

President Report to the Annual General Meeting 2010

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As one can expect, this position is becoming more challenging every year and my job is to rise –up and meet the challenges head-on. I have been very fortunate to work with dedicated stewards and part of many successes stems from us working together as a team. I hope I can look forward to that team-approach in the coming year.

Here are the highlights of my activities this past year.

Resolved Grievances

We had a total of four resolved grievances. Two of those grievances were personal, and the rest union-Policy- the latter one union local about lesson plan and the other about the breach of the Memorandum of Settlement regarding the posting of vacant coordinator positions. The two personal grievances were resolved to the satisfaction of the grievors. The lesson plan grievance was resolved in-house prior to arbitration. The College eventually backed away from their request for one. The last one was resolved by way of a "Gentleman's agreement" I will explain more about this later in this report.

On-Going Grievances

We have three grievances in progress. One is about the Return –to Work requirements, another about LEID position and the last one is about staffing. We have identified four positions that need to be filled by September 2010. A step two meeting is scheduled by the end of the month with regards to staffing.

Gentleman's Agreement

This is similar to a resolution that both parties agreed upon but without the formality of signature and sunset. We now have three of such agreements. The first one is the reimbursement for PLA, Transfer Credit, etc. Even though, there is no longer a formal agreement, the college still abides by the resolution. The second is for the College not to use Moosonee as the dumping ground for faculty in need of employment. So far, the college has not relocated any faculty to Mosoonee due to lack of work at their home campus/program.

The third now will be about the posting of coordinator vacant positions. Although the MoU ran its course, and fighting over it will not yield any positive outcome, I convince the College to buy into a "Gentleman's Agreement, which they did. In short, the college will continue to post vacant coordinator positions, except in special circumstances. For each special circumstance, the College will have to make its case to the union local. Each and every circumstance will need the concurrence of the union local before any deviation from the posting requirements.

Successes

The cases I've personally most enjoyed have been those of members on Long-Term Disability (LTD). Sad as it may be that they are off work, it has also been rewarding to help members on LTD who have had difficulty with our insurer. LTD recipients tend to be forgotten and are happy they can count on their union in times of need. We did help one faculty member out on Porcupine.

A faculty member was asked to write a letter of retirement/resignation from the College by a supervisor. The union immediately took the matter with the upper management. The union requested for and received a resolution whereby the supervisor will write a letter of apology to the faculty member in question and furthermore, he, the supervisor will take a training in Human Rights Act and all its implications.

Labour Relations

Labour management relations at Northern seem to be improving. We send far fewer grievances to arbitration than any other college of comparable size. It seems the new president is trying to create positive working climate based on trust and respect. Time will tell.

Looking Ahead

In light of the Modified Workload Arrangement, there is a need, more than ever for us to bridge the communication chasm between the Lec and our members. A union's strength and effectiveness depends on member involvement. Therefore, more immediate measures need to be taken to ensure a good flow of adequate communication on both provincial and especially union committee issues, down the line to our members. We need to commit financial resources to this endeavor as a matter of priority. We may look at quarterly newsletter as start... and I am sure there are many ideas out there for our consideration. Also, let us encourage new stewards and members that are showing interest. I am now serving my seventh term as President, but someone else will eventually need to fill this position some day.