

Newsbreak

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Precarious employment - the fight comes to Humber College

Audrey Taves, President, OPSEU Local 562

Precarious work - with its poor pay, limited or no access to benefits, uncertainty for the future, fear of retribution for speaking out – has become a hot topic in the media lately. Contract workers striking at the University of Toronto and York University, Seneca’s cuts to partial-load faculty in the college system, and Humber’s dramatic increase in contract teaching over the past few years are all raising awareness of how precarious work has become a key part of post-secondary education.

For the past several rounds of bargaining, your faculty union has been fighting to improve language in our collective agreement for our partial-load members, and by extension to the non-unionized part-time and sessional faculty. Although we have made minor gains in terms of job security, the college management has refused to address the key issues of precarious work in the college sector.

We know that faculty working conditions have a significant impact on student learning conditions. The percentage of full-time faculty continues to decrease at Humber, along with a

steady increase in the hours taught by contract faculty.

Why is this increase a problem for contract faculty?

- Decreased chance of getting full-time work
- No job security
- Last minute contracts
- Lower pay



- No paid time to meet with students outside of class
- No caps on class sizes and the resulting increase in evaluation time
- Few or no benefits
- No paid time to participate in team meetings or curriculum development
- Pressure to do volunteer work

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A positive way forward

We were able to resolve concerns related to the release of relevant staffing data and the functioning of the Workload Monitoring Group. Requested data was provided immediately and assurances were given that timetables, SWFs, and other staffing data as identified in the collective agreement would be made available in a usable format.

Thanks to Chris Whitaker, President, and Laurie Rancourt, Senior VP Academic for their prompt attention to the faculty union’s concern regarding access to college data.

We welcome this respectful and cooperative approach and look forward to working together. 🏡

Newsbreak is a publication of the Humber College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 562, intended to provide information and stimulate discussion. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. All articles and letters should be signed, though in some circumstances the author’s name will be withheld upon request. We encourage thoughtful discussion that respects human rights. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length, and clarity.

Articles reporting on union business will be signed and will include the author’s position of responsibility in the local. Where an article has the author’s name only, the views are those of the author. You may e-mail the editor: sylvia.ciuciura@humber.ca or drop materials at the Faculty Union office – Portable PX, North Campus, ext. 4007.

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President's notes

Audrey Taves, President, OPSEU Local 562



Faculty least engaged group

Employee engagement survey results

In our last Newsbreak, we encouraged you to attend the college-wide Town Halls reporting the research results. Now a summary of the college-wide results (but not the comments) have been reported and posted through the College Communicate. I have identified some concerns based on the posted results and have listed a few of them below.

1. What do the numbers really say about faculty engagement?

- Only 43 per cent of all faculty responded to the survey. Doesn't that already say something about faculty engagement?
- Of the 43 per cent of faculty that responded to the survey, over 50 per cent identified as "not engaged" or "only somewhat engaged"
- So... that means **less than 20 per cent of all faculty** at Humber feel even moderately engaged?

2. Of the faculty who responded to the survey, over 20 per cent either don't know if they are treated with courtesy and respect (*you don't know?*) or feel they are not treated with courtesy and respect.

3. Of the faculty who responded to the survey, 40 per cent do not feel that their opinion and input are valued at Humber.

4. Of the faculty who responded to the survey, almost 30 per cent do not feel listened to when contributing to discussion in their academic school. Yet, there are posters in the halls at Humber that cite Humber faculty as "the experts".

5. Of the faculty who responded to the survey, almost 40 per cent are not satisfied with their involvement in departmental decisions that affect their work – the work in which they were hired as the subject experts.

6. Humber is an educational institution. By definition, the job of Humber is education, done by faculty. Yet, the faculty group identified the lowest satisfaction with having the resources to do their job effectively, whereas, the administrative group had an almost 90 per cent satisfaction rate for having the resources they need for their work. This suggests the resources at Humber are not going into education.

7. The group that feels most valued for the work they do? Not faculty, not support, but administrators.

I encourage you to review the reports for yourselves, attend your school and program report meetings, engage with your colleagues to identify the results you find to be problematic and challenge your managers to work with you to improve engagement in your area.

General Membership Meeting, save the date

Our general membership meeting and lunch will be on Wednesday, May 27, 2015. We would love to see as many full-time and partial-load faculty as possible. Please reserve the date. Details regarding the agenda will follow soon. (See page 10). 📌

PRECARIOUS from page 1

Why is this a problem for the full-time faculty?

- Fewer faculty to do the necessary curriculum revision and development
- Fewer colleagues available for curriculum discussion and decisions
- Fewer faculty available to meet with students
- More work mentoring of a never-ending stream of new contract faculty.

Why is this a problem for students?

- Contract faculty have no paid time to meet with students outside of class so are often unavailable (the contract faculty are often off to a second job to make ends meet)
- The high turnover of contract faculty makes it difficult for students to get references from their professors on or after graduation.

So what can be done?

Well... some of our contract faculty have spoken up. They have sent an open letter to our college president and to the Dean of their school, asking for:

- More full-time positions in their programs to match the full-time work they have been doing for years,

- Increased job security for those who remain in contract positions,
- Paid time to meet with students outside of class,
- Paid time to work with their full-time colleagues in curriculum development, and
- Recognition that the work they do outside of teaching contact hours is also teaching work – as it is for full-time faculty.

This group has taken a risk. Their work is, by definition, precarious, but they have reached the point where they felt they had to speak up.

We salute them for their courage. We encourage other partial-load and full-time faculty to speak out in support of secure, stable work for all college professors.

And we ask our college administrators to move forward in addressing the concerns of precarious faculty at Humber by

- Making teaching a priority in Humber's budget,
- Increasing the numbers of full-time faculty,
- Working with the faculty union to make contract teaching more secure, and
- Making contract teaching more inclusive of the different aspects of teaching in a post-secondary environment. 🗣️

Partial-load faculty with benefits (time sensitive message)

As a partial-load faculty, your benefits are set to expire at the end of your contract - likely mid-late April. If you wish to bridge them, please contact Nathan Tysdal, in Human Resources by email at Nathan.Tysdal@humber.ca before April 17,

2015. If you are not interested in bridging your benefits for this contract, they will be suspended as of April 30, 2015 (unless you have a partial-load contract from May to August). 🗣️

Chief Steward's report

Robert Mills, Chief Steward, OPSEU Local 562

New faculty positions



Staffing arbitrations

We have had six staffing arbitrations since the beginning of February that were filed under the previous contract. So far, we have managed to get 35 new positions through mediation prior to the actual hearings for four of the schools – Business, Media Studies & I.T., Creative and Performing Arts, and Applied Technology. We couldn't settle with Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism. We are continuing with arbitration hearings for those schools. The college seems to be unbothered by spending tens of thousands of dollars on hearings to maintain precarious employment.

For about the last 10 or so years, the college has replaced, as a matter of course, those who have left the college, thereby maintaining the full-time complement at a fairly steady level. We understand that the current administration is committed to slowly increasing the full-time complement. It remains to be seen whether or not the college is going to continue the replacement practice under this collective agreement. If not, we will have to go back to grieving replacement positions again.

Grievance report

Three personal grievances are going to arbitration: unjust discipline, unjust dismissal, and a letter of counsel combined with failure to offer union representation. The last was filed because a supervisor issued a verbal/written warning to a faculty member. The college must inform the faculty member about the right to union representation at a discipline meeting (article 31.04). In this case, that didn't happen and the faculty member grieved.

Professional Development Leave

A number of people have received their Professional Development Leave (PDL) acceptances for next September. Article 20 covers this leave, and the

first paragraph reads

*The college recognizes that it is in the interests of employees, students and the college that employees are given the opportunity by the college to pursue college-approved professional development activities outside the college through further academic or technical studies or in industry where such activities will **enhance the ability of the employee upon return to the college to fulfill professional responsibilities.** (my emphasis)*

There is nothing here which indicates that applicants are required to do work for the college. If you have received your acceptance and are concerned about any college requirements in it, please call ext 4007.

Not using the term “instructor”

The terms instructor and professor have particular definitions in the collective agreement, and an instructor is defined as one who provides

... instruction to assigned groups of students through prepared courses of instruction and according to prescribed instructional formats; and limited to instruction directed to the acquisition of a manipulative skill or technique; and under the direction of a professor.

Professors have a wider range of responsibilities regarding the teaching of courses, the teaching environment, program development and so on. Confusing the two terms can lead to misunderstandings, and the use, by management, of the term instructor for professor or vice-versa shows a lack of understanding of the collective agreement. We have been assured by the college that there are no instructors presently employed by the college, so there is no need to use the term. 🙏

Haves and have-nots in academia

Janet Porter, Professor, School of Business

With teaching assistants on strike recently at two Toronto universities, the contrast between mounting administrative costs and the precarious employment and low wages of contract faculty has been a strong focus of attention.

Figures from the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) show non-academic full-time salaries at Ontario universities, adjusted for inflation, rose 78 per cent from 2000/01 to 2013/14, from \$934 million to nearly \$1.7 billion (Davidson, J. (2015, March 16). *CBC Canada News*. Retrieved from CBC Canada: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/where-do-canada-s-post-secondary-dollars-go-1.2994476>).

In many ways, the Ontario college system mimics the university systems, albeit with a different and more frugal funding model. There are parallel financial characteristics although salaries of senior college administrators can match or exceed salaries of comparable administration positions in the university sector. In addition, Ontario College administrators with salaries over \$156,000 per year enjoy a supplementary pension, called the Retirement Compensation Arrangement (RCA). Compensation rates for Ontario college administrators can be viewed on Ontario's 2015 Sunshine list.

In contrast to the riches and privileges experienced by academic administrators, it is well-known that most of the undergraduate and college courses are taught by contract faculty. Contract faculty are paid by the teaching contact hour, have reduced collective bargaining rights in comparison to full-time faculty, have fewer benefits, have commensurate lower pension plan contributions, and experience the vagaries and uncertainties of semester-long contracts. Similar to the university sector, 70 per cent of the faculty employed to teach, at least at Humber, are employed as contract staff according to the college's fall 2014 staffing reports. Unlike university faculty, college faculty do not have academic freedom rights in their collective agreement.

Shoukri's Contract (c. 2008)	
There has been much talk over Mamdouh Shoukri's almost \$500,000 salary. But this doesn't at all tell the whole story. Back in 2008, his own contract details were released. Here are some of the highlights:	
\$325,000	Base salary
\$2700 + 3.5% \$10,000 / year 1/4 to 1/2 of base salary \$13,000 / year	Base salary increases each year Additional increases as of 2009 Annual bonus subject to performance review (automatically got 1/4 in 2009) Supplemental pension fund (this is in addition to the usual pension plan)
 Housing loan of \$750,000 (interest-free) \$50,000 of this loan per year as President will be forgiven	 A driver and a car
 One year leave with full pay every 5 years of service	 Up to \$5000 / year for home entertainment
President of York University, Mamdouh Shoukri, 2008 compensation package	

In Toronto, academic workers at the University of Toronto and York University have had work stoppages to protest poor compensation and living conditions that accompany precarious short-term contract teaching.

Where's the governance?

From a legal perspective, universities and colleges in Ontario are provincial Crown Corporations, and are treated as self-governing separate entities. The provincial government, in the cases of the striking academic workers at York and U of T, has claimed in the media that it has no jurisdiction to tell the universities how to run their institutions. These entities appear more and more to operate like for-profit corporations, as administrator nests get more and more feathered, and academic workers fall farther and farther behind. If not with the provincial government, where does the governance and oversight of these institutions lie? 🏠

Stolen wages revisited again

Robert Mills, Chief Steward, OPSEU Local 562

A workload resolution arbitrator at Durham recently clarified attendance at Open Houses. Following is Durham College's Chief Steward's report.

A Workload Resolution Arbitrator has determined that Open House's strictly voluntary and faculty are not required to attend.

*In a decision released October 27, 2014 by Arbitrator Norm Jesin regarding the sign-back of three faculty members' SWF's for failure to include attendance at Open House, Mr. Jesin relied on the college's submissions that Open House is conducted on a purely voluntary basis to decide that, on that basis, voluntary attendance did not need to be included on a SWF. Of note – because the college has decided not to “assign” the work of Open House attendance, **the college cannot compel any faculty member to attend.** (my emphasis)*

Accordingly, no member of faculty should feel pressured to attend. In particular, please note the following:

—Members of management cannot compel or otherwise pressure any faculty member to attend at Open House

—Attendance at Open House does not fall within the duties assigned to a coordinator

—Coordinators are not required to attend at Open House

—Coordinators are not required to solicit other faculty to attend at Open House and coordinators must not pressure other faculty to attend at Open House

—Faculty teaching within a specific program, regardless of the size or success of the program, are not required to attend at Open House and must not pressure other faculty to attend at Open House

—Members of management, coordinators and/or other faculty who do engage in pressuring other faculty to attend may be engaging in harassing and/or bullying behaviour which is a breach of article 4 of the collective agreement as well as other applicable legislation.

Generally at Humber, Open House is neither assigned* nor, for partial-load and part-time, compensated. If the Open House is assigned, and it is for a Saturday or Sunday, you are entitled to 1½ times the credit hours for it. So, if the Open House is for four hours, you should receive a minimum of six hours on the SWF. If there is no mention on your SWF of Open Houses and the like, you have not been assigned the work.

You are within your rights to decline the work that is not assigned because there is no such thing as volunteer work in the collective agreement. When the college coerces faculty into doing work that is not on the SWF or compensated, I feel this is another example of *We Are Humber – We Believe in Stolen Wages*.

Please contact our union office at 4007 if you have any questions about this.

*The **only** way to assign courses is on the SWF. If you are ordered by your supervisor to do work that is not assigned, you should do it, otherwise it can be considered insubordination. Ask for the order to be given in writing. Be sure to contact the union if this happens. 🏠

On retiring from college teaching

John Steckley, Professor, School of Liberal Arts & Sciences

I never thought I would do it: retire. Somehow I imagined myself working until I dropped dead in the classroom. But now I want to retire. It is both push and pull, repulsion and attraction that have motivated this decision. The latter is provided by my many writing projects, my wife Angie, our eight parrots, and the rest of our menagerie both inside and outside our house.

Part of the reason for my retiring is a typical old man's gripe against change. But part of it means not wanting to be part of a changing atmosphere in colleges into something I see as toxic. There are challenges ahead that I am willing to let the next generation of teachers face. Decreasing attendance, devices that help students cheat in ways unimagined before cell phones, decreased literacy skills (daily exhibited in increased use of 'text speak' in student writing), fewer and fewer students taking notes in class, and decreased reading of textbooks.

Concerning the attendance problem, I don't know whether this is my invented name or that I heard it somewhere: the PowerPoint effect. This is evidenced in the drop in attendance that I have seen over the last ten years or so. I am not imagining it. When students are handed a whole set of notes, and spend class time staring at a screen, there is a decreasing sense that in-class-time is valuable. There is a disincentive to attend, to benefit from the immediate, from the sudden development of ideas that comes from discussion. I can remember sometimes telling students, "I had better write that down. I have never thought of that before." It is a long time since I have said

and done that.

Education tends to follow fads as a dedicated follower of fashion (if you can remember that song, then you are of my age). The educational fad now is computers and similar devices making every possible intrusion into our work, increasing our workload and our stress. Last year, it was Banner (2014 was not a banner year for Humber efficiency). This year, it's the amazing Robophone (my term), which has left a number of us in phone limbo. Next year, what? I'm thinking the Humber drone. I am glad to be leaving that part of the college behind.

I teach my students that technological change is not socially neutral; there is indeed a correlation between the increasing workload carried by temporary teachers, and the increasing teacher-work done on-line. That is no coincidence.

And "We are" not Walmart, so we should not be presenting ourselves as a brand. Quality and dedication of teachers and staff, not advertising signage and slogans, is what has made Humber a good place to teach and to learn for so many years.

I was part of the 'great hiring' of 1986. It was thanks to the union that we got our jobs, as our union brothers and sisters went on strike to decrease our workload from six classes to five. The colleges would not have done that on their own. I am hoping that when the old guard retire, the union leaders of the future will be prepared to fight for full-time jobs and fully engaged students. Our educational future is worth it. 🏠

Contract faculty issues

Sam Steele, Program Coordinator, School of Applied Technology

It appears that contract faculty are not receiving fair compensation for the job they perform. York University and the University of Toronto were recently on strike. Our union was in full support and made a monetary donation to help them through this trying time. What are some of their main concerns? Wages and working conditions!

As professors, we know there is much more to teaching than showing up and giving a lecture. Part-timers are faculty who teach 6 hours or less and partial-load faculty teach up to 12 hours. That is student in-class contact time only. The ROE (record of employment) factor is 2.17. In other words, part-time and partial-load professors work for a minimum of 2.17 hours for each contact hour they are paid. This is intended to take into account lesson plan preparation, evaluation, and marking. There is no time or money allotted for connecting with students one-on-one. This may or may not be enough money for a family to support themselves and this is why your union encourages all contract faculty to confirm they are at their correct pay grid step. A few of the most common questions asked are: Was I placed at the right step when initially hired? When do I move

up a step? Is it automatic? I have been teaching on a partial-load basis for some time now and have not seen an increase in my hourly rate. Why?

Partial-load faculty are eligible for a step increase each and every time they accumulate the equivalent of 10 months of service at the college.

The 10 months of service are calculated as follows: partial-load faculty accumulate 0.5 months of service for every calendar month in which they have taught 30 hours or more (so you need 20 months X 0.5 credit).

The months of service calculation is also used to identify those partial-load faculty eligible for "priority in hiring" (8 months of service (or 16 calendar months X 0.5) required to qualify for this).

If you are a contract faculty member and are unsure whether you are at your correct pay step, see the spreadsheet on our website:

www.humberfacultyunion.org/benefits-menu/partial-load-benefits/

This spreadsheet can be a very helpful tool when calculating months of service. If you have any other questions or concerns please see your school's union steward or call the union directly. 📧

Bottles are better

Robert Mills, Chief Steward, OPSEU Local 562

The employees at Crown Holdings packaging plant in Toronto have been on strike since September 6, 2013 (about 18 months now). The company is demanding a 42 per cent pay cut for new hires, creating a 2-tier pay system, and proposing to fire 75 per cent of the workers on strike and replace them with the scabs they hired.

Since the strike began, the company has been using scab workers. It also wants to fire 34 workers even though there have been no charges laid against any of them. This is a plant that has won awards for safety and productivity, and Crown

Holdings has been making increasing profits.

The new Liberal government is not getting involved - the labour legislation in Ontario does not exclude scabs, and the Liberals are notorious for not supporting workers' rights.

To help out the striking workers, join the boycott on canned beer. So when you buy beer, choose the bottled variety; you never know if a can has been tainted by a scab.

To learn more about the issue and sign a petition to the Ontario government, use the following link: <http://www.bottlesnotcans.ca/>. 📧

Humber College Faculty Union
OPSEU Local 562
General Membership Meeting & Lunch
 Wednesday, May 27, 2015
 11:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
 Humber Room, North Campus

Please save the date and join us for lunch and the general membership meeting.

Union calendar correction

After the union calendar was printed, the college changed the dates for the winter term. Please note the change below for May.

May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4 Final Grades Due (13 & 15 wk)	5	6 Final Grades Due (13 & 15 wk)	7	8	9

