by 3.9% and is now the lowest of any College in Ontario
- Seneca's graduate satisfaction rate went from 3rd place among GTA colleges to last place
- In 2013-14, 6.1% fewer employers reported satisfaction with Seneca graduates, compared to the previous year

Local 560 argues that co-governance models, increased classroom time and reduced class sizes are essential to restoring Seneca's academic quality and reputation.

- A 5% reduction in the passing grade, reducing our graduation standards;
- The large-scale conversion of Partial-Load positions to Part-Time, ensuring that contract faculty need employment outside of Seneca, and thereby reducing the attention they can give to students;
- The elimination of a literature Gen. Ed. requirement, which was falsely represented by Senior Academic managers as a move that aligned our requirements with Ministry policy (In reality, the literature requirement had not violated Ministry policy in any way.)
- A cancellation of all classes in favour of Orientation sessions on the first day of the semester;
- The elimination of a maximum number of “D”s permitted for graduation; and
- Entire programs without a single faculty member (all instruction being completed by support staff).

What impact (if any) have these steps had upon Seneca's students and graduates? For example, has the student experience been eroded by increased class sizes, or have some outside

“supports” (for example, the aforementioned Orientation) managed to compensate for the reduction of basic foundations of quality education, like sufficient teaching contact hours, manageable class sizes, or contract faculty who are able to take a paid sick day?

In the absence of any exit testing for Seneca students, the only outside measurement of our students and graduates is through the province's annual survey of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at each College. (It must be stressed that the KPIs measure the reported *satisfaction* of students, graduates, and their employers, as well as graduation and employment rates – not the *quality* of students and graduates.)

And indeed, an analysis of Seneca's KPIs from 2012-present does tell a story: a story about the consequences of Senior Management's efforts to implement measures that would erode the classroom experience and academic standards, as well as the consequences of systematically excluding faculty from power over academic decision-making.

KPI: Graduate Satisfaction Rate

In 2011-12, 78.3% of recent graduates reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their education at Seneca. Seneca was 18th of the 24 Colleges in this rating, but 3rd of the five GTA colleges.

After three years of the implementation of the 2012-17 Academic Plan, our 2014-15 graduates reported a satisfaction rate of 76.7%. This represents a 1.6% decline in graduate satisfaction, during a period when the graduate satisfaction rating of graduates province wide *increased* by 1.4% (to 80.3%). No less startling, among the five GTA Colleges, we went from 3rd place in this metric to last place.

To reiterate: After three years of implementing the Academic Plan under the guidance of Academic Vice-President Joy McKinnon, our graduates reported being less satisfied with the education they received at Seneca than at any time in the previous ten years. Our graduates are now the least satisfied of any GTA College.

KPI: Student Satisfaction Rate

Four years ago, 74% of surveyed Seneca students reported being satisfied or very satisfied, with 7.4% reporting dissatisfaction. While that figure was 2.8% below the provincial average, Seneca nevertheless placed 3rd of the five GTA colleges in this metric.

Four years later, the survey of students enrolled in 2015-16 shows a decline in satisfaction that is even more startling than that of our graduates: Only 70.1% of current students (surveyed in 2015-16) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their education at Seneca. While the provincial average had remained constant, the number of Seneca students reporting satisfaction went down by 3.9%. Shockingly, of the 24 Ontario Colleges, Seneca came in dead last in terms of student satisfaction – a full 2.2% behind the 23rd-place college.

In sum: Last year, Seneca's students reported a lower rate of satisfaction and a higher rate of dissatisfaction than students of any other College in the system.

KPI: Graduation Rate

Judging from presentations made in Town Halls, Seneca senior management was unabashed that its 'initiatives' were being undertaken in order to increase the rate of retention and graduation. There is some justification for this: Only 54.6% of Seneca's 2010-11 graduates did so within the timelines set out by the province, and Seneca's graduation rate was the lowest of all 24 colleges—over 10% below the provincial average, and 6.2% below any other college.

A faculty member who was given the task of improving Seneca's graduation rate might consider several different approaches: More stringent consideration of the preparedness of incoming students; additional
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non-credit remediation courses; increased class time and increased personalized attention from faculty; and additional counsellors for our approximately 3,000 students with special needs.

As mentioned above, however, senior academic leadership took virtually an opposite approach: less contact between students and faculty, and a reduction in the number of counsellors. One obvious step that was taken to improve graduation rates, however, was the unilateral reduction of passing grades from 55% to 50%, coupled by similarly eroded standards of the letter grades needed to graduate.

When Joy McKinnon discussed Seneca's retention strategies at a Town Hall at King Campus on October 21, 2015, she stated "I want to be clear that this is not about lowering standards". Lowering standards for passing and for graduating was, however, one unambiguous approach adopted by Seneca's senior academic management, to predictable effect: The 5% reduction in Seneca's passing grade correlated to a 5.7% increase in the graduation rate from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

KPI: Employer Satisfaction

So now that Seneca has been sending graduates with lower academic standards into the workforce since 2013, what is the impact upon Employer Satisfaction, as measured by the latest KPIs? Well, prior to the implementation of the current Academic Plan, the KPIs indicated that 94.7% of employers who hired Seneca graduates from 2012-13 reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the graduates' workplace performance.

That figure has changed drastically in recent years: Employers of 2013-14 graduates reported only an 88.6% satisfaction rate—a startling *6.1% drop in employer satisfaction, in only one year*. Last year's KPI's gave some reason to avoid outright panic, however, with an employer satisfaction rate of 92.1%, which is nevertheless a disturbing 2.6% drop over the satisfaction rate from only two years prior.

Conclusions

In her new role as Academic Vice-President, Laurel Schollen will face the sobering task of undoing several years of eroded academic standards, reduced educational quality, and decreased faculty morale. Most regrettably, she will face the task of repairing the unconscionable breakdown in trust between Senior management and faculty—particularly contract faculty, who have been shamefully treated as dispensable and fungible by College managers.

As a faculty Union, we believe that trust between faculty and management can be restored only by the implementation of a co-governance model by which faculty (the people who actually have the expertise needed to educate Seneca students) have meaningful decision-making power over academic practices at Seneca. No less importantly, we believe that Seneca's success and reputation depends upon the urgent restoration of educational quality and academic standards at Seneca College. The failed experiment of the last four years proves that this can *only* be accomplished by ensuring that every student has sufficient access to faculty instruction and attention, both inside the classroom and out.

**There is a professor who lives in a shoe,
On a partial load salary what else can s/he do?
If you think that's a shame, then you're in for a shock,
Down the street's a part-timer who lives in a sock!**



King's Korner: The Right Move???

by Frank Yee, Chief Steward

It appears that nothing has changed with management at King Campus – it's the same old, same old. The newly-anointed Dean Maria May, as head of King Campus, has continued to treat faculty in the same dismissive way as did the former Dean, Tina Di Simone. It should be noted that Di Simone is now in the newly-created position of Associate VP Academic Planning, yet another level of unnecessary administration and a further drain on the budget at a time when unionized full time faculty members are being replaced with non-unionized part-timers in order to "better manage" departmental costs.

Dean May claims that she did not know about the renovations at Garriock Hall, implying that there was insufficient time to give appropriate notice for faculty members to move out of their respective offices for the construction in early summer. Really? Dean May is part of management, and had input for the Super Build; claiming lack of knowledge is inexcusable. This just appears to be a profound lack of respect for faculty; this is change without change, and the disrespectful treatment continues.

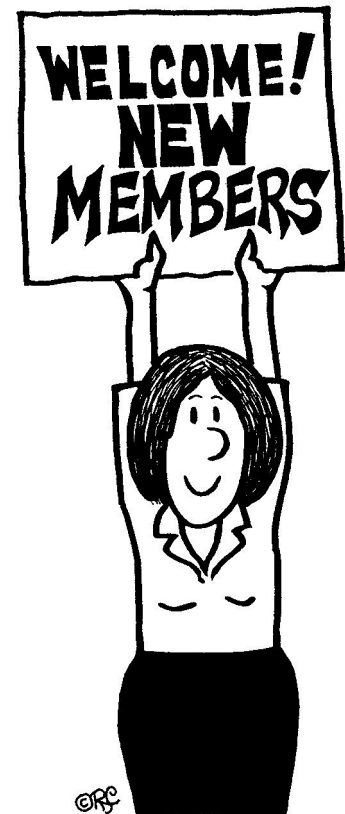
Unfortunately, directly due to the Dean's lack of direction and mismanagement, a number of faculty were caught off guard, and required to work on their vacation to accommodate the move. Will management do the right thing, and appropriately compensate members for working on their vacations, or will they need to fight through filing individual grievances?

This "right move" has seen our members losing their respective private offices and corralled like livestock into an "open office" space – similar to the computer rooms where students sit at individual workstations. What's worse is that GH-2100 is an "open area" office that is far removed from the main foyer and the security desk. At time of writing, there is no working lock on either of the doors giving entrance to the area, putting faculty security at risk should they be working alone or at night.

In the Community Services area, where programs stress the importance of sensitivity and confidentiality when working with clients, faculty report serious concerns about the lack of privacy and ability to maintain student confidentiality. In advisement sessions, students often disclose personal information or are very emotionally distraught. The advisor can hear what is being said to other faculty, and the students are aware that others can hear them.

It is common for students to start talking about dropping a course and, the next second, they are crying and revealing personal matters. But at King Campus, management is now in the process of trying to provide a room or two for such matters to be discussed privately.

We cannot help but wonder how the Deans and Chairs would feel if President Agnew ordered them to move out of their respective private and plush offices, into one of these collective open workspaces. We do however suspect they will never face this eventuality.



Faculty Working Conditions = Student Learning Conditions

The Back Page

Seneca Follies—King Campus Style

Super Build, Not So Super After All

It may be a bit ironic that Seneca College in July was soliciting for donations to the Super Build at King Campus in the amount of 20 million dollars. Ironic, not least because it is a figure that is 5 million short of the 25 million dollars that was originally pledged by York Regional Police to fund jointly with Seneca College an Emergency Training Facility at King Campus, with an overall building budget of approximately 95 million dollars. With that commitment having been lost, why not look for the full 25 million dollars to be replaced?

Could it be that the replacement donation was for only 20 and not 25 million dollars due to cost savings implemented by Seneca College? If that is the case, it certainly sounds like a good thing, until you look more closely at those “cost savings”. Seneca is trying to save money by:

- 1) eliminating Partial-Load Faculty through the degrading of Partial-Load Faculty to Part-time status;
- 2) not replacing in a timely fashion Full Time Professors who leave through retirement or resignation;
- 3) replacing Union positions in certain Faculties with Support Staff teaching, sometimes across the board within those programs;
- 4) hiring only Part-time Professors and Support Staff as replacement for Full-time or the eliminated Partial-Load Professors;
- 5) discounting and misrepresenting evaluation factors on SWFs, to exploit FT faculty;
- 6) eliminating meeting and committee work on SWFs;
- 7) eliminating 4-hour courses (while still charging the same tuition for 3-hour courses and 25% less material covered);
- 8) doubling class size for certain courses;
- 9) reclassifying Clinical Professors to Clinical Supervisors and paying them 1/3 the wages in Nursing, ECE, and SSW; and
- 10) failing to meet the Ministry framework regarding instructional hours, in several programs.

As unsettling as this non-exhaustive list is, these and more processes are not yet complete.

Management had a fully-funded budget, but lost the community partner contribution of the funding for the Super Build. Is this a representative outcome of Seneca management? It looks like even if you are an inefficient manager at Seneca, you can still get promoted and collect your bonus, because senior management will look to recoup by finding “cost savings” that savage all of us in the Union and in front of the classroom, and ultimately the quality of the education that can be offered here.

(Continued from page 3) - President's Message

Next summer, the bargaining team will work at the negotiating table to achieve the members' demands for our next Collective Agreement. If they are unable to achieve those demands in initial negotiations, then a province-wide strike mandate to add force to the team's efforts could be sought as soon as next September.

Eligible to vote in the U.S. election? Visit www.FVAP.gov or www.VotefromAbroad.org
Questions? Contact dr.cbreslin@gmail.com