

Chief Steward Report – CAAT-A Local 653 OPSEU Local 653 GMM; May 13, 2022

Grievances

- In May 2021, we settled a staffing grievance and secured the posting of a new full-time communications professor. The grievance was filed in early 2020 in response to the growing need for communications courses from the influx of international students. Despite this success, the college continues to rely too heavily on non-full-time faculty to deliver these critical courses.
- There is an ongoing staffing grievance where we are seeking three new full-time positions. This arbitration hearing has been postponed multiple times to date, but is currently scheduled for November 2022
- We will be monitoring staffing levels very closely over the next two years as the college has made it clear it plans to massively increase student numbers via international recruitment.
- In the fall several personal grievances were settled during the arbitration process to the satisfaction of the grievor.

Pandemic Effects on Faculty

In the past two years the faculty at Northern College have gone above and beyond to help students make it through the constantly changing delivery modes and restriction rules. College administration, while no doubt well intentioned, have been lacking in firm decision making and clear communication.

For example, in the fall of 2021 many faculty arrived on campus, ready to begin the in-person courses they had been assigned, only to find that all their courses had shifted back to online. No announcement had been made to them since the decision was last minute, and the assumption was that it was “no big deal” to change from an in-person course to an online one.

Overall, we have seen far too many faculty who are over worked and stressed by additional demands on their time. This is further aggravated by management’s ongoing resistance to recognizing this additional work via proper attribution on the SWF.

Bargaining

The last round of bargaining was contentious and brought us to the brink of a full-blown strike. I cannot say enough about the resolve and solidarity that faculty at Northern College and across the province displayed under very challenging circumstances.

The work to rule campaign was enlightening for many of our members, and hopefully helped them to better understand the workload limits that exist in Article 11.

Arbitration hearings are currently scheduled for the fall 2022. Until we have a new Collective Agreement in place, we will continue to work under the revised terms and conditions of employment that the Colleges imposed in December 2021.

Neal McNair
Chief Steward
OPSEU CAAT-A Local 653