

Facing the challenges together

At October's pre-bargaining conference, delegates elected the bargaining team to take us through this round. Inside this bulletin you'll find a short bio from each member, including our alternates, to help you get to know the people who will be representing you at the table.

We have an important challenge in front of us. As we've seen in recent years, the government's continued underfunding of public colleges is pushing colleges into questionable ventures, with negative consequences for the quality of students' education. Colleges will say their hands are tied, pointing to budget shortfalls caused by the fact that Ontario provides the least per-student funding of any province. We know, however, that in many cases these budget problems are the result of administration decisions, a fact that Darryl Bedford covers in this issue in his article "Broke on Purpose." Whether it results from government underfunding, or poor administration decision-making, the reality is that we have a chance in this round to stand up for quality education, and stop the current practice of balancing the budget on the backs of students.

One of the biggest challenges we face comes from the decision by administration to hire an increasing number of faculty on precarious



JP Hornick, Chair,
College Faculty Bargaining Team

contracts who do not receive the full, or in many cases, any, benefits of our collective agreement. As it stands, 70 per cent of all faculty are precarious workers. This unequal and unfair situation impacts both faculty and students.

The next few bulletins will look at precarious work and some of the other challenges facing us – from privatization on campus and the growing shift to online learning to the lack of academic freedom at colleges. Detailed fact sheets that give some of the background on these issues

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will also be provided to locals to help prepare members for the local demand-setting process.

We certainly face a challenge – but that challenge provides an opportunity for all of us. We have a chance to change our circumstances, re-shape the learning environment at our colleges, and ensure that the students who enroll in our public college system's 50th year

are provided the same opportunities as those who enrolled in its first year. We owe it to our students, and to the province that relies on all they have to offer as graduates.

In solidarity,

JP Hornick, Chair,
College Faculty Bargaining Team



What happens next?

How faculty proposals make it to the negotiating table

Step 1: Pre-bargaining conference	On October 22 and 23, delegates from all 24 colleges met to elect the bargaining team, discuss the bargaining procedures, and hear updates on some of the larger challenges facing the sector. At this meeting, seven members were elected to the bargaining team, along with two alternate members to serve as replacements if needed.
Step 2: Membership survey	A survey is being sent to all members to help identify common issues throughout the province. This information will be compiled and sent to the bargaining team. The team will then present the results at local demand-setting meetings to help inform decisions.
Step 3: Local demand- setting meeting	The local at each college will have its own demand-setting meeting, where faculty will have the chance to suggest and vote on specific changes to the collective agreement. This is your opportunity to make proposals for how to improve working conditions in the colleges. The provincial demand-setting meeting will only consider proposals made by individual faculty members and passed by the union local at one of these meetings.
Step 4: Provincial demand-setting meeting	On March 4 and 5, elected delegates from each of the 24 colleges will meet again, this time to rank the demands submitted by locals and vote on which ones should be proposed. When the bargaining team sits down with the employer they will bring forward the issues selected at this meeting.
Step 5: Bargaining	The earliest date to give notice to bargain is July 2. Following this, the union and management bargaining teams will meet to negotiate about changes to the collective agreement. The current collective agreement expires on September 30, 2017.



The CAAT-A 2017 bargaining team (left to right): Nicole Zwiers, Local 354; Mona Chevalier, Local 470; Ed Toivonen, alternate, Local 655; JP Hornick, Local 556; Shawn Pentecost, Local 415; Ravi Ramkissoonsingh, Local 242; Kevin MacKay, Local 240; and Darryl Bedford, Local 110.

Meet your bargaining team

Darryl Bedford

According to Google's search results, Darryl Bedford is a fictional character. We have our doubts at times, but we think he is a real person. Darryl is a software developer and has been teaching for over 14 years as a Professor of Information Technology at Fanshawe College in London. He is also the president of Local 110, one of our trustees on the board of the CAAT Pension Plan, a member of the provincial workload data collection committee for the Collective Bargaining Information Services (CBIS) unit of the Ministry of Labour, and was a member of our 2014 bargaining team.

Mona Chevalier

Mona is fully bilingual and has worked as a full-time counsellor at La Cité collégiale since 2005, where she currently serves as president of Local 470. Mona is a psychologist registered in Ontario and in Québec. She was a union steward at the college prior to taking on the role of president and was also a union steward when she worked at the University of Ottawa. She has received negotiation as well as mediation training throughout her career as a steward, a psychologist and a federal government employee. Mona has initiated and managed many projects in the course of her career and has also participated in a variety of executive committees, including the Ontario College Counsellors/OCC (2012-presently), the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association/CCPA (2005-2009), and her College Counsel (2006-2010) where she was elected President from 2008-2010.

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JP Hornick

JP Hornick is the Chief Steward for Local 556, coordinator of the School of Labour at George Brown College, and a member of the CAAT-A Divisional Executive (DivEx). In addition to teaching labour studies courses, JP has also been a member, vice-chair, and chair of the CAAT-A DivEx; a delegate to the Canadian Association of University Teachers; and a member of the 2012 bargaining team. JP has worked in the Ontario college system since 1997 as a contract and full-time professor.

Kevin MacKay

Kevin MacKay has been a sociology professor at Mohawk College since 2004. He has been involved in Local 240 first as the communications officer, and currently as vice-president. In 2013, Kevin approached the CAAT-A DivEx to help mobilize for 2014 contract negotiations. For the 2013/2014 academic year he worked for OPSEU as a Campaigns Officer in charge of the Campaign for Quality Education. In this role, Kevin visited all 24 college locals to talk with local executives and members about the many challenges facing faculty. The result of this tour, and of extensive system research, was the Report on Education in Ontario Colleges, published in 2014. In 2014 Kevin joined the CAAT-A Divisional Executive as vice-chair. On the DivEx he has also worked as co-chair of the Intellectual Property Sub-Committee. In 2016 Kevin was again re-elected as DivEx vice-chair, and was also elected to the bargaining team. Kevin has been a strong advocate for an expanded faculty role in college governance, and has also been instrumental in the drive to achieve academic freedom, intellectual property protection, and increased full-time staffing.

Shawn Pentecost

Shawn is the treasurer for Local 415, was a member of the CAAT-A DivEx in 2015-16, and is a Coordinator/Professor at Algonquin College. He brings valuable expertise to the bargaining team in the areas of interpersonal communication, group dynamics, and conflict management. As a union activist, Shawn has been fighting for members' rights and union principles both at the local and provincial levels for over 10 years. He is known for his creative problem solving and consensus building skills, which will prove instrumental both within the bargaining team and at the bargaining table. Having almost a decade of experience as a local treasurer will also prove useful at the bargaining table. Shawn looks forward to working with this team to tenaciously bargain the best deal for our members.

Ravi Ramkissoonsingh

Ravi has taught in the Ontario college system since January of 2003. He was a part-time, partial-load, and sessional psychology professor at Mohawk College in Hamilton from 2003 until 2006 before becoming a full-time professor at Niagara College in Welland in August of 2006. Ravi has been vice-president of Local 242 at Niagara College since the spring of 2015 and has been serving on the College Workload Monitoring Group (CWMG) and College Employment Stability Committee (CESC) since 2014 and on the Union/College Committee (UCC) since September of 2016. He is eagerly looking forward to the challenge of being on the CAAT-A bargaining team for the upcoming round of contract negotiations.

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Nicole Zwiers

A full-time professor teaching law at Durham College and President of Local 354, Nicole is a lawyer and member in good standing of the Law Society of Upper Canada. Nicole has experience as a steward, chief steward and most recently as president of Local 354. Nicole has worked closely with the Divisional Executive in her role as Locals' Legal Coordinator and in that role created the first CAAT-A electronic annotated collective agreement for use by locals in understanding the application of our agreement. Finally, Nicole is a part-time adjudicator appointed by Governor-in-Council with the Social Security Tribunal rendering binding decisions in CPP-related appeals.

Alternates:

Edward Toivonen

Ed Toivonen is president of Local 655, served as a steward since 2008, and is an alternate to both the Divisional Executive and the bargaining team. He has been a professor of mining and civil engineering technology at Cambrian College since 2006. Previous to his time in CAAT-A, Ed worked as a Mining Engineering Technologist & Beat Geologist at Falconbridge Nickel Mines from 1988 to 2006 where he served as a steward for Steelworkers Local 6855 and Amalgamated Local 2020 from 1991-2006, and as Chief Steward (Mines) from 1999-2004. Ed brings a strong background in bargaining, having served on Steelworkers teams in 2001 and 2004. He has also engaged in training on Arbitration, Advanced Arbitration, Facing Management, Leadership Development Program Levels I & II, and Collective Bargaining through USW.

To contact your CAAT-A bargaining team,
please write to:
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www.facebook.com/OntarioCollegeFaculty.

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Pam Johnson

Pam Johnson has been a faculty member in Theatre Performance at George Brown College (part-time) since 1988 and Humber College (partial-load) since 2000. She has been a steward at Humber since 2006. She has served on the communications committee and writes regularly for the local newsletter. She is her local's delegate to the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and the OPSEU Greater Toronto Area Council. She is also the coordinator of Contract Faculty Forward, an advocacy project for better working conditions for contract faculty.

Broke on purpose: decoding messages from management

By: Darryl Bedford, Local 110 (Fanshawe College)

As bargaining approaches, you'll likely see e-mails from your management about the budget process. The timing of these messages is not coincidental.

Broken down to their core, the gist of these messages is that your college is "broke." However, there's more to it than that.

It is true that the funding from the province is not sufficient. And on that point, faculty and management should agree. We invite you to read OPSEU's funding formula consultation submission, *Balancing the Books: Access, Pathways, and Co-Governance as Keys to a New College Funding Formula*.

But when it comes to being "broke," the colleges are actually "broke on purpose." The operating budget cupboard is being laid bare by decisions made by the college administrators themselves. How? Look around the province and you'll see evidence of large amounts money spent on:

1. *Lots of shiny new buildings.* Much of this construction was made possible by colleges transferring funds from their operating budgets to capital projects. This is permitted by the ministry, but ends up starving operating budgets that are already overburdened. The cuts to operations in favor of capital are why you see new buildings open but with few new hires, or no new hires, or worse yet, cuts to faculty.
2. *More full-time administrators.* The College Employer Council (CEC) reports that the number of full-time administrators has increased from 1,595 in 2002-03 to 2,825 in 2015-16, an increase of 77 per cent overall, with the number doubling in some colleges. Of course that doesn't include the consultants and retired managers that are regularly hired.
3. *Salary increases for administrators.* We're sure you've noticed the fairly significant management salary increases in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act ("Sunshine List") data over the years. This doesn't tell the full story either; the CEC itself and some other college-related entities believe (erroneously) that they are exempt from the law and do not report their salaries.
4. *Extra benefits for administrators.* Managers earning more than the Income Tax Act (ITA) limit, currently \$160,970, have an additional retirement package known as a Retirement Compensation Agreement (RCA) in addition to the CAAT Pension Plan. Unlike the CAAT plan, where all risks and costs are shared, the RCA is not designed to be fully funded and any RCA shortfalls are the responsibility of the employers. As of today, the employers contribute 44.4 per cent of salary above the ITA limit to the RCA. (For example, when a college president earns \$300,000/year, the college contributes \$61,729/year to the RCA during their active employment - not to mention what the college may need to pay during the retirement period.)

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You won't hear any of those four explanations in management's spin. During the run-up to bargaining, and throughout bargaining in 2017, watch out for the following messages. We've heard them before and you're sure to hear them again at your college:

- "We'll look to everyone to be innovative." When you hear this, management is looking for you to tell them what to cut. This is a convenient cover should anyone criticize the cuts; they can simply say that their faculty agree with the changes. As faculty we must consistently promote initiatives that improve quality education for our students.
- "We need to modernize our benefit offerings." This language has already seeped out from the CEC to Boards of Governors at the colleges. As you likely can guess, the word "modern" is code for "less." Based on what the CEC put forward in 2014 bargaining, you can expect a "use it or lose it" sick day system to be proposed.
- "We must be more flexible." You'll hear this as an excuse for hiring such large numbers of precariously employed faculty, consisting of approximately 70 per cent of the system. Is such "flexibility" really needed? The Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) projections are fairly sound. Colleges often know well in advance from OCAS

what their enrollment is going to be; they know how many sections they can afford to offer in the coming intake.

- "We're pleased to offer improvements to our faculty." In the past we've seen modest wage increases tied to offer packages that include hidden traps. Watch out for management proposals that are simply too good to be true. Consider the unlimited overtime proposal from 2014. Although that might seem like a great opportunity for some full-time faculty to make a bit of extra money, it will take work away from partial-load faculty and other full-time faculty, possibly resulting in layoffs. Not to mention the faculty who could be pressured into consenting to the additional overtime, sacrificing their home life.

Perhaps the best strategy when reading management missives is to apply the very same critical thinking skills we teach our students! What are they really saying? What have they left out? What are they really trying to achieve?

We can't control what management writes, but we as college faculty can stand up for what is right. We can stand up for quality education, academic freedom, collegial governance, and fairness for contract faculty. Those are the messages you'll be hearing from your faculty bargaining team in the months ahead.

Authorized for distribution

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
OPSEU President