

**Everyone
needs
support.**

BARGAINING BULLETIN



News from the CAAT-Support negotiating team

Bargaining team pushes your agenda forward

Words from the Chair...

Our contract expires in a little over four months. Your bargaining team is working hard to get the improvements you need in the next contract.

We exchanged proposals with the employer Feb. 12 and have had two rounds of negotiations: Mar. 18, 19 and 20, followed by Mar. 25 and 26.

What we need to succeed

As bargaining heats up, remember the team can only go as far as you take us. That's why it's so important that you become involved. This means participating in events organized at your local; keeping up to date with negotiations; attending meetings; voting on proposals when the time comes; and, if necessary, supporting the team by giving us a strike mandate when we call for it.

We've taken your agenda to the table and we're standing strong, but the responsibility for what goes into our next contract rests with you. The team depends on you, the members, to be prepared to do whatever it takes to assist in getting you a decent contract. The solidarity you show on your local campus sends a strong message to the employer giving us the power we need to help us gain improvements. Remember, united we stand, divided we fall!

Progress so far

In the first two weeks of bargaining we've seen where the employer is going. First they say they want to "improve processes, which enable the colleges to respond and resolve unique issues and circumstances within their own environments."

What this really means is the colleges want the ability to bargain locally, with your local executive, on issues that should be dealt with centrally. While at first this may sound like a great idea, it's designed to weaken your bargaining power.

All employees should enjoy the same benefits. That's what bargaining centrally is all about. There is strength in numbers. The employer will use any tactic, communicate any position and exploit any strategy to divide the membership and erode the strength that support staff have because of our numbers.

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BARGAINING TEAM CONTACTS

Team members, and assigned colleges

Rod Bemister, Chair; Local 561, Seneca College:
George Brown, Georgian, Seneca, Conestoga

Marg Rae, Vice-Chair, Local 109, Fanshawe College:
Fanshawe, Mohawk, Conestoga, St. Lawrence

Richard Belleau, Local 731, Confederation College:
Algonquin, Boreal, La Cite, Confederation

Rick Nemisz, Local 351, Durham College: Durham,
Sheridan, Humber

Florry Lang, Local 137, St. Clair College: St. Clair,
Lambton, Sault

Rasho Donchev, Local 559, Centennial College:
Centennial, Fleming, Loyalist

Katherine Hilyer, Local 656, Cambrian College:
Cambrian, Canadore, Northern

Got questions?

Contact the bargaining team at:

bargaining@rogers.com

Don't be fooled by ploys to divide and conquer.

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The team is well aware of the game management is playing, whether it be at the bargaining table or within the locals themselves. The push for local bargaining must be stopped and it must be stopped right now.

The employer's second big push is about creating "balance."

They claim their demands will help employees by "balancing their personal and family needs with the college's operational requirements."

Boy, does that sound good! Who couldn't use a little balance in their lives? Their balancing act is all about telling you how flexible schedules are good for you, but not telling you how it will affect your family and personal relationships.

Aren't you tired of hearing the colleges tell you what's best for you, how contracting out is good for you, or that job security language doesn't need to be improved? It's time for management to start listening to your voices.

Over the next few months we will continue to fight for your rights, and to strike an appropriate "balance" for you. One that doesn't tip the scales in management's favour.

Protecting members from immediate threat

As well as listening to your demands and pushing your agenda we also need to protect ourselves from some of management's demands that threaten the immediate future of support staff.

Two of the most immediate and horrific changes the employer has proposed are the creation of "term-specific" employees and central vs. local bargaining issues. No matter how much management would like to candy-coat these issues and make them sound good for you, these proposals create a serious threat to your college employment.

Why would 'term-specific' employees be a threat to you?

The employer has tried this before. They called it "term certain" in 2003, "fixed term" in 2005, and now they're using "term specific."

This would create a category of full-time employee for a specific period of time, with no job security, benefits or ability to accrue seniority. This would give the colleges a way to undercut job security for full-time support staff. It would be a direct attack on your career

path at the college and allow the colleges to develop a large pool of cheaper workers with lesser rights.

The employer is trying to sell this to you as a professional development opportunity. Take a new position for a specified time,

gain new skills, enhance your career path. However, this would allow the employer to pick and choose who gets these "opportunities," and they could dissolve them at will.

In every round of bargaining, you've shot down this concept with very good reason, and every round they bring it back to the table. Why do they think that changing the name will make it any more appealing?

Central vs. local bargaining

In central bargaining, 24 colleges bargain collectively across the province. A deal for one is a deal for all. A strike for one is a strike for all. Language in the collective agreement is enforceable across the province.

Management would like to see us embrace a form of local bargaining, where each college has the ability to bargain local agreements that may be contrary to the collective agreement. This would slowly erode your rights and leave you subjected to the whim of the employer.

We are a provincial college system. Employees (and, for that matter, students) should have the same rights, whether they work in Timmins, Thunder Bay, or Toronto.

"The team depends on you, the members to be prepared to do whatever it takes to assist in getting you a decent contract."

-Rod Bemister, Chair

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You set the demands - we're pushing them forward

We're one central bargaining unit for a reason. Central bargaining gives us strength, protection and power at the table. Let's use it and keep it.

In the fall, the delegates from each college told the team that we need to continue to control bargaining, much like we did the last time.

With that in mind, we developed demands around your priorities based on the more than 2,700 bargaining surveys you returned, and on what we heard from the delegates at our meetings. The listed items below pertain to non-monetary demands (a later newsletter will detail monetary items).

Bullying in the Workplace

Bullying is a daily problem some members face, with nowhere to turn and no way to deal with it. Imagine getting up every morning and knowing you have to face a situation where you are made to feel incompetent and worthless.

A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of bullying.

- Verbal abuse/insults
- Physical abuse
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Excess monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information
- Repeatedly manipulating a person's job content and targets

This list is by no means exhaustive.

Bullying and intimidation are starting to be more recognized in the colleges. No longer are these incidents categorized as "personality differences." In a bold move, the Employee/Employer Relations Committee (EERC) researched and prepared a joint

report that clearly identified the problems and consequences of bullying in the workplace.

The employer was part of this committee, yet there is nothing in their proposal on adding language to combat this issue.

Statistically, 80 per cent of bullied workers will eventually leave the workplace. This is a topic that can't be swept under the carpet any longer.

Bullying/psychological harassment was identified in the surveys as a priority in this round of bargaining. You want it to stop. We want management to acknowledge this is happening and agree to language to deal with incidents quickly and efficiently.

Management wants policies. We want a strong enforceable way to deal with it.

Why do they want a policy? The only thing we can think of is so that they control the policy and how it is investigated. In most cases, the person investigating would be management. They know who pays them, so we're pretty sure we can kiss goodbye any sort of unbiased investigation.

The team is listening to the members and we've presented your language loud and clear: "No contracting out!"

Contracting Out and Job Security

Your team knows job security is one of your top priorities. We have put forward proposals to protect your jobs and to protect your interests in the event of layoffs.

Management continuously talks about balance but when the team addresses the issue of contracting out their language tips the scale...the only balance they're interested in is their budget, not your job security.

What possible benefit could there be in losing your job? Why would we want to remove the little

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Fighting for your agenda

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protection we have now?

Contracting-out language allows the employer the ability to bully and intimidate you into giving up your rights. They want to remove your protections to ensure you don't "step out of line," -- in their opinion. Who would feel comfortable requesting a classification grievance to increase your payband knowing the boss could turn around and contract out your work? (Don't think they haven't...)

The team is listening to the members and we have presented our language loud and clear: "No contracting out!"

We want to amend *Article 4.3* to increase the frequency and accuracy of part-time lists provided. The colleges continue to play the shell game when dealing with these lists. They do this to frustrate the union and to make it tougher to combine part-time jobs to make full-time jobs you could be considered for, or in the event of layoff, be bumped into.

We want to amend *Article 15.3.5.2* to increase the notice period to 120 days in the event someone is notified that they're going to be laid off. There are two reasons for this: It allows the Employment Stability Committee more time to go through the bumping process and find an appropriate fit; and it makes the colleges plan a little further in advance. The colleges are shortsighted when it comes to planning around job security; their plans rarely are long term and only serve as patchwork to alleviate perceived problems, mostly

around funding issues. Perhaps, if management were to plan more around our job security and less around how much money they're going to put into their pockets this wouldn't be such a big issue.

We want to amend *Article 15.4.3* to allow for unlimited bumps. While this issue does not come up as a problem very often, we can see this becoming a larger issue as the colleges struggle to with their budgets. The more they struggle, the more layoffs will come. The more layoffs that come, the more the need for bumping. The more the need for bumping, the better the chance that someone will be subject to a third bump despite their seniority, and be laid off from the college.

We want to amend *Article 15.4.4.1* by increasing the election period to take a position you have been bumped into -- to 10 days. Five business days is not enough time. You may want to weigh your options in regards to leaving the college. To make that decision you will probably want to talk to a number of people, including your family, friends, a financial advisor and/or pension and benefits experts before deciding what to do.

This all takes time and, unfortunately, financial advisors and benefits/pension people do not work around the schedule of the college laying you off. You need to make appointments, and the extra time would allow you to do that.

These are some of the improvements you've asked for. We'll make sure your agenda, not management's is advanced at the table this round. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we'll make it happen!

Bargaining Dates

Your team will be at the table representing you on the following dates:

April 8, 9
May 13, 14, 15
June 10, 11, 12
June 24, 25, 26
August 12, 13, 14
August 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
Sept. 1 (if necessary)



Contact your local mobilizer to find out how you can help:

For the latest bargaining update visit: www.opseu.org

Approved for distribution: Rod Bemister, Chair, CAAT Support bargaining team and Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, OPSEU