

OPSEU Local 653 – General Membership Meeting

Union College Committee (UCC) Annual Report

Compared to the previous year things were fairly quiet at the UCC table this year. Here are a few highlights:

Automated courses

Last year's report detailed all of our concerns about the horribly ill-conceived 'Digital Campus' initiative. Since that report we were successful in obtaining via FOI the contracts and emails around this project. The details were as bad as we feared and made it clear that this 'Digital Campus' was simply an attempt generate revenue at the expense of education quality and the College's reputation by cutting the professor completely out of the College education model. Management has since refused to discuss the issue at UCC. We have not pressed too hard since it seems that for now at least the project is dead in the water with no students enrolling as far as we can tell. We will continue to monitor the project as it seems unlikely that the College will simply abandon it completely.

Partial Load Registry

The College has still not properly implemented the new Partial Load Registry, and as it stands we have no way of verifying whether Partial Load faculty are being given 'first dibs' on their courses according to the new rules laid out in the last collective agreement. We will attempt to move this item to CESC where it will be easier to have oversight on the process.

Student Accommodations

The role of faculty in meeting student accommodation needs has been a standing item on the UCC agenda. In reality it has been 'standing still' since there have been no updates for most of the year. In a report tabled to the committee last June, management seemed to indicate that the "duty to accommodate" lay with faculty as much as with the institution, and that this may require additional work from faculty to the point where they suggested that part-time faculty may be required to work for free in order to meet student accommodation needs, and they have consistently resisted acknowledging any additional work for accommodations on full-time faculty SWF's. We objected to this and insisted that the correct interpretation of duty to accommodate is that the duty lies with the institution. The college must assign any additional work required by student accommodations as they would any other work, either on the SWF for full-time faculty, or through paid hours of work for non-full-time. While this seems to be simply common sense, management has claimed to be seeking legal opinion ever since.

The college has announced a PD session on June 11th called "Faculty Role in Retroactive Accommodations". We encourage faculty to attend if possible and to make your voice heard that work must be properly assigned and compensated regardless of duty to accommodate.

Timetabling forms

In recent timetabling rounds there have been inconsistencies in how faculty have been allowed to make 'preference' requests for when their classes get scheduled. Some academic deans were accepting these requests without restriction as was the intent, while others were denying most and playing favorites as to who would have their requests accepted. After several objections and discussions at UCC, management has decided to completely remove the option from the timetabling process so that faculty no longer have the ability to express any preference for when their classes are scheduled. This is a direct consequence of the poor implementation of the timetabling software which since its implementation has caused more stress and poorly designed timetables than we ever had using the manual scheduling process. The software is capable of accommodating these preferences, but management does not see it as a priority to allow faculty to make these requests.

Climate Survey

At the March Town Hall meeting President Gibbons presented a summary of the climate survey results. The UCC asked for the full results to be presented at the committee. Based on the summary, there were a few positives, but there remain some glaring issues that have come up every year that they have run this survey:

- poor communication from management
- lack of training and orientation,
- lack of performance feedback
- morale is low,
- stress is high

These are serious issues that aren't getting better. Simply looking at the list of items in this report makes it clear why there are issues with morale and stress. If management truly wants to improve conditions at the college, they will have to stop pushing the boundaries of the CA, start acknowledging the work they are assigning, and show greater respect and willingness to work with both union locals and non-full-time staff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neal McNair
UCC co-Chair
OPSEU Local 653