

NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2017

Ontario college strike begins Monday morning as employer rejects faculty offer

TORONTO – More than 12,000 Ontario public college faculty will be on the picket line rather than in their classrooms on Monday morning after talks between the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and the College Employer Council failed to produce a tentative collective agreement.

“On October 14, we presented Council with a streamlined offer that represented what faculty consider to be the bare minimum we need to ensure quality education for students and treat contract faculty fairly,” said JP Hornick, chair of the union bargaining team. “We carefully crafted a proposal that responded to Council’s concerns about costs in a fair and reasonable way.

“Unfortunately, Council refused to agree on even the no-cost items, such as longer contracts for contract faculty and academic freedom,” she said. “This leaves us with no choice but to withdraw our services until such time as our employer is ready to negotiate seriously.”

Hornick said Council is committed to a “Walmart model of education” based on reducing the role of full-time faculty and exploiting underpaid contract workers who have no job security beyond one semester.

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas called the current impasse “regrettable” but said college faculty have the full backing of the union’s 130,000 members and their \$72 million strike fund.

“Our union has a track record of getting deals done without work stoppages,” he said.

“Unfortunately, that has not happened in this case. Nonetheless, I encourage the colleges to get back to the table so we can wrap this up swiftly, for the good of students and faculty alike.”

OPSEU represents professors, instructors, counsellors, and librarians working at 24 public colleges across Ontario. To view the union’s most recent offer, please visit www.collegefaculty.org.

- 30 -

For more information: JP Hornick, 416-806-9526; Mona Chevalier, OPSEU college faculty bargaining team (French only) 613-606-2238