

Prez Sez

Geoff Ondercin-Bourne, President, Local 240



Well, here we are at the halfway point of what has been a trying semester for students and faculty alike. With no break between semesters and with orientation clogging the first week of classes, some of us ended up with 13-week semesters and some of us, me included, are halfway through a quicker-than-lightening, 12-week semester. Roll on May and a return to whatever passes for 'normal' these days.

However, despite the dog's breakfast that has been the winter semester; we have much to celebrate with our new Collective Agreement (CA). We've wasted no time putting the new language to work on your behalf.

- We've made progress in getting a proper allotment of time on SWFs for accommodated students. Article 11.02 C2 gives us more latitude to ensure students requiring accommodation are considered when workloads are assigned.
- We're also looking carefully at the winter SWFs to identify rogue departments that have been getting away with relying far too much on contract faculty. Now that the moratorium is over, it's time to realign the full-time to non-full-time ratio of faculty in order to restore stability, both for students and faculty. I suggested to Ron that the FT/Contract ratio be brought into line with that of our managers. I'll let you know if I get an answer.
- Of course, we will also be doing ADs a favour by reducing their need to scramble at the last minute to properly assign workloads. In at least one department sections of a course had to be cancelled because the AD ran out of faculty to teach, a significant disruption for students – you know, the folks who are at the heart of all we do.
- Partial load faculty can now move up the pay grid twice as fast as they could, prior to the new CA. They also have stronger protection under 26.10 to

seniority considerations for partial load work, and stronger protection as internal candidates when full-time positions are posted.

Despite these wins, we know there is still much to be done. Some ADs are still engaging in 'wage theft', by combining online hours and thereby reducing the number of TCHs

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on your SWFs. We continue to oppose this practice. For contract faculty, it means less pay for dealing with more students.



We are working with the College on some important initiatives. First, we are pressing Management to pilot 12-month SWFs for some faculty. This has been done successfully at other colleges and will create more stability for students and faculty, and less work for administration. We are also working to clarify the language around coordinators. The College has committed to striking a committee to clarify the responsibilities for coordinators, which will hopefully end the common practice of dumping everything but the kitchen sink onto the workloads of our coordinators.

As I said, much to be done. However, your Executive is up to the job and will do everything we can to hold the College accountable for the commitments it has made and for the questionable practices that still haunt several departments.

Good luck to us all, as winter thaws, spring beckons and this strangest of semesters comes, mercifully, to a close. See you in the trenches.

My Final Greeting from the Board

Heather Giardine-Tuck, Faculty Representative, Board of Governors

With the nominations for the next Faculty Representative of the Board of Governors now underway, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for allowing me to serve on the Board as your Faculty Representative.



I began my first term on September 1, 2012 and will be finished my second, consecutive term on August 31, 2018. Board members are only allowed to do two consecutive terms so it is time to pass on the porch. It has been an honour and privilege to serve in this role. I obtained my Advanced Good Governance certification during my tenure and hope to continue doing more governance work in the community in the years to come.

I wish my successor all the best as our Faculty Representative. It is an interesting role which provides a very strategic look at the College and the good work that we do.

With gratitude,
Heather

A Special Thank you from Local 240

Heather, I know I speak for all faculty in thanking you for your tireless effort to ensure our interests were well-represented at the Board of Governors.

Your commitment to putting our issues on the table was unshakable. You leave behind very big shoes for your successor to fill.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

MY FINAL
GREETINGS FROM

THE

Chief Steward's Corner

Heather Giardine-Tuck, Chief Steward, Local 240

Hope this finds all of you well, now that we have the Winter semester underway. As I speak with you in the halls, it is clear that our work in finishing last semester and beginning this one with no turnaround or preparation time and, again, on a compressed timeline, has been **exhausting**. Kudos to you all for the professionalism and commitment you have demonstrated to our students. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed!

Here is the status of current Local 240 issues/grievances/arbitrations as of February 2018:

- With a member's Bullying and Harassment grievance denied, we will go to arbitration next. Date for arbitration to be determined.
- **Resolved** a member's workload issue (SWF time due to extra work involved in addressing student accommodations) to the member's satisfaction and without the need for a grievance.
- Working with other faculty members to ensure their requests for additional SWF time, due to a high number of student CAAPs or accommodation needs, are resolved (particularly now that we have our new Collective Agreement language to support this – Article 11.02 C2 "The WMG shall in its consideration have regard to such variables affecting assignments as: ... (x) students requiring accommodation.
- Presently supporting members in getting student complaints resolved.
- Workload Monitoring Group (WMG) Complaint—Member's workload issue (incorrect evaluation factor) denied at WMG but **resolved** when heard at Workload Resolution Arbitration. Evaluation factor was adjusted.
- Assisted a member whose Associate Dean was making demands not supported by the Collective Agreement.
- Worked with the VPA and HR to ensure the February 2018 Reading Week was left unbooked by Associate Deans so that faculty could remain focused on doing the work we need to do for our students. **No mandatory meetings or PD sessions are to be held during this Reading Week.**
- Accepted the offer from the VPA and HR to adjust the faculty D&PMP process for this year given the pressures faculty are under. Meetings were to be informal and 15 minutes or less. The intention was a 'check in' with faculty to see how we are doing, ask about any possible PD we may be interested in and informally chat. While most Associate Deans adhered to this revised process, we know that some did not and have let the VPA and

HR know, too. We will continue to work with management to ensure that when these directives are given, they are rolled out and followed across the entire College.

- Working to ensure our Partial Load faculty get their Union cards signed ("New contract? New card."). We are pleased to see this message getting out and PL members getting in touch with the Local Exec Officers or their Stewards to sign up.

As always, if you have questions or need assistance, please contact your Steward or a member of the Local Executive team. We are here to help!

CAAT Pension Buyback

Gaspere Bonomo, CFO, Local 240

In response to the inquiries the Local has received regarding the buyback of their pension, here is how it works.

During the strike members lost five weeks of pensionable earnings.

For those retiring more than five years from now, the loss is minimal. Five weeks of service amounts to a reduction in pension of \$17.82 per month or \$213.87 annually.

On the other hand, for those retiring WITHIN five years, the loss can be significant.

For illustration purposes I am showing a member at the top of the grid and how it could affect their pension. Your pension calculation is based on the average earnings of your **best five consecutive years**, which could result in a reduction in your pension of up to \$414 per month or \$4,968 per year.

The cost to purchase your pension contributions lost during the 5 week strike would be **\$1,329.18 x 2 = \$2,658.36**. You must elect to do so this year and make a payment to the pension plan now.

Local 240 will reimburse you for one half the pension buyback cost, representing the College portion. The union reimbursement will be made at time of your retirement. (Please see the illustration on p.7)

If you have any questions about buying back your pension, please contact the Local and make an appointment to discuss how the buyback works.

Gaspere



Calculating the Cost of Your Pension Buyback

CAAT PENSION BUY BACK						
						Pension Contribution
	\$4,452.21					\$575.98
	\$4,452.21					\$575.98
salary	\$8,904.42	12.94%	\$1,151.96	monthly		
			\$13,823.52	annual		
			\$265.84	weekly		
			\$1,329.18	5 weeks		
Best 5 consecutive years - with buyback						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
	\$106,853	\$108,990	\$111,170	\$113,393	\$115,661	\$556,067 sum
						\$111,213 avg
			25 years of service			\$55,607 annual
			monthly pension			\$4,634 mnthly
Best 5 consecutive years - without buyback						
	\$2,012	\$2,013	\$2,014	\$2,015	\$2,016	
	\$97,331	\$99,317	\$101,344	\$103,412	\$104,963	\$506,366 sum
						\$101,273 avg
			25 years of service			\$50,637 annual
			monthly pension			\$4,220 mnthly
			DIFFERENCE			\$414 mnthly
			over 15 years			\$74,552
Members not within 5 years of retirement						
			1300 weeks in 25 years			
			0.003846	5 wks as a percent		
			WOULD LOSE 5 weeks service			
			\$17.82	Monthly Loss		
			\$213.87	Annual Loss		
			\$3,208.08	over 15 years		

Communication Update

Mary Allan, Communications Officer, Local 240

Hello members of Local 240! I hope that the winter term is going well!

With the strike behind us we have been able to reflect on how we were communicating information to you during the strike and how, moving forward, we can improve on this process.

We will continue to use non-work email as the primary method of communicating important union information to you. Please ensure that we have your most current non-work email address. You can email opseu240@gmail.com to let us know of any changes.



You may have noticed a different look in the emails you have been receiving over the last couple of weeks. We are now using Mailchimp to send out mass emails. There were too many challenges with trying to use Gmail for this. You still will send your questions, comments, etc. to opseu240@gmail.com and we will respond via Gmail as well. Any feedback or comments are welcome on our switch to Mailchimp.



We are also in the process of revising/refreshing our website. We would like to make our site more functional than it currently is. Stay tuned and, if you haven't been to our website, it is www.opseu240.ca. We are hoping to do a roll out of our new website late spring/early summer. If you have any suggestions or comments in the meantime,

please let us know.

See you at our General Membership meeting on March 26!

In solidarity,

Mary

Mark Your Calendar!

Just a reminder for you to be sure to attend our GMM on Monday, March 26 at 5:00pm in Room C121 on the Fennell Campus.

The agenda includes the election of your Local Executive.

Yes, there will be food, and No, it will not be pizza.

Academic Freedom: How Do We Use Our New Language to Defend the Quality of Education? (Part 1)

Kevin MacKay, Vice President, Local 240

Making History

The recent five-week faculty strike, longest in the 50 year history of the college system, was about four key issues: an appropriate level of full time staffing, fairness for contract faculty, academic freedom, and collegial governance. Movement on each of these issues has been long overdue, and the Kaplan Award, along with the provincial task force, will ensure that each area will see significant improvement.



Collegial governance (academic senates in the colleges), and a sustainable ratio of full-time to non-full-time faculty, are being considered by the provincial task force in the coming months. It is too early to tell exactly what will be decided in this process, but the signs are certainly hopeful. An interim report on the task force's findings will be produced in May of this year, so we won't have to wait long for news.

However, arguably the biggest gain from this round of bargaining came as an early Christmas present from arbitrator Bill Kaplan. In his historic award, Kaplan added academic freedom language to the collective agreement. The importance of this achievement cannot be overstated.

An academic freedom article has been the elusive prize sought by several past faculty bargaining teams, as faculty long realized that government funding cuts and the corporatization of college management were devastating whatever collegiality had existed in the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. For the sake of the system itself, it was imperative that faculty once more had the ability to frame academic decision-making, and academic freedom was the tool we needed to do so.

The employer also clearly understood the stakes of this fight. For them, academic freedom would spell and end to their ability to freely gut quality in the interests of cost-cutting, efficiency, and competitiveness. Management refused to contemplate a challenge to their total control over college education, and for this reason the Colleges Council, numerous college presidents, and the Council's legal enforcers, Hicks-Morley, repeatedly stated that faculty would *never* achieve academic freedom.

And yet, despite all of the odds, faculty held together, successfully combatted the lies and misinformation coming from the Colleges Council (and more than a few college presidents), and won the strike decisively. Every faculty member who participated in the 2017 strike can be proud that they had a hand in winning academic freedom. Having won it though, how do we utilize it to start bringing the focus of colleges back to quality education?

In the next few issues of Examiner, I will explore various aspects of our new academic freedom language, and suggest how faculty can begin using it to make much-needed changes at Mohawk.

Protected Speech

One of the most immediate and powerful aspects of our new academic freedom language is its affirmation that faculty are free to speak about academic issues without fear of threat or reprisal from management. The key language here is:

13.04 Every faculty member is able to exercise academic freedom in the performance of his/her duties. Academic freedom at the College includes the right to enquire about, investigate, pursue, teach and speak freely about academic issues without fear of impairment to position or other reprisal.

This article enables faculty to speak out – to their colleagues, management, and even students – when they see something that does not make academic sense. As we well know, much of the poor academic decisions at the colleges are made because managers count on the fact that most faculty won't speak out. Threats of discipline or other retaliation (concerning workload, course assignments, PD leave, etc.) have been used for years to effectively silence faculty.

With **13.04**, faculty can now clearly communicate their perspective on management decisions, but there are some important caveats to the form this speech must take.

First, speech is limited by **13.05 (i)**, which states:

In exercising academic freedom, employees shall be responsible for adhering to legal parameters (such as but not limited to The Human Rights Code, Criminal Code of Canada, civil liability, collective agreement obligations), institutional regulations, Ministry Directives, requirements of accrediting bodies, and program and curriculum requirements.

These limits are largely common sense. You are *not* protected if you say something that is harassing or discriminatory. You are *not* protected if you legitimately violate workplace codes of conduct (such as publicly insulting a manager, colleague, or student). However, you *are* protected when statements you make are based on academic grounds and reference such things as research, evidence, professional standards, the public good, and student success. In fact, the form that protected speech should take is referenced in **13.05 (ii)**, which states:

Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligations to base research and teaching on an honest search for knowledge. In exercising such freedom, faculty have a responsibility to respect the academic freedom and rights of other members of the college community.

This article spells out that academic freedom is about us speaking, teaching and researching *as academic professionals*, as experts in our field. If faculty keep this in mind, our voices can become a powerful tool to start shifting Ontario's colleges away from a sterile, corporate culture, and toward one that is dynamic, collegial, critical, and faculty-and-student-centered.

And so, may 2018 be the year of college faculty speaking up, and speaking out! If you have any questions about how the new Article 13 relates to free speech in a particular context, please contact your Local 240 reps.

Urgent!

Are you a Partial Load member?

If so, then please remember to fill out a union card each semester. We know it's one extra step with every contract, but your membership needs to be renewed when you get your teaching assignment for the fall, winter and spring.

See your department steward to get your new form. Your steward can answer any questions you might have about keeping your membership status up-to-date.

Union Proud!

Have you got your "*I Walked the Line for Fairness and Quality*" thermos? Makes a great conversation piece when you walk into a meeting with management, holding your piece of 'strike history'.

If you haven't got yours yet, come on down to the Union Office in A006 to pick one up. If you're at Stoney Creek or IAHS, place your order with your steward.

You did your part. Show 'em we won't forget!

OPSEU Local 240 Faculty Area Stewards Officers

President: Geoff Ondercin-Bourne

Vice President: Kevin MacKay

Chief Steward: Heather Giardine-Tuck

Treasurer: Gaspare Bonomo

Communications Officer: Mary Allan

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