

# STRIKING NEWS TODAY

March 10, 2006

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## Quality Education Includes Counselling

Quality education means providing an environment in which students can learn, perform well on examinations, and enjoy the college experience. Counsellors play a vital role in ensuring our students' success and deserve to be recognized and compensated fairly.

Officially, counsellors are assigned a 35-hour workweek. In reality, they devote many hours of unacknowledged and unpaid overtime work to accomplish their many responsibilities. Therefore, at the bargaining table, the union is demanding that managers provide each counsellor with a workload form clearly specifying the tasks they should undertake and the time allotted for each task. The wide-ranging needs of our students account for the magnitude and complexity of our counsellors' work.

Our student population is a diverse group, and includes New Canadians, career changers, displaced workers upgrading their skills, and high school graduates venturing out on their own for the first time.

Many of our students have children or elderly parents to care for. Many of our students have part-time or even full-time jobs. Many of our students are dealing with culture shock as they get accustomed to living in Canada. Many of our students are coping with the loss of a job and the choice of a new career path. Some 15% of our students have special needs.

The pressure of making the grade affects all of our students. They all want to succeed. They all are trying to make sense of their role as learners, and integrate that into their lives.

Some fare better than others. Existing problems can be intensified when added to the stress of getting an education. And occasionally life takes an abrupt turn when a student thought it was all under control.

Our highly trained and qualified counsellors are the people who catch these students when they fall. When the going gets really tough, our counsellors are there to support, guide, and advise.

In addition to leading counselling groups, they lead online groups as well. They conduct research projects to provide data for quality improvements.

They consult on assistive technology, provide assessments, and write assessment reports. And don't forget, some counsellors teach courses, as well.

Faculty depend on the counsellors too for assistance in accommodating students' learning needs. Counsellors train faculty and staff in how better to deal with special-needs students. Counsellors visit classes to brief them on the services available. Counsellors work in the Learning Centre, providing learning assistance to students so they can get the most out of instruction and examinations.

So, add it up — all 35 hours and more of every counsellor's time consumed rapidly by the tasks mentioned, and additional administrative tasks. Let's record those tasks and hours on a workload form for every counsellor to ensure that they have the time needed to meet our students' many needs.

### **Overheard**

**Got any great quotes/  
stories you've overheard  
on the picket line?  
Send them in!**



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

# A Picketer's Blog

## Day One: Let's Look on the Bright Side

Management may not be on our side, but the weather sure is! Okay, it's not 85 degrees and we're not out in shorts and T-shirts, but the sun is shining down on us. Several picketers are wearing sunglasses, and some have secretly applied suntan lotion. So let's look on the bright side: finally we're getting some exercise. All winter, almost everyone's complained about gaining weight and not having time to exercise. Now here we are burning off calories while walking and talking with our friends and peers.

And how about our New Year's resolution to drink less coffee? It's so much easier on the picket lines. First of all, coffee is not that accessible and, secondly, the less you drink, the less you visit the portable toilet. How's that for incentive!

And remember all those faculty meetings where you realized that you had never met half of the staff and were constantly passing people in the hall that you didn't know? Well, we're meeting them now and we'll have more people to talk to at the next departmental lunch. Plus, how about your faculty friends that you never get to see because of your conflicting teaching schedules? Or how about the faculty that you're forced to see because you *are* on the same teaching schedules? Now you're in control — sort of like planning your own party.

And how cool is it to come home from school and *not* have to respond to a million student emails. Now you have time to actually return personal emails. Maybe you can recoup some of those neglected friendships. It's all

good. By the time management addresses our issues and comes to understand our fight for quality education, we'll be slimmer, healthier and have more friends.

## Day Three: Don't Rain on our Parade

Though we chased the rain away for a while today, we did see many of our picketers sharing umbrellas during the rainy time. Our bonding just grows stronger. We also see that our faculty has quite the flare for fashion. Many donned trendy rain ponchos in a variety of hues. It's been rumoured that many more ran out to purchase ponchos after picketing. The misty weather today did wonders for our picketers' skin — free facials for all. The mist also revealed those that have been camouflaging their naturally curly hair. They started picketing looking like Cher and left looking like Einstein!

And how nice is our union for bringing fresh bought cookies to the picketers. And not just any run-of-the-mill cookies. We're talking M&M cookies. At Seneca @ York, the York faculty union YUFA brought coffee to those walking the line. We'd prefer a discount on our parking, but it was still a wonderful gesture.

So, as you're soaking your feet tonight, keep an eye on the news. Maybe, just maybe, they're starting to understand that we're not backing down in our fight for quality education. Could be that they're getting the importance of smaller classes, more teachers and more time with students? However, while we're still on strike, I think that hot chocolate with those tiny marshmallows would be a great idea. *Future picketers' blogs will appear on the local website.*

## How Smart Are You?

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get catgut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What color is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. How long did the Thirty Years War last?

All done? Check your answers and see how many you got right!

What do you mean you failed????

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last? 116 years
2. Which country makes Panama hats? Ecuador
3. From which animal do we get catgut? Sheep and Horses
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? November
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of? Squirrel fur
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal? The dog
7. What was King George VI's first name? Albert
8. What color is a purple finch? Crimson
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from? New Zealand
10. How long did the Thirty Years War last? Thirty years - of course!!!

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ: