

## OPSEU Local 653 – General Membership Meeting

### Associate Chief Steward Report

Reading through the various reports submitted for the GMM, one may get the impression that relations between the college management and the faculty union are not very good. That impression would be accurate, and it is unfortunate since this is not how things need to be.

There are colleges in the system where the union Local and management have a fairly good working relationship. There was a time when Northern was one of those colleges. Looking through some of the old AGM minutes posted on the Local 653 website, I came across the following brief entries from the 2003 AGM:

**President's Report:** *"Current labour relations between Union and Management are good. Grievances filed are usually settled without the need for arbitration."*

**UCC Report:** *"Harmonious relations seem to be the norm unless the President overrides mutually agreed decisions."*

That was 16 years ago, and even six years ago we could say that there was still a relatively good working relationship. Things have changed in recent years, and the last round of contract negotiations and strike strained the relationship even further.

The union Local feels that a respectful and positive working relationship with management is best for all our members and best for the college. We would encourage the college administration to consider looking at finding local solutions to the issues that arise, and not rely on lawyers and arbitrators to settle these problems. We would also encourage them to respect the language of the collective agreement, especially in matters of workload assignments and Article 11. Doing so would be a great first step to address the issues of low morale and high stress among Northern College staff that were identified in the climate survey results.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neal McNair  
Associate Chief Steward  
OPSEU Local 653