

STRIKING NEWS TODAY

March 21, 2006

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Exploitation of Partial-load Faculty

“Seneca is a bad employer.” That matter-of-fact assessment was a little unsettling to hear last week as I was heading home by TTC after strike duty on the Seneca@York campus. On the bus, I sat beside a York University professor who used to teach at Seneca. Her thoughts about her Seneca experience revealed one of the underlying truths of this conflict: the Colleges have kept the system running through the exploitation of part-time and partial-load faculty.

As a program coordinator of the Journalism – Broadcast program, I am moved every day by the dedication of partial-load colleagues. Without them, we simply could not go on. Our program has two full-time faculty members. We run two or three semesters year round. partial-load faculty routinely advise students on their projects outside of office hours, volunteer at Orientations and Open Houses, and launch new initiatives for the program. These contributions are above and beyond their contracted duties. Bottom line: they do it out of a commitment to our students’ education. They are seldom paid to do so.

“My ‘partial-load’ status affects the amount of time that I have to spend on a weekly basis at Seneca. I come; I teach; I do office hours; I answer my email; and then it’s off to job #2, or #3.” That’s the frustrating experience of Stacey Johnson, a partial-load faculty member in the Journalism Broadcast program. A dedicated educator and broadcast professional with a

doctorate, Johnson knows that, “An overwhelming majority of part-time instructors in a program runs the risk of leaving students with a partial academic experience.”

Practical, vocational education is the Colleges’ bedrock. We need faculty who are involved in industry. But the imbalance between full-time and partial-load professors has widened at the expense of the quality of education. The mistreatment of partial load faculty is a direct result of former governments’ assaults on College education.



As a coordinator, I’m appalled by the lack of basic support our partial load faculty receive. In lieu of adequate office space where they can effectively meet with students, many are consigned to ‘fattening pens’ in converted classrooms with inadequate lighting, poor telephone service and limited access to printers and other equipment.

The former Senecan, now at York University, described her working conditions this way, “We were all put in a large room with glass on two sides and partitions around each desk. I shared a desk and computer with two other

instructors, who often worked the same hours that I did. We were falling over each other and unable to accomplish any work. Speaking privately with students required the utmost in cooperation among the three of us, and we were unable to give

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So, How Much Money Is Management Really Offering Us?

Let's do the math...

A faculty member at the maximum step on the current salary schedule earns \$82,299.00.

Over a four-year period, that same faculty member will earn a total of \$329,196.00.

With the new incremental increases proposed by management (2 increases per year), that same

individual would earn a total of \$352,763.05 over a four-year period.

The difference in earnings comes to a total salary increase of \$23,567.05 over that four-year period.

\$23,567.05 represents a total increase in real-dollar earnings of 7.16% over the four-year period ($\$23,567.05 \div \$329,196.00 = 7.16\%$).

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adequate attention to our students' needs."

In his report, Bob Rae famously wrote that Colleges have been, "Ontario's 'poster child' for public efficiency gains..." The exploitation of partial-load faculty is the pointy end of the way such "efficiencies" were achieved. Rae noted that "per-unit-costs" of services had declined in the decade leading up to his report last year and he took direct aim at this dubious "achievement" by noting the Colleges' "diminished ability to deliver the educational services Ontario and Ontarians badly need". His report bluntly insisted on hiring more full-time faculty.

The funding crisis worsened during a period when College enrollment grew by over 50% and faculty increased by just over 20%. We have stayed in business due to the abilities and good graces of our partial-load faculty. Their precarious position meant that issues like workload and classroom size only worsened.

Partial-load faculty tend to be put in a passive position of merely accepting what they are offered from semester to semester. Often they simply don't have the time or economic security to challenge conditions they face or to actively pursue improvements for students. If the colleges were "poster boys" for Harris-era 'efficiency', partial-load faculty are the whipping post to achieve those ends.

\$\$\$\$\$ Strike Pay \$\$\$\$\$

Pay for Week Two:

- We anticipate distributing pay for week two on Friday March 24 via picket captains.

Pay for Week One:

- If you did not pick up your week-one strike pay on the picket line, please come to the union office (2942 Finch Ave. E. Suite 119) to get it.
- If you reported a problem with your pay for week one, you will receive personal notification as soon as your new cheque is ready.

SAFETY ON THE LINE

As you may know, a picketer at Centennial College was seriously injured by a driver running the line early Monday, March 20th. To keep our members safe, we need to take certain steps to reduce opportunities for driver misbehaviour.

1. To ensure your lines remain strong, please check with your picket captains before leaving a line for a break and let them know when you have returned.
2. Above all, don't leave your picket line until the next shift has begun to arrive. This will help the picket captains gauge the numbers needed to keep the line dense enough to be safe and to

discourage line runners.

3. Picket captains should post an individual with a pen, paper and clipboard, to observe drivers, particularly left turners so that the observer can see any incident from start to finish and note what happens, the make and colour of the car, a description of the driver etc.
4. Another picketer could be posted with a camera – videotape is best, but a still camera is fine. The simple presence of a recording device deters drivers otherwise inclined to misbehave.
5. Lastly, stay alert, keep your eye on the traffic around you, and obey traffic signals.