



A (slightly) new spin on some old ideas – the latest College Council bulletin

There is a new council bulletin circulating that I am sure you will see soon if you have not already.

Despite hiring a private “spin doctor” (with public money of course), the council has nothing new to offer in this latest bulletin.

Like the previous bulletins, this one attempts to present the Colleges’ last offer as ‘responsive’ to the issues raised at the table by your bargaining team. And of course, they recycle the familiar ‘not letting faculty vote on the offer’ line, without mentioning their right to bring their offer to a vote.

Contract faculty and staffing ratios

The over use and unfair working conditions of contract faculty has become the #1 issue of this strike. At the core of this issue is Article 2 of the Collective Agreement. Article 2 states that the colleges will “give preference to the designation of full-time positions as regular rather than partial-load teaching positions” (2.02), as well as “rather than sessional teaching positions” (2.03A). This preference is limited by things like program quality and economic viability.

Article 2 has been part of our collective agreement for a long time. While not perfect, it has helped us fight for full-time positions. Article 2 was ‘suspended’ in the previous contract, meaning that no staffing grievances could be filed. This moratorium expired with the previous contract, and Article 2 is now back in effect.

In their bulletin management states that their offer “specifically requires every college, when it is staffing a program, to give preference to creating full-time jobs over partial-load jobs except where justifiable operational considerations require different staffing”. **They present this as something new, but this is simply plain old Article 2 back from suspension.**

What they don’t mention is that they have added a bunch of new language to the C.A. that essentially guts Article 2:

- New language to specifically exempt Part-Time contracts (6 contact hours or less) from this article.
- Removal of the language from 2.03 that requires the rollover of Sessional positions into full-time
- An entirely new contract position call “temporary full-time”. They try to sell this as gain for the union when it is a huge concession which will allow for even more teaching to be done by precarious workers.

If that is not enough, they also propose to remove overtime limits on full-time faculty which will lead to further reductions in the full-time complement.

Their intent could not be more transparent: they want to continue the precipitous reduction in the percentage of teaching that is being done by full-time faculty. Previously they wanted to extend the moratorium on Article 2, and now that it is back, they want to gut it.

They go on to claim that the colleges cannot possibly work with a 50/50 staffing ratio. One must question the competence of college administration if they truly believe that they cannot operate with at least 50% of the teaching being done by full-time faculty. **Remember also that they have claimed that the Colleges already have a 50/50 ratio in place.** Which is it guys?

Don't be fooled, the colleges' offer is a terrible one that only 'responds' to our issues by doing exactly the opposite of what we are asking for.

How did we get here?

As we said at the outset, there is nothing new here, and that is the problem. Since July, the council has refused to engage in discussion on the issues that our members have overwhelmingly said are their top priorities. We have held a strike vote, and have been picketing for two weeks because we believe in the issues and want them addressed. Still nothing.

This is unacceptable. **The council, the college presidents, and the Minister are not doing their jobs.** Collective bargaining should involve some actual bargaining, some discussion and negotiation about the main issues on each side. Instead we have stonewalling and a complete lack of leadership from the Council.

These are highly paid public servants as well as high-priced lawyers (<https://hicksmorley.com/>) and spin doctors (<http://dsconsulting.ca/>) on retainer with public money, and they are doing nothing to address the issues. **In the Toronto Star Minister Deb Matthews is quoted** saying " why the parties aren't bargaining is beyond me,".... is it not her job to know why they are not bargaining?

We demand better and will not settle for less.

*Reprinted from a blog from Neal McNair Local 653 October 27