

Standing up for Quality Education

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FLEMING FACULTY UNION

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Full-Time Faculty: An Endangered Species?



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Forestry student Gwen and her red-tailed hawk Kara visit the line at Frost.

Look at the plummeting statistics about full-time faculty. If we were red-tailed hawks (or a [spiny lump sucker](#) or even a [satanic leaf-tailed gecko](#)) with such plunging numbers, Greenpeace would be all over us: full-time faculty, an endangered species!

Imagine the Hinterland Who’s Who: First, that haunting theme. [Woo-oo-hooo](#). And then... Full-time faculty, once noble denizens of community colleges, are decimated, replaced by poorer, more stressed *pars temporis facultatem* lacking sleep, habitat security and benefits. This furtive species darts in and out of colleges, beholden to yet exploited by the parasitic *administratio mustela* that has exploded in numbers across campuses and other institutions since the eco-system was devastated by Mike Harris.

Full-time faculty are increasingly social, organizing, and walking outside of their usual habitat. This is making them stronger, and many researchers see *pars temporis facultatem* morphing into full-time faculty in the near future.

Riddle:

What’s correct? “The yolk of the egg *is* white” or “the yolk of the egg *are* white”?

Compensating Managers with “Managing Hours”

A faculty member at Conestoga writes: “According to a recent Statistics Canada study, the average starting salary of a college graduate is considerably higher than the compensation received by the typical contract instructor. Given many contract instructors have Master’s degrees and extensive industry experience, this just doesn’t seem right.

Imagine if a doctor was only paid for doing surgery or a lawyer was only paid when meeting face-to-face with clients. This doesn’t make sense.



After thinking about this, I have a proposal. If the College Council considers the “teaching hour” to be an effective measure of compensation, why not extend this approach to college management? It would work as follows: College management compensation would be based on “managing hours”. A “managing hour” would only be time where the manager is physically with someone from their team (either faculty or support staff). All of their other work (planning, emails, communication with their managers, etc.) would not be included. After all, isn’t this what managers do: manage?

Now let’s think of the savings that could result if college management was compensated using “managing hours”. For the purpose of this example, let’s assume the following:

An average “managing hour rate” of \$100 per hour. Managers would be allotted 15 hours per week to meet and interact with their employees. Remember that other activities such as meeting with other managers and planning would not be directly compensated.

This would result in compensation of \$1,500 per week or \$78,000 annually. Compare this to the average salary of \$133,000 as reported by an online salary survey. This results in an annual savings of \$55,000 per manager. Perhaps this system should be put in place for 80% of managers while the other 20% would be considered “full time” and continue to earn their higher salary. This example demonstrates the deep inequity in the current practice of using “teaching hours” to compensate contract faculty.”

“Flexibility?”

The employer resists a 50/50 split between full-time and part-time faculty because it wants “flexibility.” The ability to easily dismiss half your faculty is not flexible enough? How flexible can you be? What is this, a new kind of yoga, *downward faculty*, *upward management*? Note the use of “flexibility” in their offer... you say flexibility, I say unlimited overtime.



11.01 J 1 Notwithstanding the above, ~~overtime worked by a teacher shall not exceed one teaching contact hour in any one week or three total workload hours in any one week and where a teacher exceeds the weekly teaching contact hours or the weekly total workload hours, such overtime~~ shall be entirely voluntary.

Allow teachers more flexibility to work overtime if they wish to do so.

Riddle Answer: Neither. Yolks are yellow.

Dear Student,

A beautiful letter from a Conestoga faculty member

First of all, I miss you. You matter to me and I feel terrible that we've had to be apart. Every day I wake up hoping we will meet in class - even the dreaded 8 am class where we all stumble in half-asleep with Timmy's in hand. I get it. This has all come as a huge surprise. Hearing that colleges and faculty are fighting - finding out just weeks or days before it all went down - is a lot like hearing that your parents are separating. You'd rather not hear about their annoying troubles and you wish they'd worry more about YOU and how much this news is hurting YOU.

But here's the thing. We thought that shielding you from our conflicts, trying to work them out quietly, would be the most professional approach. We didn't want to bother you. You're already dealing with rising mental health challenges, school stress, life stress, career angst and all kinds of uncertainties. We had faith that our employer would see things this way too.

First, back in the summer, we thought our employer would bargain in good faith and agree with us that quality education truly matters. We didn't disturb you when we raised our concerns to the College Employer Council about ballooning class sizes, countless programs with zero full time faculty to commit themselves to you, or our personal instability with 80% of us on short term contracts. **They didn't listen.**

Early this fall, we didn't talk much about the strike mandate we voted for, based on a very poor contract offer. Their offer would make your classroom numbers even bigger, your full time dedicated faculty even fewer, the standards of your programs even lower, the credibility of your credential lower too. We hoped, perhaps naively, that our employer would hear us. **They didn't listen.**

We don't like to bring our politics to the classroom. So we had to bring this to the streets. We had to stand up for ourselves, one another, and for you. Before you say we've put you last, please hear me out. We agree, it's students first. That's why we are here on strike. Seems like twisted logic, but we see what's happening to you. If you've been here for a couple years, you've no doubt seen and felt it too. You never know who will be teaching you. You've been frustrated that some of us don't seem organized or don't know the textbook very well.

We struggle with the classroom equipment or with college processes you can't believe we don't know. How could we not know how things work when we work here? You get less feedback on assignments, and perhaps even assignments that don't seem to truly measure the learning. It takes us a long time to complete our grading. Do you know why this is?

Most of us don't know from one semester to another whether we will have a contract. Many of us just arrived days before class started. We don't know our way around. We teach at multiple colleges or universities, all with different processes. We aren't paid to be at most meetings, so we miss key information. As I write you this note, most of us don't know if we will have teaching contracts in January. We have no idea what the new year holds.

These issues matter. They matter because you deserve better. You deserve more for your money. You don't deserve to pay tuition and have most of it go to administrators who you will never meet (and often don't even meet us other than to sign our last-minute contracts). You don't deserve to sit beside someone who shouldn't have passed but was passed by an administrator more concerned about money than about standards. You deserve the best and you deserve us at our best.

Continued on the next page

Dear Student, continued

Monday was a crushing day. The Colleges' bargaining team duped us all. I am a dedicated, hard working employee. I still held faith in my employer over the past few days when, after weeks of stalling, they finally returned to the table. I refreshed my social media feeds every 90 seconds, looking for news that we would meet soon in class. I've never been so on edge. Instead, the colleges walked away. **They didn't listen.**

I'd like to say they gave up. But they didn't. They played us all like a cheap violin. They wanted to pit us against one another. They are now forcing a vote on a deal they could have had us vote on WEEKS ago. It has always been an option for them, though they have spun it otherwise.

Instead of doing the right thing, they waited. And waited. And collected your tuition and my paycheque. And waited. And now, after they think they've worn us all down and whipped us all up, they bully their very same offer in our faces, claiming they're solving everything. They have solved nothing. We rallied in the streets, we shared our stories, we bargained in good faith. **They didn't listen.**

Here's the thing. I want this all to end. I want to wake up and think about my courses and my pile of grading. But I will continue to defend education. I will continue to defend what we have built and the career you are building and the credential you are working towards. If I back down now, I will have helped to create nothing but a diploma mill. I will have agreed to an employment contract that places women - who represent 75% of the lowest paid contract faculty positions - in precarity, unable to support themselves and their families. I will have let all of you down, and my integrity too.

I won't stand for unfair treatment. I will stand for education. Will you stand with me?

Perhaps, if you do, they'll listen.



Toques, toques, toques!

Dobbin shows its strength in frosty weather, standing more determined than ever. "We are determined" notes Joanne.

As are we.

Send pix, articles & ideas to local352website@flamingcollege.ca