



United for what we all need

The message came across loud and clear: Ontario's colleges need significant changes, for the sake of both the faculty who work in them and the students who rely on the education they provide.

Gathering from across the province, delegates from Ontario's 24 public colleges came together on March 4 and 5 to discuss and debate the demands sent in by locals and to prioritize the issues the bargaining team will take to the negotiating table later this year.

While delegates considered hundreds of proposals designed to address the full breadth of issues facing the sector, this round's decision-making happened under a new format. This

format was designed to ensure that the particular needs of marginalized groups within the membership were prioritized by the team. To reach that goal, the delegates in attendance selected not only their top 10 global demands to improve conditions for all faculty, but also three demands designed to address needs identified by partial load members and an additional three demands focused on the issues raised by counsellors and librarians.

If implemented, these changes will address many of the challenges facing the college sector and will make Ontario's colleges better for both faculty and students.

Negotiations Bulletin

Brought to you by the CAAT-A
Bargaining Team



Demands for all members

(presented below in no particular priority order)

- Improve job security, complement and layoff language
- Improve language for replacement and consideration
- Prevent the contracting out, privatization or outsourcing of faculty work in whole or in part
- Establish academic freedom and collegial governance
- Strengthen intellectual property rights
- Improve workload language to ensure that all faculty work is recorded on the SWF and that volunteerism is eliminated
- Improve workload factors to provide adequate time for academic work

- Strengthen language to improve union representation of members working inside and outside the Province of Ontario
- Improve the salary grids and wages to better our position in relation to our comparator groups and to account for inflation
- Improve benefit coverage for all faculty

Demands for partial-load members

- Gain parity for partial-load faculty
- Improve partial-load job security
- Record and compensate total partial-load workload

Demands for librarians and counsellors

- Create a workload formula for counsellors and librarians
- Create workload and caseload limits for counsellors
- Establish ratios of librarians and counsellors to number of students



Our colleges' finances are better than we thought – so where's the money for the front lines?

Despite the dire warnings of college administrators, who always seem to discover that they're broke just before heading into bargaining, the reality is that the system is almost entirely in the black.

The latest data from the College Financial Information System (CFIS) shows that the college system's finances are in a healthy state. CFIS data from the last fiscal year (2015-16) show that total revenue within the system stands at \$4.11 billion, with total expenses coming in at \$3.97 billion. This adds up to a surplus across the system of roughly \$136 million, or more than 3 1/2 per cent of the total budget. This is a far cry from the dire picture painted by administrators.

Even broken down to the individual college level, the numbers are overwhelmingly positive. With the exception of Sault College, with a minor deficit around \$325,000

(less than one per cent of their \$58 million budget), every other college is in surplus.

Humber College, one of the largest colleges in the system, has a surplus of \$29.6 million for the year, which makes its president's efforts to block precarious workers from unionizing to achieve better treatment particularly galling. In second place, Seneca College ran a surplus of \$19 million, just in a single year. Even the third-place college, Sheridan, ran a surplus of \$15.7 million in 2015-16.

The numbers are clear. If colleges want to make student success a priority, they have the means. The only question is whether they have the will.

College surpluses 2015-16

(Top 5)

Humber College:
\$29.6 million;

Seneca College:
\$19 million;

Sheridan College:
\$15.7 million;

Algonquin College:
\$11.7 million;

Centennial College:
\$9.9 million



Taking a stand against hate

Delegates took a break from their meeting at lunch on March 4 to stand with those opposing hate at Nathan Phillips Square, where a counter-protest had been organized against a planned anti-Muslim rally. Carrying signs bearing statements of solidarity with Muslims, immigrant

Canadians, and refugees, delegates sent a clear message of welcome and support for Muslims and other minorities. The message was received, as media reported that those gathered for the pro-immigrant counter-protest outnumbered the racist protesters 30 to one.



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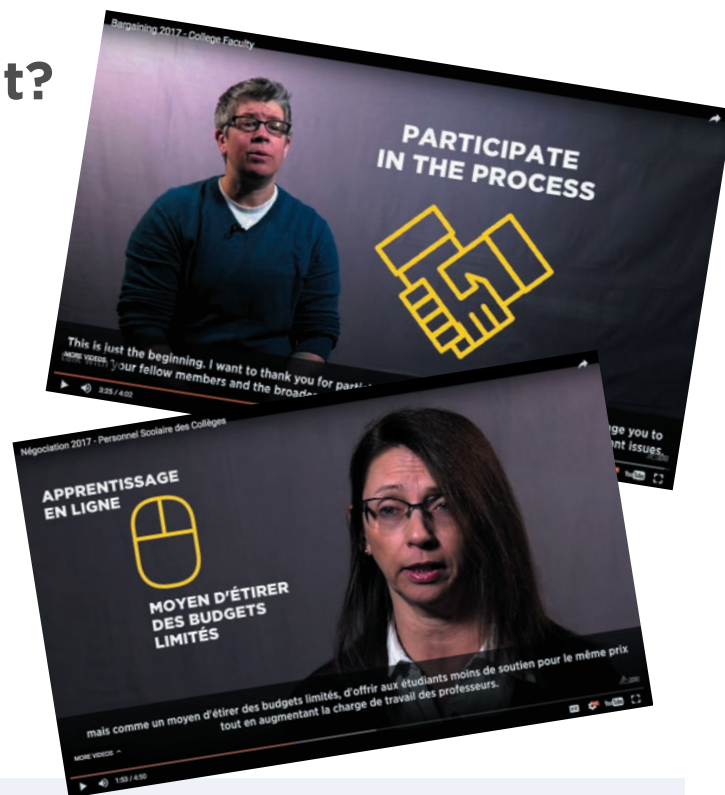


What's this round all about?

In January, two members of the OPSEU College Faculty bargaining team, JP Hornick and Mona Chevalier, recorded videos to be screened at local demand-setting meetings. These videos introduced members to the challenges facing the sector and the various stages of the bargaining process, and encouraged them to get involved and talk about these issues with their broader college community. If you haven't had a chance to see them yet, the videos are available on the OPSEU website at the URLs below.

English video: <https://opseu.org/node/15713>;

French video: <https://sefpo.org/node/15714>



The BAC

The Bargaining Advisory Committee (BAC) is a new structure in CAAT-A negotiations. It is comprised of 24 full-time members (selected by Local Executives) and 8 partial load faculty members from around the province. The BAC represents a new direction intended to improve communication, transparency, and decision making; to involve contract faculty directly in the bargaining process; and to draw on the collective knowledge of our division, as well as recognize unique regional and local concerns. This approach is a successful structure used by other education unions to win gains in times of austerity. One of the key benefits of the BAC is that it serves as another way to demonstrate solidarity to and by our members.

The mandate of the BAC is to act as a resource to the bargaining team during negotiations.

The BAC, along with all local presidents, will review any proposed contract language before the bargaining team agrees to the proposed language. This ensures that each region is represented; that there is representation from small, medium, and large colleges; and that the viewpoints of partial load members are adequately represented and considered. The Divisional Executive, which also remains active during this round of negotiations, will coordinate responses from, and communication with, the BAC and the presidents. Of course, voting for or against a settlement rests with the full membership. Consultations with the BAC are intended to gather the widest scope of representation on the issues on the bargaining table, and represent the widest support for these issues, and to provide additional energy for mobilizing.

Message from the chair:



JP Hornick, Chair,
College Faculty
Bargaining Team

The provincial demand setting meeting was definitely lively, but the key for me was what it demonstrated among our locals: passionate solidarity.

As delegates from across the province debated the issues facing our sector, their solutions, and the best way to approach

the challenges facing us, I couldn't help but feel incredibly optimistic about this round of bargaining.

It's true that the college sector faces significant challenges, both as a result of government underfunding and administration mismanagement of the funds available. But with so many possible solutions to these challenges proposed by locals (who in total submitted more than 300 possible demands for consideration), and so many enthusiastic delegates ready to work to build the united movement needed to make these demands a reality, how could a bargaining team feel anything less than hopeful?

That willingness to stand together was visible in the overwhelming support for the idea of identifying a number of demands that focused on the particular needs of marginalized groups of members within our sector, including partial-load faculty, counsellors, and librarians. It was also visible when delegates took to the streets to join forces with those gathered to oppose the

racist demonstration happening across the street from our meeting.

Seeing CAAT-A picket signs mixed with a sea of pro-immigrant and refugee, pro-Muslim and anti-racist signs in Nathan Phillips Square demonstrated that our members stand behind the maxim that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Ontario's colleges from their founding were about increasing access to education for all, and while that began with an increase in access for low-income and rural Ontarians, it has also increasingly become a way of providing improved access to education for immigrant Ontarians.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of that college system. And while that will quite rightly be marked by celebrations of how much the college system has grown, it is worth recognizing the ways it has fallen short, and the aspects that need to be corrected if it is to be set up for success for the next 50 years.

The college system was launched with great fanfare – and with lofty expectations. The minister at the time, Bill Davis, who would later go on to serve as Premier, set out these expectations for the system, saying that:

“In the long-run, this new educational venture will be rewarding to our society as a whole, perhaps equal in returns to that enjoyed by the individuals concerned, with rewards in wealth and technical advancement as well as in human happiness and satisfaction.”

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On behalf of his government, Davis also took on a responsibility the current government would do well to remember, stating that:

"I have no intention of permitting any group of young people to be forgotten and deprived, or of any group of adults needing retraining for a new world of work in a new age to be neglected."

Unfortunately, we've drifted far from those original ideals.

From a mandate of a united, government-funded system that would increase access to education for all, we have drifted into a collection of disparate elements, fighting over an ever-shrinking supply of inadequate funding. As the government has promoted competition for resources and enrollment, colleges have competed with each other in efforts to build their own fiefdoms, rather than working together to build up the whole system.

I look around and I see a college system that has turned away from investing in faculty, developing expertise, and providing the frontline services that ensure student success. Instead, I see example after example of mismanaged funds, misallocated priorities, and efforts to divert money that should be

going to the front lines into the pockets of senior administrators.

The college system at 50 is at a tipping point.

We can continue in the direction we're headed, where it seems that student outcomes are the lowest priority on the list. Or, if we have the strength, we can set out on a different path, one that prioritizes student success through real collegial governance, sufficient government funding, and proper allocation of those funds to the front lines where they will do the most good for the students we all serve.

It was patently obvious at the final demand-setting meeting which path faculty want to see us head down. We heard a strong commitment to stand firm to make it a reality, no matter how hard the struggle.

The team will take your message – and your energy – to the table later this year, and invite college management to join us in building the college system we know is possible.

In solidarity,

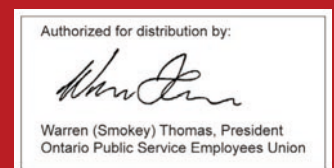
JP Hornick
Chair, College Faculty bargaining team

To contact your CAAT-A bargaining team, please write to: bargaining2017@gmail.com

Visit us on Facebook:

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