

# NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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## College faculty call for strike vote as management refuses to deal with core issues

TORONTO – The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) has asked the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to schedule a September strike vote for faculty at Ontario public colleges.

The chair of the union bargaining team, JP Hornick, says the vote should come as no surprise to college management, given their refusal to deal with the core issues raised by faculty.

“For students and faculty alike, the learning and teaching environment plays a critical role in the success of the college system,” said Hornick. “We’ve put forward proposals that would improve academic decision-making through collegial governance and academic freedom, create fairness in how partial-load and contract faculty are treated, and support the success of students.

“Together, our better plan will provide students with the quality education that they deserve – and that will benefit their future employers, and our province as a whole.”

Under the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* (CCBA), the OLRB is responsible for scheduling a strike vote when requested by the union bargaining team. The team has asked for a date in the second week of September, after faculty have returned for the fall term.

Hornick added that the team is committed to continuing to bargain for a settlement, not a strike, but that the result of the vote will help send a clear message to management.

“We are asking members for a strong ‘YES’ vote to help the team push for the best deal possible.”

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas expressed his disappointment with management’s refusal to engage with the ideas put forward to improve Ontario’s college system.

“Our colleges have played a vital role in providing access to education for the past 50 years,” said Thomas. “But to make sure they can continue to do this for the next 50, there are some serious problems to be addressed.

“College faculty are committed to providing high-quality education for the hundreds of thousands of students who rely on Ontario colleges to prepare them for the rest of their lives. It’s time for management to listen to their expertise on how best to do that.”

The OPSEU collective agreement for college faculty will expire on September 30, 2017.

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**For more information: JP Hornick, 416-806-9526; Warren (Smokey) Thomas, 613-329-1931**

100 Lesmill Road  
Toronto, Ontario  
M3B 3P8  
Tel: 416-443-8888  
Fax: 416-448-7469

Toll free:  
1-800-268-7376  
TDD: 416-443-9898  
or 1-800-663-1070

opseu@opseu.org  
www.opseu.org  
OPSEU is affiliated  
with the OFL, CLC  
and NUPGE

100, chemin Lesmill  
Toronto (Ontario)  
M3B 3P8  
Tél: 416-443-8888  
Télé: 416-448-7469

Sans frais:  
1-800-268-7376  
ATS: 416-443-9898  
ou 1-800-663-1070

sefpo@sefpo.org  
www.sefpo.org  
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