

The Local

OPSEU Local 560: Representing Full-time and Partial-load Professors and Instructors, Counsellors and Librarians at Seneca College



BARGAINING UPDATE: EMPLOYER SETTLEMENT OFFER - LOOKS LIKE SHORT CHANGE?

Frank Yee, President OPSEU Local 560

Dear Members,

Our Collective Agreement will expire on September 30, 2021. The Bargaining Team has been active since the summer, negotiating for a fair and equitable contract.

On September 17th, the Management bargaining team, the College Employer Council (CEC) provided the remainder of their non-monetary proposals and additionally a settlement offer. It seems as though the most recent CEC proposals seeks to devalue the worth of our faculty. Under these proposals, faculty could:

- See an increase in the number of weeks of work per year;
- Be requested to work weekends and new faculty could be scheduled to work on any 5 consecutive days in a week Increasing the number of weeks of work per year.

Partial Load faculty in particular could see:

- A rollback of their seniority rights gained in the 2017 contract; and
- The institution of a probation period for new P/L professors that amounts to a right of termination without cause for a period of between 2 to 5 years (1,008 TCHs – depending on your P/L Contracts – 7 to 12 TCHs, and whether you work 2 or 3 academic terms per year).



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**Attention:
Partial-load faculty**



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Counsellors are being asked to accept an amended classification of their duties, which restricts their work to mental health counselling. Counsellors, Librarians, and P/L Professors' demand for a "SWF" has not been addressed by CEC. Additionally, the proposals attempt to create conditions where courses can run without a professor.

The proposals lack regard for faculty needs, however, several suggestions for the creation of varied Task Forces have been made. It isn't much of a coincidence that most of the CEC proposals centre around creating Task Forces to address key faculty demands—considering that in 2018, the Ford Government prioritized the disbanding of the College Task Force, enacted in 2017 to address education issues. Unfortunately, in the 50 plus years of the existence of the Ontario College System, not one recommendation from either a task force or subcommittee established over the years to address the plethora of educational issues has made its way into a collective agreement.

The CEC has not attempted to meaningfully address the 17 demands set out by faculty across the province. As such, in a strategic move to bridge the divided positions, our Bargaining Team has proposed pre-conciliatory mediation. We hope that this responsible path forward will assist negotiations without leading to any labour conflict.

In Solidarity
Frank Yee

RETURN TO CAMPUS A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Frank Yee, President OPSEU Local 560

Dear Members,

The Fall 2021 Semester is well under way and I want to thank all faculty for their hard work and perseverance during these difficult transitional times.

The College's and other post-secondary institutions are experiencing many changes as a result of provincial mandates around COVID-19 Vaccination policies. As we are all well aware, Seneca implemented its COVID-19 Vaccination Policy at the beginning of the Fall semester. The Local recognizes the College's responsibility to provide a safe working environment for all of its employees and students. However, a reasonable COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (the "Policy") must consider possible accommodations for those who cannot be vaccinated. Additionally the Local believes that further protective measures should be implemented in parallel to the existing policy.

The Local is aware of the College denying medical exemptions for some professors and placing them on "suspension without pay" for the entirety of the fall academic term. It is unreasonable to deny the request for these exemptions when remote teaching is valid accommodation for many professors; the salary loss for a full-time professor is at least \$38,459—and an even more astounding loss for contract faculty.

Had Seneca worked collaboratively with both Local 560 and 561, to develop and implement this "Policy", the unnecessary hardship to faculty and staff could have been avoided. We note that other post-secondary institutions have taken a more pragmatic approach to a mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination policy by implementing parallel protective measures in addition to vaccination.

At the last Central Health and Safety Committee, both Locals requested that the College implement daily testing and temperature readings for individuals accessing the campus. These additional safety protocols would complement Seneca's existing measures.

However, Management was reluctant to commit to the Locals' proposition. We stand that any and all reasonable safety precautions should be taken to protect the Seneca community, in reopening our campuses. We hope that the College will consider these additional measures in the future, to strengthen the existing policy.

This summer, I welcomed our new Academic VP, Marianne Marando to Seneca College. I am optimistic that our new VP will be supportive as she shares our academic history and the perspective of our faculty. I am also hopeful that she will work collegially with both Locals to support faculty needs.

In other Local news, I am astounded by our Counsellors and Partial load Aviation faculty who stood up against the inequity within their respective departments and filed group grievances against the College. The grievances are the largest collective grievances in Seneca's history.

However, the Local is concerned that these grievances are appearing during such a stressful time for faculty. Many of these grievances have arisen due to the lack of support afforded to faculty and the iniquitous actions of Chairs. This also comes during a year where Seneca reported that the college had achieved an annual surplus of \$21,508,208, an increase from 2020. It is conservatively estimated that the College has amassed over 130 million dollars in liquid assets.

Faculty are the "life blood" of the Colleges. Post-secondary institutions can do without managers, but cannot do without Professors and Instructors, Counsellors, and Librarians.

As such, on September 2nd, I challenged the new Academic VP to consider reinvesting some of the College's profits into reducing class sizes, guaranteeing partial load contracts, and creating new full-time positions for our precarious members. The College has certainly recognized the need for additional supports for faculty. They have invested in administration by adding another layer of managers, the Academic Program Managers. Perhaps this layer will improve administration and organization at the College.

In Solidarity
Frank Yee



OUR MENTAL HEALTH

Anna Ainsworth, First VP, Local 560

After more than a year and a half of the pandemic, everyone is experiencing strain and various degrees of burnout. In our profession, September used to be an exciting month—the hallways and classrooms buzzing with the nervous and expectant energy of our students brought a smile. I always looked forward to that butterflies in the stomach feeling of week one. Getting to meet that new batch of students, figuring out the distinct nature and culture of each class were a big part of the joy of teaching.

This semester feels different. We are doing our best to maintain the same energy, but so many of us are sharing, in private conversations, that completing the same tasks as before leaves us twice as tired. Our sleep schedules remain odd. Our caregiving needs are magnified as those we love are also under strain.

So, we urge you to reach out for support. Remember that your benefits include massage therapy and other forms of therapies. Seek out counselling if you need it. Connect with your colleagues and friends. Take care of yourself. Please get the help you need before you burnout. We need you to be well.

**For Bargaining updates
and discussion listen to:**



**For Comments, questions
or submissions...**

Contact us:

Email: union@opseu560

Tel: 416 495 1599

Connect with a steward:

<https://opseu560.org/stewards/>



STAY INFORMED!



WHATEVER'S COMING IS UNLIKELY TO BE GOOD

Howard A. Doughty, Steward, King Campus

As some are aware (and I'd like to forget), I'm the longest standing (or sitting) faculty member in the CAAT system, with 52 years, one month and a couple of weeks of continuous servitude. Though perhaps living proof of the proposition that endurance doesn't guarantee excellence, I do at least have some perspective.

I vividly (or vaguely, depending on the time of day) recall Seneca before OPSEU or any union at all. I remember the organizing drive by OPSEU's predecessor, the Civil Service Association of Ontario, Inc. which Seneca faculty overwhelmingly rejected joining. We weren't anti-union, but we didn't think that "tea-and-crumpets" outfit, run by elitist bureaucrats, who'd rather schmooze with Conservative politicians than protect workers' rights, was right for us. Some of us wanted to join CUPE. Others preferred the Steelworkers (or the Teamsters!). Most wanted a province-wide "faculty association"; but, we were only allowed an "up-or-down" vote on CSAO and, since the majority across Ontario voted "up," CSAO won.

In the early days and during the transition to OPSEU—a change in name and in nature—we became a "real" union. The atmosphere was different. If, in the 1970s, it was this late in the bargaining process, we'd have packed the Firefighters Hall on Steelcase Avenue with up to two hundred Senecans (about one-third to half of the total membership). We'd have noisy, sometimes cantankerous sessions with feisty debates, serious "strategizing," and bubbling enthusiasm (admittedly increasing as the draft beer flowed). Now...silence!

#Bargaining
for Better

#Négociier pour
améliorer

WHATEVER IS COMING IS UNLIKELY TO BE GOOD...CONTINUED...

What's up?

These remarks may be proven ill-conceived and ill-fated even before they're printed (or pixelized); but I thought someone should say something about the pachyderm in the palace: our Collective Agreement expires in less than three weeks!

I know it's been a hard 18 months. Folks are tired, frustrated, and depressed about everything from the SARS-CoV-2 to the current federal election; but, doesn't it seem odd that no one is talking about October 1st, the day after our Collective Agreement expires?

What's going on?

All sorts of explanations—some valid reasons, others shabby excuses—can explain the current situation, but I'm not going to get into that now. Instead, I'll make just three points:

- The Strike of 2017 was a successful; at last—albeit through arbitration—we won language on “academic freedom” and a mandated discussion of monstrously overdue college governance reform; the College Employer Council (CEC) wants those back;
- Our success so annoyed the current Ontario premier that he ripped up the best parts of the Kaplan Award in a fit of petulance (an action was ideologically driven, ill-advised, and, in my view, illegal); the CEC isn't acting “in good faith”;
- The CEC is following the Rahm formula (named after evil genius Rahm Emanuel's quip that “a good crisis is a terrible thing to waste”) and will try to extract concessions while we're flustered.

Absent a full-bodied “education and mobilization” campaign by either our Local or the CAAT Division over the summer, we must now self-educate and become ready for whatever happens in a couple of weeks—lock-out, strike, protracted negotiations ... or a quick agreement to kick all controversial issues down the road.

Meanwhile, management has utterly dominated the narrative. Throughout the pandemic all adjustments, emergency measures, future planning (e.g., the Au Large project), and “faculty resources” including mental health initiatives, classroom “tips,

tricks, and technological licks,” and rhetoric about “motivation,” being “in this together,” and even some apparent epiphanies about ecology and social justice, and all the conversations about courage, empathy, and commitment on the Good Ship Seneca have come exclusively from the top down.

In fairness, the College has succeeded in mandating vaccines, promoting environmental sustainability, and chatting amiably about gender issues and ethno-racial inclusion, but without serious faculty participation—thus highlighting the desperate need for democratic governance reform.

So, even if we're nervous, confused, distracted, and “burned-out” by events and really don't want to think about it, it's time to straighten up, take deep breaths, and ready to confront an tenacious CEC fully supported by the most anti-education premier in Ontario's history (or at least since Mike Harris). If permitted, the CEC will use our own professionalism against us, apply layers of guilt upon us for daring to make rumbling noises, and use the SARS-CoV-2 cover to snatch back the gains we've made.

If my sentiments stink of nostalgia, so be it. I know that circumstances and structures have changed since the 1960s. And, the CEC's strategy and tactics are currently as mysterious to me as to anyone (maybe more). Still, I can't believe the CEC is as unprepared, irresponsible, and sloppy at it appears this close to the deadline. Whatever its “secret” plan and whether it has a flint-lock musket or a howitzer at the ready, degrading faculty solidarity, solidifying managerial domination, and sweeping away all talk of academic freedom and shared governance is its “Rahm agenda.” The CEC and the government behind it disrespect our autonomy, demand our compliance, and want only to further corporatize the educational project.

The current premier, a first- semester drop-out from Humber with a silver “Deco Label” stuck in his mouth, still gripes that college education “bored him silly.” He gives us neither respect nor affection, and shows us only contemptuous neglect. Be prepared!

In Solidarity
Howard Doughty



COLLEGIAL MANAGEMENT

Tim Abbott , Steward, Seneca@York

Much effort has gone into trying to get the colleges to accept collegial management models. While thinking about that I found myself looking for some good definitions of management.

For guidance I downloaded the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) publication called [Quality management principles](#). There are seven principles laid out. I wanted to share just one of those with you.

The opening statement of this publication is, "One of the definitions of a " principle " is that it is a basic belief, theory or rule that has a major influence on the way in which something is done. "Quality management principles " are a set of fundamental beliefs, norms, rules and values that are accepted as true and can be used as a basis for quality management."

Their first principle is Customer Focus. While some may balk at calling students customers, the principle still applies. Here it is.

"Customer Focus Statement: The primary focus of quality management is to meet customer requirements and to strive to exceed customer expectations"

Actions you can take:

- Recognize direct and indirect customers as those who receive value from the organization.
- Understand customers' current and future needs and expectations.
- Link the organization's objectives to customer needs and expectations.
- Communicate customer needs and expectations throughout the organization.
- Plan, design, develop, produce, deliver and support goods and services to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Measure and monitor customer satisfaction and take appropriate actions.
- Determine and take actions on interested parties' needs and expectations that can affect customer satisfaction.
- Actively manage relationships with customers to achieve sustained success.

Do we as a College meet this short test of management? Are Seneca's objectives linked to our students' needs and expectations?

I would suggest that the College falls short on a number of these actions. Thankfully we don't have to rely solely on management to lead in this regard. Faculty collectively are the primary interface between the College and our customers. If we each delivered on all of these actions then we would be leading the way.

We have heard the many calls for collegial leadership models. It's not going to happen. But leadership can be demonstrated even when it is not invited. We can provide leadership whether the College accepts it or not. It is up to us, not them.

As General Patton and Lee Iacoca both said: Lead, follow or get out of the way.

In Solidarity
Tim Abbott