

THE LOCAL

OPSEU 560 NEWSLETTER- NOVEMBER 2020

WINTER 2020 SWFs

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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.

WMG VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE:

Wednesday, November 25th 2020

Session ONE: 1:30PM- 3:00PM

Session TWO: 5:00PM- 7:00PM

Local 560's WMG team will be answering your questions in a virtual open house.

An email will be sent out to all members with Zoom meeting information on Monday, November 23rd 2020.

As another round of SWFs are being handed out it is likely that the continued shift to a virtual learning environment during the ongoing COVID pandemic will create more obscurities regarding workload.

As faculty, we know that its isnt possible to offer our students the quality of education that they deserve if we are run off our feet and exhausted.

If you are concerned about your Winter 2020 workload, get in touch immediately with the union representatives on the Workload Monitoring Group at wmg@opseu560.org.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

The SWF/ Workload FAQ page on our website includes a workload calculator to help you determine the accuracy of your SWF: <https://opseu560.org/workload-faqs/>

Our workload tracker to help track your time: <https://opseu560.org/workload-faqs/workload-tracker/>

Email the Workload Monitoring Group:
wmg@opseu560.org

Presidents Address : The New Normal?

Frank Yee, President, OPSEU Local 560

There is no doubt that this has been an arduous year for all faculty. Amid the turmoil brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic, Seneca College has finally recognized your hard work towards making the College system function. President Agnew has extended a very modest 'remote work' stipend to all fulltime, part-time, partial-load and sessional faculty and committed to an extension of the holiday closures by an extra two days. While this is a miniscule gesture, I hope it is a step in the direction of recognizing and rectifying the many workplace issues that have arisen out of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been brought to the attention of the College by the Local.

There is still a long road ahead. Black, indigenous and racialized communities in Canada and the United States, continue to face incredible undue hardship, further exacerbated by the Pandemic.

Systemic racism must be confronted at every level of society and Seneca College is not immune to these realities. I have called on the College to address its inequities, in response to several Article 4 grievances levied against managers based on various enumerated grounds for discrimination.

These inequities are made more prominent by the switch to online learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a convenient opportunity to push forward on-line class conversion, with little regard or preparation on the effect of this shift on the precarious nature of work for contract faculty.

Workload has drastically changed and increased while partial-load professors continue to deal with staffing, seniority and priority hiring issues. Many faculty have had to become pseudo online course designers at the flip of a switch. We face a new re-

ality and it is likely that many courses will continue to be offered online even when it is safe to return to campus.

This reality comes with a new and bold set of challenges, issues such as academic freedom, intellectual property rights and addressing accommodations for both faculty and students are now amplified. Little direction from the College and its Managers on how to address these issues has left faculty to continuously jump the hurdles of online learning parameters. Any guidance received has not been inclusive of upholding the rights of faculty while simultaneously meeting the needs of students.

Finally, a brief comment with respect to SWFs and Partial-Load contracts for the Winter semester. We are faced with several unresolved issues surrounding class sizes, academic integrity, synchronous vs. asynchronous materials and delivery. I encourage all members to inform themselves of their rights

under the College's policies on [Recording Lectures and Educational Activities](#), [Intellectual Property](#) and [Copyright](#) and direct any questions or concerns to the Local. Any member who doesn't believe that their Winter SWF reflects or captures their workload should contact the Workload Monitoring Group (wmg@opseu560.org) for assistance in referring their SWF to the WMG for review. Additionally, any Partial-Load members whose contracts were not renewed should get in touch with the Local immediately to file an [Article 26](#) grievance.

The Stewards and Officers of Local 560 remain committed to supporting the rights of faculty and as we continue to adjust to this new normal, we will continue to serve you, the members of Local 560, to the best of our abilities.

In Solidarity
Frank Yee

TEACHER BURNOUT

*Anna Ainsworth, Vice President,
Local 560*

We, as teachers, chose a profession that often results in burnout. We chose this profession because we are called to teach, so when we burn out, we suffer all the more for it.



Burnout is defined by the World Health Organization as a "syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed" and includes symptoms of exhaustion, loss of interest in one's work, cynicism about the work and workplace, and reduced professional capacity.

According to a 2018 study by [Quinn and Smith](#), burnout is a greater risk for women than for men, even in the same profession. But it is a risk for all of us. As [Hall, Lee and Rahimi](#) argue in their 2019 study, internationally, over the last 20 years faculty at post-secondary institutions have been experiencing increased rates of burnout, as teaching and workload demands have risen, but institutional supports have not increased.

And now we are in a pandemic; the pressures have only increased. As [Flaherty](#) argues in her re-

cent article, the added stressors of the pandemic are creating an environment that will likely lead to higher burnout rates among us. Indeed, I have been observing the declining mental well-being of my colleagues as well. After the scramble to put our courses online with vastly inadequate support, then the shift to emergency remote teaching, but with the expectations that we would be offering online learning, and then the unrelenting pressures of isolation, increased family responsibilities, the increased needs of our students...it is no wonder that we are struggling.

Those who are raising alarm bells about the conditions of our work, are deeply concerned that we will face a post-pandemic mental health crisis. I also think that this is likely to occur, but want to work to mitigate it. I want us to be well, and to continue to love the work we do. One of the suggestions that comes up in the literature is that we should lower our own expectations. Good enough is good enough, especially now. We should not internalize the superhuman expectations under which we are placed. We should slow down. We should create communities of support and care for each other. We need to name what we are going through.

Of course, our local keeps working to create better work conditions, and we have made some gains, but we have also not been able to ensure that our labour is appropriately assessed and respected. While we keep pushing, I want to reach out to all my colleagues, whom I miss seeing in person, and say that we are in this together. Let's take care of ourselves and each other.

Partial-Load Registry and Seniority Rights

The Partial-Load Registry was won during our 2017 strike. It was a step toward job security for contract faculty. All Colleges in Ontario must take it into account when hiring Partial-Load faculty.

Members must actively register on the Partial-Load Registry by October 30th of each calendar year. This is a hard deadline set forth by the College and it is imperative that all Partial-Load faculty be mindful of this date.

The Local will send out timely reminders of this date, every year. Please get in touch with the Local immediately if you are not receiving these reminders.

As members of Local 560 Partial-Load faculty have been ascertained particular rights under the Collective Agreement, covered by the Registry. First, hiring managers must take into account several criteria when hiring Partial-Load faculty. Criteria include: length of service and the courses you have previously taught.



OPSEU Local 560

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Partial- Load Registry and Seniority Rights *continued...*

If you are on the Partial-Load Registry, under Article 26.10 D and 26.10 E of the Collective Agreement (found at opseu560.org), you are entitled to certain seniority rights.

You are particularly entitled to be offered all sections of all courses you have previously taught for the department and the School if:

- a) Your school or department chooses to assign those sections as part of any Partial-Load contract in the Winter semester;
- b) You have taught that course/ those courses in the past;
- c) You currently are Partial-Load or have been Partial-Load for at least eight months in the last four academic years (as per Article 26.10 C of

the Collective Agreement);

d) You have more service with the College than any other person who meets the above three criteria.

Contact the Local immediately if you believe that your rights under Article 26 (Partial-Load Employees) of the Collective Agreement have been violated.

Useful Resources:

Partial-Load FAQ on our website:
<https://opseu560.org/partial-load-registry-faq/>

The Emanuel *Diktat* Howard A. Doughty, Steward, King Campus

Shortly before becoming Barack Obama's first White House Chief of Staff in 2009 and later having his own eight-year political career as Chicago's mayor, Rahm Emanuel (a fierce champion of "charter schools" and a bitter adversary of teachers) guaranteed himself a place in future editions of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations when he gave this advice to a Wall Street Journal symposium of business government executives: "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Then, Obama had the "Great Recession"; now, we have Covid-19.



A "good crisis," Emanuel intimated, was one fraught with danger, but also presented opportunities for authorities to make changes they couldn't get away with in "normal times."

The College Employer Council is taking Emanuel's dictum to heart. The Covid Crisis is rife with opportunities — whether it's the federal government piling up billions of dollars of debt, provincial governments shuttering "non-essential" businesses, or public libraries doing curbside check-outs, for good or ill, the previously unthinkable is being done.

So, in the next round of collective bargaining, our bosses will have "academic freedom" in their sites. Academic freedom has never been recognized by college executives. Management has always denied the "professionalism" of academic employees and refused even to discuss the matter. They consider it

an unwarranted limitation on their right to control the "teaching and learning" process completely.

That's why the strike of 2017 was so significant. We exercised our right to suspend work for clearly "professional" reasons: decent treatment of "contract" employees, serious reforms to college governance, and academic freedom! What's more, we persisted and, when the Kaplan Arbitration Award was handed down in January, 2018, we won at least basic recognition of academic freedom and a task force to resolve the other issues. When, however, the current premier won 63% of the seats in the legislature with 40% of the votes, he immediately trashed our hard-won settlement.

Now, with the toxic Covid wind in its sails, the employer intends to do what it hasn't done before. Previous collective agreements have said that it's management's "exclusive function" to dominate all academic policy and practice. In practice, however, some aspects of teaching have been informally delegated to teachers and a certain amount of "flexibility" has frequently prevailed. Now, on the advice of highly paid private consultants, the colleges will be demanding not just retrenchment, but detailed "Fordist" micromanagement in the manner of a industrial assembly plant.

Our experience with online teaching makes clear that administrative overreach is being exercised. The employer will soon be arguing that college courses should permit no room for interpretation. True and false answers should suffice since not only are we not "professionals," but our students are not being trained for jobs where employee discretion and responsibility apply.

The further deskilling and degrading of academic workers faculty is the "subtext" of the current response to Covid-19. Simply put: while the colleges ask us to pull together, they're simultaneously preparing to deliver the coup de grâce against the kind of education we signed up to provide.

Stay Connected:

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/opseu560/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OPSEU560>

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/>



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