

THE LOCAL

OPSEU 560 NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2018

GRIEVANCE DEADLINES

OPSEU 560's Chief Steward, Frank Yee, is urging us to be aware of the **procedures governing grievances**. These procedures are found in Article 32 of our Collective Agreement, the document that governs faculty members' relationship with their college.

If you have a complaint, please meet with your direct supervisor within 20 calendar days of the circumstances giving rise to your complaint. Do not hold off. Immediately after your meeting, please email your supervisor and state something to the effect of "Thank you for meeting with me regarding... I hope to receive your response to my complaint within the next seven days."

If you do not receive a response within seven calendar days, or if the response does not resolve your complaint, contact us immediately. It is imperative that you follow this timeline.

Even legitimate—potentially winning—grievances may be dismissed by an arbitrator if the Grievor does not follow the above grievance timelines.

Please contact us for guidance or for more information. We are here to assist you throughout the process. *See page 2 for contact information.*

CUPE 3903 STRIKE UPDATE

CUPE 3903, representing contract faculty, teaching assistants, and graduate assistants at York University has been on strike for more than five weeks. Instead of bargaining in good faith, late last week York University asked the OLRB (Ontario Labour Relations Board) to supervise a forced vote on the latest management offer.

The last offer had significant concessions, including the reduction of conversions from contract status to full-time from eight per year to two per year, thereby reducing full-time positions from 24 to six over a three-year contract.

CUPE 3903 members have overwhelmingly rejected their employer's bad offer, with 86% saying NO! They, like all workers in the education sector, deserve better working conditions.

We stand in solidarity with them.

NOTICE: STEWARD NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS 2018-20 TERM

You may now nominate yourself or other faculty in your area to a steward position for the next term. **Nominations will be closed at 11:59 PM, Wednesday, April 18th.**

More information: <http://bit.ly/steward560>

UPDATE: PL COORDINATORS

A 2013 arbitral decision determined that the College may assign co-ordinator duties to Partial-Load faculty when it cannot find a Full-Time professor willing and able to accept the assignment.

However, a new arbitral decision out of St. Lawrence College has concluded Partial-Load faculty who perform co-ordinator duties in addition to teaching *may* (depending on hours assigned) effectively be working a Full-Time workload, and may therefore be entitled to classification as Sessional.

This principle could also be understood to apply to all PL faculty who have effectively "been assigned a full-time workload comprised of teaching and other academic complementary duties".

This ruling is significant for Partial-Load faculty because, if it were to be determined that they had been assigned to work Full-Time workloads for more than one academic year in the previous 24 calendar months (as defined by the Collective Agreement), then the Collective Agreement could oblige the College to automatically designate those positions as regular Full-Time positions.

If you believe that this may apply to you, and you wish to consult with Local 560 to explore your legal options under the Collective Agreement, please contact the Union (ideally prior to the end of your contract), at union@opseu560.org.

EI FOR CONTRACT FACULTY

The summer months are an anxious time for contract faculty at Ontario Colleges, but Ontario post-secondary contract faculty can receive Regular Benefits under the Government of Canada's Employment Insurance program during the times that they have no contract or during weeks when they are not paid.

Many contract faculty who did not receive teaching work for the upcoming summer months have already applied to receive EI benefits. The EI benefits these faculty members receive will usually be for a period longer than their summer, non-teaching period. When contract faculty begin a new contract, any unused weeks of EI benefits will typically be banked for the times when they are not paid: between semesters and during study weeks. Typically, contract faculty will not run out of EI coverage, and if their teaching schedules are similar in the following year, these faculty members can reapply for EI the following May.

Some contract faculty worry that the hours indicated on their paystub will not allow them to reach the minimum number of hours required to receive benefits, but this is not the case. When this author applied for EI, the 'hours worked' were calculated by multiplying Teaching Contact Hours by 2.27. To find out the number of insurable hours on your Record of

Employment you can sign into [Service Canada's website](#) with a Sign-In Partner (such as a major Canadian bank). Sign in as you usually would into your online banking and then select your Record of Employment. When I signed in, I discovered that within the past 52 weeks, my insurable hours were way above the minimum required so if I do not receive any teaching work this coming summer, I will apply for EI and bank the remaining weeks.

If you are contract faculty and have had a sessional or partial-load contract combined with part-time teaching at two or more colleges within the past year, you are likely eligible for Employment Insurance regular benefits. If you have been working only on a partial load contract at one college within the past year, you may have accumulated enough hours to receive regular benefits. To find out, request a Record of Employment from HR. The best step you can take is to apply. If you don't, you could be losing out on financial support. If all contract faculty applied for EI, it would certainly put a strain on the system, so why not? This is one way we can put pressure on the federal government about the crisis in education.



BILL 148 COMMITTEE

OPSEU 560 members will be pleased to hear that the **Bill 148 Committee** (responsible for implementing the provisions of Bill 148 into our collective agreement) includes JP Hornick (whom we all know from the strike) and RM Kennedy (a former member of our Bargaining Team and currently on our OPSEU Executive).

We could not have stronger defenders of contract workers' rights representing us. In preliminary reports from this committee, it has emerged that the College system saves \$1,860,000 per year by underpaying contract faculty. Put another way, every year, the College system exploits contract faculty to the tune of \$1.9 million. Keep in mind that Seneca alone had a surplus of \$16.9 million in 2017.

We are expecting to hear a preliminary report from the **Province Wide College Task Force** on May 18th, so stay tuned.

LABOUR NOTES

Teachers in the United States have been pushing back against austerity and cuts by staging wildcat strikes, protests, and sit-ins.

The most daring of these acts was the West Virginia Teachers strike—teachers walked out in an illegal strike, protesting rising premiums on their health insurance, among other cuts. The strike, which lasted from February 22 to March 7, ended with teachers winning a 5% raise for ALL public-sector workers in the state.

On March 30 teachers in Kentucky followed suit, walking out in an illegal strike. Oklahoma teachers have begun to do the same. Teachers are refusing to put up with low wages and precarity, and they are fighting back.

OPSEU Local 560

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