

Newsbreak

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January 2012

Humber is the Best

by Robert Mills, Secretary, OPSEU Local 562

Coming to work in early November I noticed that the flashy board on Hwy. 27 and Humber College Blvd. was displaying a sign that Humber College had earned a place as a top GTA employer for 2012 – neat trick. It’s still being displayed. I guess this is to encourage people to come to Humber because it’s such a nice place to be. I then found out that to get this award, the college had to have made an application to *Mediacorp Canada*, a publisher of employment periodicals. The selection by *Mediacorp* was based on criteria mentioned in the application; some of which (from the *Mediacorp* website) is listed below.

Mediacorp editors have confirmed that this employer:

1. supports new mothers with generous maternity and parental leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 52 weeks) and manages an onsite daycare facility which they may take advantage of when they return to work;

2. also provides parental leave top-up to new fathers to (93 per cent of salary for 35 weeks) and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 52 weeks);

3. encourages employees to balance their work and personal life through a variety of alternative work arrangements including flexible hours, telecommuting, reduced summer hours and shortened and compressed work week options;

4. invests in ongoing employee development with subsidies for tuition and professional accreditation, in-house and online training options and a formal mentoring program helps employees prepare for life after work with retirement planning assistance, phased-in work options and generous contributions to a defined benefit pension plan.

I have some problems with the whole process.

It seems only those in Human Resources were involved in this exercise, and consultation with faculty and support staff was sadly lacking. Funnily enough, the report did not mention the union or the Collective Agreement once, even though we in the union have fought to include many of those benefits mentioned above in the Collective Agreement – parental leave, salary top-up, tuition subsidy... Our faculty union has negotiated hard for, and sometimes gone on strike for, these self-same benefits; now the college has claimed them as their own initiatives. The Collective Agreement defines vacations, maternity leaves, parental leaves, professional development, workload and other benefits that were major criteria in the selection. The day care charges full rates and college employees are not subsidized – it just happens to be on the campus. Our pension plan, which was set up in 1967, covers all of the colleges and is jointly administered by the union and the employer.

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Revised Employment Equity Self-Identification Questionnaire

The Employment Equity Questionnaire that will be distributed on January 26, 2011.
Your participation is important.

Please take a few minutes to complete this confidential questionnaire. If you require the Employment Equity Questionnaire in an accessible format, or have any questions about Employment Equity, please refer to the 'Resources' section of the Human Rights & Diversity website, <http://hrs.humber.ca/diversity> or contact Nancy Simms, Human Rights & Diversity Manager at (416) 675-6622 x 4425.

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 – H109, North Campus, ext. 4007.

OPSEU Local 562 Stewards and Officers

President - Orville Getz
1st Vice-President - Paul Michaud
2nd Vice-President - vacant
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Bernie Monette
Joey Noble
Gene Rychlewski
Sam Steele
Paul Suda
Yuri Sura

Board of Governors Faculty Rep - Franca Giacomelli
Local 562 Admin Assistant - Michelle Albert
Newsbreak Editor - Sylvia Ciuciura



E-mail to Editor
sylvia.ciuciura@humber.ca

Surface / Internal Mail
OPSEU Local 562
Room H109, North Campus
Humber College
205 Humber College Blvd.
Toronto, ON M9W 5L7

opseu562@yahoo.ca

OPSEU Local 562 Website:
www.humberfacultyunion.org

OPSEU Website: www.opseu.org





President's notes

by Orville Getz, OPSEU Local 562 President

Bargaining Begins with your demands

You will have received the bargaining survey via email within the last week. Please take the time to fill it out. The deadline for completion is Friday, February 10. The officers will compile the results and present them at our General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, February 15. Notification of the General Membership Meeting is elsewhere in this copy of Newsbreak. All demands will be voted on and the results will be forwarded to OPSEU head office where they will be included in the Draft Demands Document, along with demands from the other 23 colleges. The officers of the Local will attend the Final Demand Setting meeting on March 31 and April 1 where all demands will be voted on and the Final Demands Document will be produced. This is the time for you to have your say so please take a few minutes now to ensure that your voice is heard.

Toronto and York Region Labour Council Forum

Officers recently attended a one day forum presented by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council on achieving a state of readiness in our unions. Relying on past practice will not be sufficient to protect living standards, working conditions and public services. The forum presented the political action tools needed to improve our ability to plan and run successful campaigns to counter service and job cuts by governments. A special emphasis was placed on the rhetoric of our municipal and provincial governments on budget and workforce reductions. Through a series of small group exercises and discussions, participants would be able to recognize the importance of strategic planning at the Local union level. As participants, we were also able to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our Local and gain a better understanding of how we could contribute to this campaign. 🇨🇦

McGuinty's austerity plan on its way

by Pam Johnson, Professor, School of Creative and Performing Arts

Not to be out-done by Rob Ford, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is about to roll out a similar austerity budget for Ontario. The plan is for massive across-the-board cuts to public services and jobs in the name of deficit cutting. Following on McGuinty's demand in 2011 that Ontario public sector workers accept a wage freeze for the next three years, this will further erode jobs and services. The blueprint and rationale is being provided by a soon-to-be released report from the Drummond Commission. Headed by former TD bank economist, Don Drummond, this plan recommends more corporate tax cuts, even though Ontario has one of the lowest tax rates in North America. It also calls for cuts, consolidation, privatization and contracting out in every area, with education and health care taking a slightly smaller hit.

Similar to the actions of Harper and Ford, McGuinty is particularly targeting workers

with good unionized jobs for belt-tightening; attacking pensions, for example as too rich for the public purse. Meanwhile already profitable corporations will continue to get tax breaks with no strings attached—a strategy that clearly supports the 1 per cent at the expense of the 99 per cent.

In places like Greece and the UK where these kinds of austerity attacks on the public sector are already underway, there has been a push back, including multiple general strikes in Greece and mass demonstrations in the UK. Torontonians made their voices heard against Ford's cuts here.

OPSEU is sponsoring town hall meetings across the province to let people know the implications of the Drummond Commission report and consider ways to fight to keep our jobs and services. The Toronto meeting is Monday January 30, 7 pm at Ryerson University. www.opseu.org for details. 🗳️

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So what has Humber done to deserve the accolade of best employer based on those criteria? Every college in the city could be defined as a best employer based on those terms since all the colleges have the same benefits through the Collective Agreement. I notice that Seneca was also selected.

One criterion that Mediacorp forgot to include is treatment of non-permanent and probationary employees. Humber would nose-dive on that one. The following are standard operating practices for this top GTA employer:

- partial-load employees suddenly becoming part-time without explanation;
- sessional numbers are reduced to avoid the possibility of those employees working too long and becoming permanent (12 in 24);

- probationary employees working over-time (strictly forbidden in the contract);
- partial-load employees near the top salary step being told there is no work for them next term;
- the college fighting at grievance hearings to hire part-time and partial load over full-time employees while managers are holding out the carrot of possible full-time hiring to hold on to contract employees and telling them later not to apply because they don't have the qualifications.

No one seems interested in mentioning the role of the union in the college system, but that's to be expected. So, while it is nice to know that Humber is seen as a top GTA employer, it's more useful to know that the work done through the union is a major factor in this recognition. 🗳️

Chief Steward's report

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward



You asked us

Question:

What are the “Allowed” 6 complementary hours on the SWF supposed to cover?

Answer:

The allowance is a six hour weekly MINIMUM and is intended for activities such as:

A) four hours for routine out-of-class assistance to individual students

- meeting with students after class
- giving verbal feedback to students regarding tests/papers
- responding to student emails/blackboard

B) two hours for normal administrative tasks

- responding to administrative/faculty emails and voicemails
- accessing class lists, photo rosters
- calculating and submitting grades
- submitting and picking up tests at the test centre.

Please note – it doesn't take long to use up the allotted time. So the next time your manager suggests that you have time on the SWF for x,y and z, you might want to suggest that you have no time left! In addition, if you find that the “normal administrative tasks” are taking more than the two hours/week, you should be asking for additional time on your SWF.

Question:

Do I have to help out at our program's Open House?

Answer:

Some faculty are allotted time on the back of their SWFs for open houses, recruitment, etc. If you have been assigned the time, you are required to do the work. However, if you do not have this on the back of your SWF, you are not required to attend. If your manager gives you a written order to attend, you must

do so, then grieve unassigned work. Please note that open house attendance is not a “normal administrative task”.

Question:

What types of activities can be included in the assigned complementary hours on the back of the SWF?

Answer:

According to Article 11.02A2 of our Collective Agreement, the SWF “shall include all details of the total workload”. So, if you are expected to complete any work that isn't on the front of the SWF, it should be assigned on the back of the SWF. Examples include departmental or program meetings, committee work, student recruitment, applicant assessment, liaison work, student orientation, mentoring etc.

Question:

I seem to spend a great deal of time taking tests to and from the test centre as I typically have several special needs students in each of my classes. Where does this fit on my SWF?

Answer:

This is becoming an increasingly common concern. The time for these tasks needs to be monitored to ensure you are not exceeding your two hours/wk for normal administrative tasks. This issue has been raised at the Union-College Committee and the union has requested a runner to transport materials, as was done in the past. Deb McCarthy has agreed to look into this. In future, the increased use of electronic transmission of test materials may help with this. It is critical that students needing these services are supported by faculty and by administration. 🙏

What is CWMG?

What does it mean to me?

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward

The **College Workload Monitoring Group (CWMG)** is a committee mandated by our Collective Agreement. Its purpose is to review general workload issues at the college, as well as to hear and resolve disputes from faculty members related to workload. The CWMG is made up of four members appointed by the college and four members appointed by the union Local.

The CWMG meets monthly to address errors/concerns that are found when reviewing the SWF such as:

- partial teaching hours
- late/inaccurate SWFs
- increased use of IP evaluation factors across programs
- probationary overtime
- assigned complementary hours – i.e. what is listed on the back of the SWF
- incorrect preparation factors
- field supervision hours – where do they fit?

The CWMG also meets to deal with SWF referrals – that is when an individual faculty member is not in agreement with their SWF, and the issue cannot be resolved with the Associate Dean. Some examples of referrals include:

- need for additional preparation time (or a different preparation factor) for a course due to significant course changes, new software applications, compressed course delivery, etc
- disagreement regarding the type of evaluation factor used in the course
- request for additional evaluation time for a writing intensive course.

If the local CWMG cannot resolve an issue, the matter can be referred to a Workload Arbitrator.

Both the CWMG referral and the Workload Arbitrator referral are designed to get matters resolved quickly, within weeks, rather than the much longer grievance process which is used for non-workload related issues.

A recent CWMG case:

Does a change from 15 weeks to 3 weeks justify a “New” Prep Factor?

Recently the CWMG heard a referral from a faculty member who was SWF’d to teach a course which had gone from a 15 week format to a three week format. This change in format required some changes to core outcomes, changes in the course assignments – both in percentage of the grade and in the requirements of the assignments, and changes in delivery format - fewer case studies, altered assigned readings.

The faculty member asked that the prep factor be changed from “Established B” to “New” based on the many changes to the course.

After much discussion the CWMG agreed that the change from a 15 week to a three week course required significantly more work in terms of preparation than a typical repeat course, but was not a “New” prep. As this was an “atypical circumstance” affecting the faculty member’s workload, the CWMG agreed to add four hours/week to the SWF under the column “Add’t Hours” for preparation.

If you have a SWF concern or possible issue, please contact Audrey Taves, Chief Steward, ext 4608. Audrey will listen to your concern **in confidence** and advise on the best way to resolve the issue. Often, a clearer understanding of the workload section of the Collective Agreement will give you the tools you need to resolve the issue with your Associate Dean. If not, the SWF can be referred to the CWMG and Audrey will help you with that process. 🏠

Do we have academic freedom?

by Robert Mills, Secretary, OPSEU Local 562

When the college hires new academic employees, much emphasis is placed on their academic qualifications – minimally MA and preferably PhD. We are told that this is to enable the college to offer more university programs. Many think that the hidden agenda is for the college to morph into a university at some point and that the academic credentials on staff will help that change.

If the college likes to see itself as a quasi-university, why doesn't it treat us, the faculty, in a university-like manner? We have some control over courses but only in group decision-making. However, evaluation is often done at the whim of the manager – essays reduced to multiple choice tests, and more and more in-class evaluation. Sometimes, student marks are changed by managers without telling the faculty member concerned. An even more egregious example of lack of academic freedom is the college behaviour when faculty apply for professional development (PD) leave, also known as sabbatical. The Collective Agreement clearly states the purpose of PD.

Article 20

Professional Development Leave

20.01 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.

It seems that professional development is for the faculty member to improve him or herself. It's difficult to interpret it in any other way. It mentions neither college nor student benefits as a result of the leave though the college and students benefit from the enhanced abilities of the returning faculty member.

However, the college is trampling over the reasons for PD leave and is trying to control what is done during a PD leave and how it is to be used after. More and more, we see instances of college managers trying to define the leave for the faculty member. Sabbatical applicants are often asked to produce a course outline, create modules, research new text books, develop a new course or program and so on. This is nonsense. All work that produces materials, courses and programs is work that should be assigned on the SWF. Why take a PD leave at 55-80% salary to do the same work that should be assigned during the academic year, and what simple-minded decision-maker would even consider requiring that from an applicant?

The college's meddling in courses and their evaluations, along with its total disregard for the rights of the faculty during PD leave, are just two of the many examples why we don't have and can't expect academic freedom at this college with its present management. With this attitude, Humber will always be a university-wanna-be.

Note: If you have any information on what the college is pressuring applicants to do during sabbatical or of any planned changes in the sabbatical application process, please contact us at the union office in H109 or at extension 4007.

Ford agenda is pushed back

by Pam Johnson, Professor, School of Creative & Performing Arts

The first significant salvo in the austerity wars in Canada, Ford's cuts budget, received a big push-back on January 17 when a coalition of progressive and moderate Toronto councillors voted against \$20 million in cuts in a 23-21 vote.

This moment was preceded by a year of organizing that included mass protests on April 9 and September 26, a fantastic campaign by library workers, round-the-clock deputation sessions at City Hall and mass meetings across downtown and in Scarborough.

Remarks by Councillor Gloria Lindsay-Luby, a sometime Ford supporter who voted with the coalition, spoke directly to the impact of this sustained pressure. She said that for every four constituents who supported the cuts, six did not. It was this that moved her to vote against the cuts.

This has not been accidental. The election of Ford and his cuts agenda sparked new alliances, revived old tactics and launched grassroots organizations. Respect, an alliance of community and labour groups, joined forces to put on several mass protests; city workers in CUPE 416 began a door-to-door campaign; the

library workers' union began a very effective petition campaign immediately following the KPMG cuts recommendations. Occupy Toronto marched to City Hall against Ford cuts. Stop the Cuts coalition of neighborhood groups held meetings across the city and co-sponsored the demonstration with Respect on Tuesday.

We also know that the impact of the Arab Spring, the struggle in Wisconsin, and the Occupy movement have galvanized people into action. It has also allowed people to see the connections between struggles, and the relationship to economic crisis and the neo-liberal agenda expressed in the 99 vs 1 per cent.

Thousands of Torontonians who signed petitions, emailed their councillor or came out to a demonstration can feel some ownership of this victory – but it is a partial victory. The momentum this provides urgently needs to be carried forward. City workers are still in a showdown with Ford over layoffs. Pressure needs to be kept on city councillors to show that job cuts mean service cuts. 🏠



Guilty???

Nurse charged in baby deaths at Sick Kids

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward

That was the news I woke up to as my alarm went off early one morning in April, 1981. The news report went on to explain that police had investigated and had charged this nurse with the first degree murder of four infants, with more charges pending.

I clearly remember thinking that if the police had already charged her, then they **must** have had ample evidence and that she must be guilty. I was a young nurse at Sick Kids at the time –young and very naïve. How could I have come to this conclusion without any real knowledge of the facts? What happened to the presumption of innocence? Why didn't I wonder if the charges against a fellow-nurse **might** be wrong? As it turned out, all charges against that nurse were later dropped.

Have you ever made a similar assumption of guilt? Have you ever heard a report on the news and jumped to a quick conclusion without all of the facts? Or, perhaps, heard about a

colleague being abruptly terminated and assumed that he or she must have done something terrible to justify such an action? Maybe, just maybe, we all need to recognize that there are times when we aren't privy to the facts and that there are **always** two sides to every story. It may also be wise to remember that institutions have been known to make incorrect decisions at times or to make decisions based on very limited grounds. Perhaps, we simply need to support one another and suspend judgement?

Finally, institutional decisions – justified or not - may not always be carried out in a humane fashion. For example, in the Sick Kids situation, that nurse was very publicly arrested and her photo splashed across the papers. It is **our** responsibility to take our institutions to task when we witness an inhumane process in the public domain or in our workplaces. 🚩

Degree Courses

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward

Are all courses created equal?

Are some more time-consuming for the professor than others?

Humber courses and programs are varied and ever changing. We are seeing more apprenticeship programs at the same time as we see a growth in degree programs. Is one more valuable than the other? No, but are they different? Of course! Why then are they treated the same way on the SWF?

The formulas on the SWF were created more than 25 years ago. Do they still work equally well for the mix of courses we teach today? Are they sufficient for **any** of the courses we teach today?

A number of faculty who teach in degree courses are finding that the amount of time needed to adequately prepare for a class greatly

exceeds the time allotted by the SWF formulas. In addition, given the in-depth research and writing required of a student paper for many of these courses, the time allotted for grading them doesn't come close to the time actually spent reading and marking them.

So... what do you do? Come to class ill-prepared? Assign simplistic papers or all-group work to make the marking quicker? Is that what a Humber credit (degree or otherwise) is worthy of? Is this what Humber faculty do when they feel the time constraints of their SWFs? Not, bloody likely! Instead, they spend more and more time on the weekends and evenings, prepping lectures and marking essays. But, how long before they burn out at that rate? 🚩

The blood diamonds of Ontario

by John Steckley, Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences

You may have read or seen on television the sad tale of Attawapiskat, a Swampy Cree community on the west coast of James Bay, in the extreme north of Ontario. Too many people, in inadequate homes, living and working conditions, such that the chief suggested that the whole community should move. The stories told are what you have heard before, especially the blame game played by the usual suspects, the provincial and federal governments fighting over who is responsible or not responsible for the horrifying conditions in which the people find themselves. They are both irresponsible in this, more by implication and by innuendo than by direct accusation. Conservative media play 'blame the victim' (thanks William Ryan for that term) for the overcrowded housing and lack of decent means of making a living. 'Why don't they just'... sentences spring to their metaphorical lips.

You don't read or get to learn about a major cause of this situation, diamonds, particularly as mined, processed, and underpaid for, by a big diamond company. I would like to tell you what I know of this story. I learned something about Attawapiskat by editing *Only God Can Own the Land*, a book that speaks about how extensively and positively the Attawapiskat Cree used their land - for food, clothing and building supplies, before the diamonds were found. There is a copy in the Humber library (and I have copies that I can give to those interested). The author of the book is, Dr. Bryan D. Cummins, a colleague and a graduate of and former instructor at Humber College. He completed fieldwork in the community from January to May, 1990 for his Phd

dissertation at McMaster University where he now teaches. The book is an uplifting account of the success of a community despite the exploitative effects of outside commercial enterprises and negligent governments.

What happened since then to change things. De Beers set up Ontario's first diamond mine. The usual social-environment assessment was done, but whatever good advice it offered was ignored or instituted in insignificant ways. Then came a sudden influx of outsiders who acquired big money in their short stay in Cree country. They provided short-term jobs for the locals, enough to give a taste or the smell of what could be, and then came the fast flow of cocaine that often accompanies big money resource extraction.

I remember seeing a show on CBC, a few years ago in which an entrepreneur in Sudbury was trying to develop a company in which new immigrants would be taught how to polish and otherwise detail diamonds and other gems. I wondered at the time why that work didn't immediately go to the people of Attawapiskat. The land that bears the diamonds, also bears thousands of years of their history, their sacred places and their ancestors.

The title of this piece contains the words 'blood diamonds', a reference to the movie about the practices in Africa of tribal Africans being ruthlessly exploited by the white owners, shareholders and well-paid employees of diamond companies. These stories seem very alike to me. 🙏

Up at the Board

by Franca Giacomelli,
Board of Governors Faculty Representative

Happy 2012! The Board has met twice since the last Newsbreak. In addition to the items detailed below, highlights from the meetings include: opening of Lakeshore L building, recognition for being a top employer in Greater Toronto and a top employer for young people in Canada, and appreciation of recent retirees.

Varsity Student-Athlete Panel

The six student panel spoke about the pride and respect that they feel representing Humber. They shared their passion for their sports; they spoke highly of their faculty and shared thoughts on how faculty can support athletes to help them achieve success both as students and athletes.

Two New Degrees Approved

Two Bachelor of Fine Arts Degrees (Visual Arts and Animation Arts) were approved. The first of the three Fine Arts Degrees was approved at the April meeting. These are four-year programs that provide the students with the knowledge and skills required for their development as visual artists (Visual Arts) or in-depth work as animation professionals (Animation Arts). The President indicated that we currently do not have space for the three degree programs; however, approval was requested subject to reaffirmation at the Board when we have a better sense of the infrastructure to house these degrees.

Consent Renewal – Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies)

The program has been in place since September 2003. It is the only degree-level program of its kind in Ontario and the first to



be offered in Canada. There are currently 232 full-time students in the program, 90 percent of our graduates apply for a paralegal license and many go on to law school.

International Tuition Fees (2013-14)

Increases are as follows: diploma programs 1.2 per cent, post grad programs 5 per cent, English for academic purposes 1.6 per cent. The organizations that funnel international students to Humber agree that these recommendations are acceptable.

Child Care Fee Increase

An increase of about 17 per cent was approved effective April 1, 2012. It is the result of the loss of older children to full-day kindergarten. The increase will affect about 16 out of the current 122 families; those receiving subsidies are not affected.

Revision to 2011/12 Business Plan – Eight Month Forecast Report

Based on the six-month forecast presented to the Board in October 2011, and further refinement of estimates, the forecast for 2011/12 represents a surplus of \$14.1 million.

I would be happy to discuss the details of any of the Board meetings. 🗣️

General Membership Meeting

Demand Setting

Wednesday February 15, 3:30 P.M.

Seventh Semester

Please mark this date on your calendar as this will be your chance to help write the Final Demands Document for Humber College.

This document will then be submitted for discussion at the Final Demand setting meeting of all 24 Colleges on March 31.

J.P. Hornick, who is a member of our Bargaining Team, will be present to help lead the discussion. She is a Professor at George Brown College where she is the Co-ordinator of the Labour Studies program. She will also be available to answer any questions on the bargaining process.

Paycheck to paycheck, making ends meet!

by Audrey Taves, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward

Have you ever found yourself living paycheck to paycheck?

Many faculty who are full-time likely live like this, but what if you are a contract faculty at Humber? First, you are only paid for the hours you are in the classroom. Second, your contract only covers the weeks you are actually in the classroom, so the pay check is never enough anyway. But add to these concerns the fact that contract staff are paid two weeks in arrears: the bank account of a contract faculty must get very low indeed during that first

month of work each term.

Now add a final complication – the contract is not signed until the first or second week of the semester – so that very first pay will now be delayed even more. How do they manage at all?

I've heard that other colleges manage to pay their contract staff much more quickly.

Humber – are you listening? 🗣️