

# THE LOCAL

OPSEU 560 NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2018

## REGISTER BY OCT. 30 FOR PARTIAL-LOAD REGISTRY

Local 560 **strongly urges all current and former** Partial-Load faculty to sign-up for the Partial Load Registry right now. You can sign up to register interest in being employed as a Partial-Load employee in the 2019 calendar year at <https://inside.senecacollege.ca/hr/partial-load-registry.html>.

Union members of the Union-College Committee have been working for months with College management on the implementation of the Partial-Load Registry, which we won in our 2017 strike.

Even if you are currently under Partial-Load contract, and even if you were "deemed to be registered" because you had a Partial-Load contract in Fall 2017, **you must register** to be considered for priority Partial-Load hiring during every semester in 2019.

Please visit the Seneca College link, read the information carefully, and fill out the online form accurately. You will be asked to provide your Seneca Employee ID, which is listed on pay stubs. If you do not know your Seneca Employee ID and

do not have a pay stub in your possession, contact your manager (or former manager) or Human Resources. Local 560 recommends using a non-Seneca email address when you register.

After you have completed the online form and digitally-signed the required document, ensure that you follow the final steps: check your email inbox and confirm your email address. Keep a digital and/or printed copy.

Partial-Load faculty may teach at more than one college. Even if you have registered for a Partial-Load Registry at a college other than Seneca, you must register at the Seneca College link in order to be considered for priority Partial-Load hiring at Seneca College.

THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS OCTOBER 30, 2018.

Read past newsletters online at [opseu560.org](http://opseu560.org)

## CANCELLATION OF COLLEGE TASKFORCE

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the day the current Ontario government was sworn in, Premier Ford cancelled all Orders in Council, including the Colleges' Taskforce.

The Taskforce had been one of the main wins from our 2017 strike, and had held the promise of proposing a solution to the high rate of contract employment in Colleges.

It was also considering our demand for Collegial Governance. In losing the Taskforce, we lost the capacity to address these two crucial demands from the strike, thus

increasing the likelihood of future strikes.

OPSEU President Smokey Thomas sent a firmly-worded letter to the Premier, requesting the reinstatement of the Taskforce. He received no reply. OPSEU lawyers determined that the cancellation was a violation of our constitutionally-enshrined right to bargain collectively, and have filed a Charter Challenge in the court.

## FREE SPEECH: THE DOUG FORD DIKTAT

On August 30, Premier Ford issued an order commanding all the colleges to come up with a policy on “free speech” by the end of the year, or to face financial punishment in the form of budget cuts. It provides a classic “I don’t know whether to laugh or cry” moment.

The zeal for “free speech on campus” comes directly from Doug Ford’s ideological soul-mate Donald J. Trump, who has blown a couple of noisy clashes between extreme right-wing speakers and student dissenters into an alleged “crisis” of free speech in American universities. Make no mistake: President Trump and Premier Ford couldn’t care less about “free speech” or the closely connected but separate concept of “academic freedom.” They have only contempt for open thought and inquiry, but the topic fuels their frenzied attacks on what they call the “elites.” It riles up their base. It works for them.

In Canada, there have been a few cases of unpleasant exchanges on campus, including a brief flare-up at Wilfrid Laurier that’s now been resolved. As for Ontario colleges, no such conflicts have occurred. This is a solution in a futile search of a problem.

Meanwhile, the local authorities and, of course, senior administrators across Ontario have dutifully retired behind closed doors where they will—presumably after consultation with other colleges, some backchannel communications involving pooh-bahs at the Ministry, and furtive conversations with insiders in the no-longer-*progressive* Conservative Party—cobble together a passable statement in a timely manner. Then, with luck, life will go on much as before. The Premier will have his statement; prudence will suggest that it is in everyone’s interest to ignore it as much as possible.

Why should we care?

In any college worthy of the name, such an intrusion by the *political* elite would raise alarms and elicit a collective response in which *all* pertinent groups would participate and formulate a collective response. After all, the purpose of this exercise is plainly not to *protect*, but to *limit* free speech. It is part of a larger effort to bring the colleges and universities to heel. It’s a weapon in the Premier’s meaty hands. It imposes a non-negotiated contractual obligation on academic employees. In the wrong hands (which are plentiful), it can limit what we do and say in the workplace. It could affect everything from curriculum to pedagogy. That it does so under the title of “free speech” is predictably and disturbingly Orwellian.

President Agnew and his many layers of officialdom could have taken this edict as an opportunity to consult meaningfully with students and staff, to engage collegially with faculty, to work co-operatively with the Union, and to build respectful relationships. They have neglected to do so. Instead, they have reinforced the top-down model that is so toxic to our work environment and simultaneously deprived themselves of access to the repository of wisdom that lies within the authentic teaching and learning community.

Doug Ford will no doubt be pleased with both the product and the process.

Howard Doughty  
*Steward, King Campus*

### You’re Invited: Family Fun Day and Fair

The OPSEU Provincial Women’s Committee (PWC) invites everyone to the free Annual Region 5 PWC Family Fun Day and Fair. *A day packed with fun for everyone!*  
**Oct. 20, 2018 from 11 AM – 3 PM** at 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto (OPSEU Head Office)

## OUR STRIKE-A-VERSARY: TIME TO REMEMBER

So, it's our one year Strike-a-versary.

Looking at Pond Road as the leaves change, I have a lot of memories from last fall: chilly mornings, blowing signs, too much Tim Hortons, chant competitions, costumes, dogs, what-are-hand-warmers...

I remember my first strike captains' meeting. I'd never been on strike before. How political would this get? How contentious? How drawn-out?

I remember my frustration that management wouldn't engage our concerns about precarious work and academic freedom.

What I didn't know this time last year was how many friends I would make. From my excellent co-captain to my outstanding 8 a.m. strike crew to our local leadership to our broader college colleagues, I didn't know how much the strike would help me to make connections across departments and campuses and institutions.

Here's something else I remember. In 2015, management knocked many Partial-Load professors down to part-time. They called us fungible (look it up). At the time, my manager told me that there would be no more partial-load at Seneca. Partial-Load professors lost money, benefits and the opportunity to do the work that they loved and that they were good at. Students lost great teachers. Because of my precariousness, I began to work for multiple institutions at multiple campuses, teaching twenty hours a week. I remember that I felt fundamentally disrespected as an employee. I felt this again last year as the CEC refused to create quotas for full-time professors, refused to create equal work conditions for contract faculty, for counselors and librarians, and refused to grant academic freedom. But I was ready in 2017 because I remembered 2015.

You know the rest of the story: We fought, we resisted bait-and-switch trickery, we won, we sent

the outstanding JP Hornick and others in to negotiate with the Taskforce. Much was gained. And then the Ford government was elected and we lost again. Not all of it, not our academic freedom, but still too much.

We aren't the only ones losing things. Toronto has lost municipal representation. People on disability support are losing a desperately needed (and still paltry) funding increase. Our environment – our air, our water, our soil – has lost protections. Our children are losing an adequate education in health and sexuality. Educational steps in the reconciliation process between Indigenous and settler people are lost. We're about to lose the important workplace protections of Bill 148. Public schools, health care, Seneca itself, and other institutes of higher learning: The government is threatening these spaces. For people who care about labour, safety, health and education in Ontario, it's a tough time.

But tough times and interim losses don't mean that we stop fighting. I see people in the halls now – colleagues, friends – who I know because of the strike. The Ontario College Association of Language and Literacy (CALL) Conference this spring focused on solidarity across campuses because of our strike experience. OPSEU is working with \$15 and Fairness towards policies that will protect our precarious workers. While there are so many losses that we face because of reckless government policies, there are also new opportunities to forge friendships and alliances that may not have presented themselves before. We're in good company.

For now, I'm holding those friendships, I'm telling stories. I'm remembering. It gets me ready to fight.

*An OPSEU 560 Member*

## STRIKE REFLECTION: REMEMBERING OUR DEMANDS

### ***Fairness***

We won the Partial-Load Registry in our 2017 strike, which grants Partial-Load professors seniority rights and recognizes the work that they have done.

### ***Equal Pay for Equal Work***

Bill 148, the comprehensive new labour law passed November 2017, enshrined equal pay for equal work. Most significantly for our sector, it affirms the principle that contract workers doing substantially the same work as full-time workers deserve the same pay. We now face two challenges: enforcing the new law, and fighting to prevent the new government from repealing it. It

is still on the books and an obligation to enforce it is in our collective agreement.

### ***Academic Governance***

The College Taskforce was to review the current governance models and make recommendations going forward. However, this taskforce was cancelled on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the day the new Progressive Conservative Government was sworn in.

### ***Academic Freedom***

We won Academic Freedom in the Kaplan Award, as a direct consequence of our strike. Now we need to use that freedom to keep up the fight.

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## BILL 148: FAIR WORKPLACES, BETTER JOBS ACT

Bill 148, now law, mandates a \$14 minimum wage on January 1, 2018, to be raised to \$15 on January 1, 2019, fair scheduling laws, paid sick days, and job protected personal leave time. Most significantly for our sector, it affirms the principle that contract workers doing substantially the same work as full-time workers deserve the same pay. We now face two challenges: enforcing the new law and fighting to prevent the new government from repealing it.

*\$15 & Fairness*, the umbrella organization which fought for this Bill to be passed, is now leading the charge to enforce it and protect it. The leadership of *\$15 & Fairness* has identified college faculty as ideally situated to enforce equal pay for equal work. In conjunction with our

Divisional Executive, they have asked sessional faculty to file Ministry of Labour complaints alleging that they are not being paid at the same rate as full-time faculty, though they are doing the same work—as our collective agreement explicitly states. The goal is to win a few of these cases, setting the precedent that contract faculty do the same work as full-time faculty and should be paid accordingly, which will then open the door to pushing for the same right for part-time workers and Partial-Load workers.

Our task is to mobilize in support of Bill 148, alongside *\$15 & Fairness*, to prevent the new government from repealing it. If it were to be repealed, we would lose our ability to fight for equal pay for equal work.



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