

# STRIKING NEWS TODAY

March 7, 2006

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## McGuinty promised Ontario “More faculty time for students” It’s time to deliver !

On May 13, 2005, Premier McGuinty announced Ontario’s post-secondary education Quality Improvement Fund, specifying, “by quality, we mean more faculty at colleges... to accommodate higher enrolments and help students succeed, more faculty time for students”.

Ten months later, college faculty can wait no longer. We are so committed to quality education for our students that we’re on strike to tell management how important this issue is to us, and to those we teach.

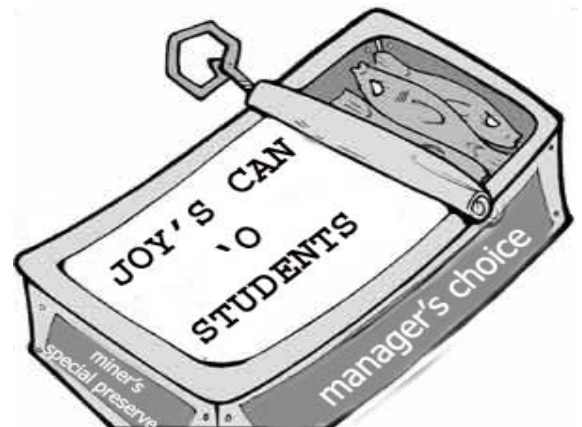
But what do we mean when we say “quality education”?

Quality means that we can spend time with students helping them succeed. Our college students are career-changers, people seeking to upgrade their skills, new Canadians, and a broad range of high school graduates who prefer a practical, real-world education. This group of students is often burdened by having to take care of their families, work part or even full time to pay for their education, deal with a new country and culture, and make sweeping changes in their lives to accommodate their career choices.

Faculty time is precious for these students. They seek the benefit of our wisdom, and our experience with other students. They see us as trusted advisors, and caring professionals who can help them navigate the rough waters of preparing for the workplace. Changes to the workload formula are needed so that we can devote sufficient time to our students to help them achieve their goals.

We maintain quality in preparing our students for the workplace when we have adequate time in which to evaluate their progress. It takes time to provide them with feedback on how to improve. Employers want workers who know how to work on a team, accept feedback and act on it, and take initiative. Our

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**No, Joy,  
it’s NOT a game!  
Students are not sardines.**

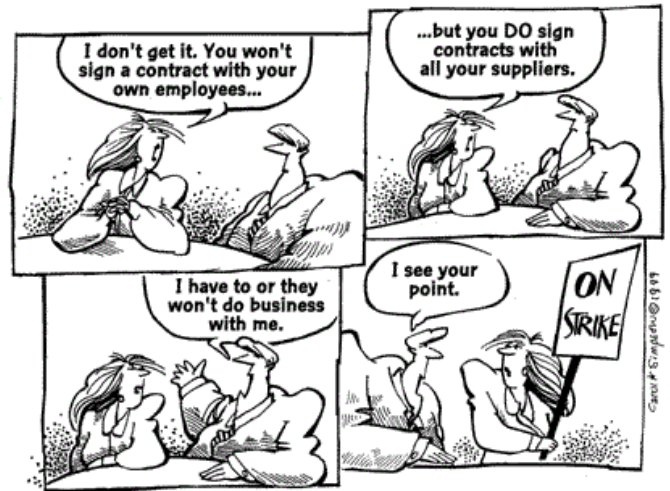
“It’s only a game,” said Joy Warkentin, after 13 months of bargaining. She was referring to — our contract negotiations. That Warkentin is the chair of the management bargaining team makes her comment all the more reprehensible. Our fight for quality education is a serious one — completely in line with the recommendations of the Rae Review and the province’s financial commitment to post-secondary education. Rae said it, and we agree: “Today our standard of living, and consequently our quality of life, depend on people having access to education that is on a par with the best in the world.”

**E-mail us your photos & stories: [union@opseu560.org](mailto:union@opseu560.org)**

## Rick Miner Vacationing in Cuba

On the eve of a massive province-wide college strike, one might expect our college president to be passionately lobbying the Ontario government and the College Council (management's bargaining agent) to generate a contract settlement. On the contrary, last week Rick Miner was relaxing pool-side in Cuba. We're not joking.

But let us not rush to hasty conclusions about what his absence from the country at this critical time says about his commitment to the college system. Perhaps he was taking a labour-relations course. Then again, perhaps he was simply working on his tan for the 'photo ops' that will no doubt arise over the course of this strike.



## What Should I Say?

Wondering what to say to those you encounter on the picket line? Here are some ideas.

**We want quality education for our students.** This means more teachers, smaller class sizes, and more time to spend with students.

**Higher enrollments mean we need more teachers.** Partial-load faculty need to be treated fairly, and we need smaller classes so we can provide quality teaching.

**We advise students to stay home** and that they not be put in the middle of a labor dispute.

**In over 13 months of negotiations, management has not moved one millimeter towards improving workload.** Workload is tied directly to quality. That is why we're on strike.

**Premier McGuinty himself said that quality means more faculty at colleges and universities,** to accommodate higher enrolments and help students succeed, more faculty time for students, more students completing their undergraduate programs and going on to grad school and easier movement for students be-

tween colleges and universities.

**The Premier has provided an additional 6.2 billion dollars over four years in a Quality Improvement Fund for education.** This strike is not about lack of funding. It is about management's unwillingness to improve workload.

**I care about teaching. I care about my students.** I want to be able to spend adequate time with every student who needs it. I want to be able to deliver a quality education to each student.

**Student/teacher contact hours, and class size are two key measures of quality.** Both have steadily increased without a corresponding change to the workload formula.

**We are striking for quality education.** Management has refused to come to an agreement with us, even though our demands are supported by government. We just want a fair settlement.

*It's time to deliver...continued from page 1)*

students develop these skills as they are guided and advised by their teachers.

We all know that it takes more time to consult with a team than it does with an individual. It takes longer to mark papers when you are providing comments on students' responses. Quality in evaluation and feedback cannot be compromised.

More teachers and smaller class sizes represent quality in content and delivery. With a smaller class we can encourage interactivity and participation, elevating the quality of the learning experience for each student. Students

acquire learning better and retain it longer if they are involved in the class. They are able to learn from each other in a smaller class because they feel more at ease in asking questions and sharing their knowledge.

Higher enrolments demonstrate the demand for applied arts and technology programs. You don't have to be a math professor to know that if there are more students, there also needs to be more teachers. Partial-load faculty help fill this critical need, and should be treated fairly in recognition of their valuable contribution.

**Quality education is a no-brainer. Why is it so hard for management to get the message?**

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