

This is no ordinary round

The current round of collective bargaining between the College Employer Council and your college faculty bargaining team is no ordinary round.

In the colleges' current governance structure, college administrators see faculty as employees only, not as colleagues whose voice in setting the academic direction of colleges is fundamentally important to student success. When it comes to faculty jobs, the colleges' approach is a cheap labour strategy that is designed to swell the ranks of underpaid contract faculty with no job security while relentlessly suppressing the growth in full-time, permanent positions.

That the colleges support this status quo is hypocritical. Students come to college for many reasons, but chief among them is to get the education they need for the job they want. Yet increasingly, the jobs the colleges themselves are offering are exactly the jobs our students are studying to avoid - insecure jobs with substandard wages, no benefits, and no future.

We need a better plan, for students and faculty alike.

In a modern post-secondary system, education quality is supported by the strong voice of faculty on academic decisions. Academic freedom and intellectual property establish the minimum standard for faculty at colleges that offer collaborative degrees with university partners, offer their own stand-alone degrees, and pursue applied research. Along with collegial governance, academic freedom is an essential requirement for post-secondary institutions engaged in these activities.

In a modern post-secondary system, fairness for faculty is an enforceable right, not just a dream. As our leaders in government realize that the world of precarious contract work is simply not working for huge sections of the population, college faculty are leading the way on the path to better workplace standards for all workers, including our students.

Moving forward to September 30

Bargaining a better future is not an abstract exercise. Our approach at the bargaining table has been reasonable, practical, and based on existing best practices in other post-secondary systems. Our goal is to bargain a fair and reasonable contract before our contract officially expires this Saturday, September 30.

To that end, your faculty bargaining team made a number of moves at the bargaining table yesterday that were designed to break the current logjam. We streamlined our proposals and put forward workable solutions, including around cost concerns, on collegial governance, faculty complement, academic freedom and intellectual property, and other issues. Our proposals sparked the first significant discussions at the table to date, even though management continues to dismiss faculty concerns with a simple no. You can review our full proposal at http://www.collegefaculty.org/comprehensive_offer_of_settlement_september_27_2017.

Your faculty team continues to push for negotiations to begin in earnest now. We will keep you updated as events unfold.

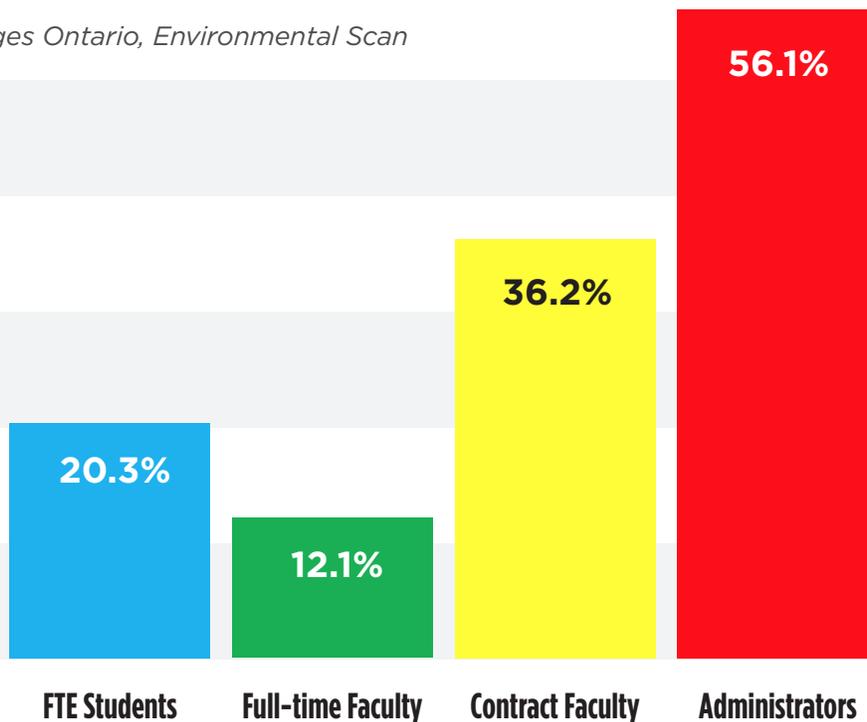
In solidarity,
JP Hornick,
Chair, College faculty bargaining team

Soaring Administrator numbers

Questions and Answers on various bargaining topics

Percentage change in number of Ontario college students, faculty, and administrators, 2007-08 to 2016-17

Source: Colleges Ontario, Environmental Scan



What's really happening with the number of students, faculty, and administrators in our colleges?

According to the College Employer Council communications, all is well in Ontario's colleges: full-time jobs are up and the system is stable and working for them.

The numbers contained in the environmental scan published each year by Colleges Ontario tell a

different story, as the chart on this page shows. In percentage terms, in the past 10 years:

- the number of college students has gone up;
- the number of full-time faculty has gone up, but much more slowly than the number of students;
- the number of contract faculty has risen far more quickly than the number of students or full-time faculty; and
- the number of college administrators has exploded.

If colleges have money for extra administrators, they certainly have more money for staff in the classrooms, libraries, and counsellors' offices in colleges across Ontario.

Based on these figures, a few facts are apparent. First, even though the number of full-time faculty is growing, the number of full-time faculty as a percentage of the total workforce is shrinking. Second, it is clear that administrators prefer to hire additional managers rather than appropriate levels of full-time frontline faculty to support students. And make no mistake about it: administrator jobs are full-time jobs.

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Do the colleges have a funding shortfall?

No, they have a surplus. According to the latest report on college finances from the College Financial Information System of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, the colleges had a surplus of \$189 million in 2016-17.

That's a big number that is far larger than the \$123 million the Council says it would cost to bring in "equal pay for equal work" for partial-load faculty. This isn't a blip. Over the past decade the colleges have accumulated a surplus of over \$1.2 billion. This is a matter of priorities as much as it is funding.

What concessions is the Council demanding of faculty?

As part of its public relations effort, the Council continues to say that it is demanding "no concessions" of college faculty in this round of bargaining. This is not the case.

- The Council insists that extending the freeze on posting and filling of full-time permanent jobs under Article 2 of the collective agreement is not a concession. This is incorrect. The current agreement very specifically says that the freeze ends when the collective agreement ends this Saturday. Reinstating the freeze after it has expired is a concession.
- The Council insists at the bargaining table that Ontario's Bill 148, the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* must be implemented in such a way that it does not increase costs for the colleges. As currently drafted, Bill 148 states that no worker's "rate of pay" can be reduced as a result of an employer trying to meet its equal pay obligations. Council's position indicates they are attempting to avoid providing equal pay for equal work for contract faculty.

What happens after September 30?

Our collective agreement expires on September 30, 2017. However, now that the union team has requested a "no-board" report (see our last bulletin), the contract remains in force until the parties are in a legal strike or lockout position. The "no board" report will expire in mid-October and, contrary to what the Council has indicated, no strike date has been set. The team remains committed to reaching a negotiated settlement.

Will creating more full-time jobs eliminate partial-load jobs?

The employer has stated publicly that the union's demands to create more full-time jobs will eliminate contract faculty jobs. In fact, the union's goals in bargaining are to increase the number of full-time jobs and increase job security for partial-load faculty. The union's aim is to create more secure full-time jobs while creating pathways for partial-load faculty to get those jobs. By phasing in the changes over a period of years, our proposal would protect partial-load faculty as the system evolves.

Why aren't we voting on the employer's offer?

The College Employer Council tried last week to persuade college faculty across the province that college faculty should be voting on the offer they (the Council) put forward in August.

There are two main reasons why the union bargaining team has not called a vote on that offer:

- it doesn't address the issues faculty said we needed to address when we held our demand-setting process; and
- faculty already rejected the employer's offer on September 14 when they voted 68 per cent in favour of entrusting the union bargaining team with a strike mandate.

Most importantly, the Council has the right, under the *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act*, to bring their offer directly to faculty for a vote at any time between now and the end of bargaining. That the Council is choosing not to can only mean one thing: they know their offer isn't good enough.

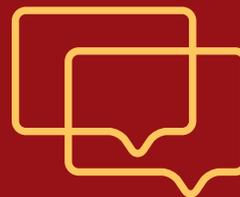
The team has an extensive consultation process with local presidents and our Bargaining Advisory Committee. Our commitment is to our members: the team will only bring members an offer of settlement for ratification that addresses key faculty demands.

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

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