

# COLLOQUIUM

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Newsletter of the Academic Union, Local 352  
Editors: Liz Mathewson & George Fogarasi

# QUALITY EDUCATION

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June's convocation ceremonies highlighted faculty's passion for teaching and learning. How can the college best support this dedication and professional knowledge? Whether you've been here for a year or for thirty, you've seen changes. What works, what doesn't? **In short, what does quality education mean to you?** This conversation, one we take part in every day, is the focus of our current bargaining.

## Bargaining

Our collective agreement runs out at the end of September. The bargaining team first meets with management on July 4th to negotiate the demands that members came up with and voted for.

Faculty demands focus on providing quality education. We are asking for a fair review of evaluation and preparation factors in the SWF formula and, to ensure that students are taught by a balance of full-time and contract faculty: this is not to balance the budget but to ensure that the best person is at the front of the classroom and also supporting students outside of the classroom.

As one of our professors recently stated, "we can lose a student in the classroom but we save them in our offices".

Support to students is improved when colleges hire full time faculty. Contract faculty are paid for their teaching contact hours and any out of class assistance is done on a voluntary basis. We all know that contract faculty are willing to help students succeed but it is often difficult when contract faculty have to leave the college to go to a second or third job.

The local encourages everyone to monitor the [Fleming Faculty Union website](#) for updates over the summer. Our local Facebook page will also provide updates as they are released by the bargaining team.



Our bargaining team, left to right: Nicole Zwiers (L354/Durham), Mona Chevalier (L470/La Cite), Ed Toivonen (Alternate, L655/Cambrian), our own JP Hornick, Shawn Pentecost (L415/Algonquin), Ravi Ramkissoonsingh (L242/Niagara), Kevin MacKay (L240/Mohawk), and Darryl Beford (L110/Fanshawe).

## Stats, a Saudi Boondoggle and Bargaining (!)

The college bargaining team's update filled our in-boxes with sleek bar graphs backing up their perspective: no money. We can, of course, suggest other statistics. Here are two. There are roughly 1,000 fewer full-time faculty to teach 100,000 more students than in 1989. The number of college administrators has increased by more than 77 per cent since 2002-03.

I could fill a page, but this can collapse into a numbing, cynical exercise. Stats risk becoming biased abstractions. *Who-ya-gonna' trust?* Trust yourself. What do you see at work: is there enough funding?

If Ontario is not funding colleges adequately, do we capitulate to that? And how do we distribute those resources? Consider the recent financial disaster at Algonquin. They opened a men-only college in Saudi Arabia, expecting to make almost 20 million dollars over a five year contract.

They did not expect to be called out for discriminating against women and supporting a regime that perpetrates human rights abuses. They did not expect low admission standards to backfire.

They opened their doors to students with poor language skills and did not support their needs (sound familiar?). Algonquin, notes CBC news, said the losses were "in part because many students at the Saudi school didn't have sufficient English-language skills to study at the college level, leading to many students failing or dropping out." The college lost over 6 million dollars, in part due to the cost of leaving the deal.

The VP of innovation and strategy noted "we've learned how to improve our risk management."

The VP of the faculty union asked if colleges should "bear the risks of these foreign ventures simply because our own provincial government has failed to properly fund the colleges. I can't imagine asking school boards and hospitals to go into overseas venture to fund operating rooms or special education classes in primary schools."



*Why do we have free health care?* People fought for this. We refused to accept the argument that there was "No money." We got together and made it happen.

If you find the stats from the college bargaining team sobering, take heart. Collective bargaining is a powerful lever that shifts government policy. **Say No to "No money."**

**There is much more at stake with bargaining than a barrage of stats, a raise or even the threat of a strike. *Public education is on the line*, and I am proud to embrace this opportunity to make a stand for quality education.**

## **Something New in Bargaining This Year: The Bargaining Advisory Council**

For the 2017 round of bargaining, one member from each local, plus eight partial load members have been appointed to a Bargaining Advisory Committee.

The Bargaining Advisory Committee's role will be to provide confidential advice and insight to the elected bargaining team as needed and requested by the team.

Our bargaining team is required to consult with the Bargaining Advisory Committee. The Bargaining Advisory Committee will confidentially review the suggested language line by line, and the local presidents will also be consulted, before the bargaining team agrees to any final language.

The principles on which this process rests is that voting for or against a settlement rests with the full membership, but that the consultations with the BAC are intended to gather the widest scope of representation on the issues on the bargaining table, and represent the widest support for these issues.

The bargaining and mobilizing strategies and tactics ultimately rests with the team. The BAC and mandatory consultation simply provide a clearer sense of the level of support for the team, and additional energy for mobilizing.

Why do we need a Bargaining Advisory Committee?

- the collective knowledge of our division is deeper and more nuanced than that of a small group
- good communication is recognized as a crucial aspect of successful bargaining
- each region and local has specific knowledge / concerns about the Collective Agreement
- previous bargaining rounds have benefited consulting larger groups of members, such as local presidents
- the employer seeks advice during bargaining from larger groups such as the President's Council and Colleges Ontario
- an expanded advisory body would bring depth and knowledge to the elected bargaining team and would challenge employer assumptions around the bargaining process
- the use of expanded teams and committees has been used successfully in bargaining in other sectors

At Fleming, Audrey Healy, chief steward for Local 352, is our representative on the Bargaining Advisory Committee.

If you have any questions or suggestions for the Bargaining Team or the Bargaining Advisory Committee, please email Audrey at [audreydh123@gmail.com](mailto:audreydh123@gmail.com)

## **Our Demands: What You Empowered Our Team to Bargain For**

### **For All Faculty**

- Establish academic freedom and collegial governance
- Improve the salary grids and wages to better our position in relation to our comparator groups and to account for inflation
- Improve job security, complement, and layoff language
- Improve workload factors to provide adequate time for academic work
- Prevent the contracting out, privatization, or outsourcing of faculty work
- Improve workload language to ensure all faculty work is recorded on the SWF
- Strengthen intellectual property rights
- Improve benefit coverage for all faculty
- Improve language for replacement and consideration
- Strengthen language to improve union representation of members working inside and outside the Province of Ontario

### **For Partial-Load Members**

- Gain parity for partial-load faculty
- Improve partial-load job security
- Record and compensate total partial-load workload

### **For Librarians and Counsellors**

- Create a workload formula for counsellors and librarians
- Create workload and caseload limits for counsellors
- Establish ratios of librarians and counsellors to number of students



## Have You Filled a Bucket Today?

Nancy Rishor

Lately I've been thinking about buckets: full buckets, empty buckets, half-full buckets. We all have buckets; you just can't see them.

What are these invisible buckets I'm talking about?

The concept of bucket filling, based on the widely popular children's book, is a simple yet powerful metaphor. Every day, successful bucket fillers send praise, recognition, and kindness to others.

In other words, treat others as you wish to be treated. Give and receive love. Sounds schmaltzy right? Wrong.

It turns out that what kindergarten readers are learning translates into sound business and ethical practices. That's the genius behind the Bucket "Fillosofhy:" what we say and do each day can profoundly impact our relationships, productivity, and mindset. Small strides make big differences.

How does the bucket analogy apply to Fleming?

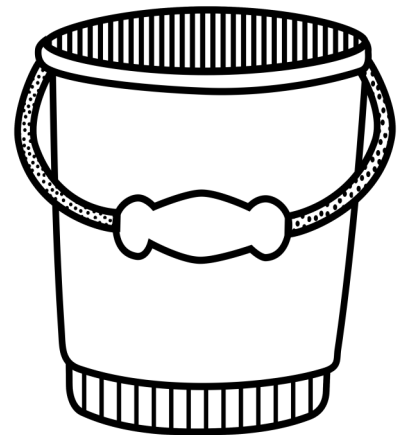
Imagine what our workplace would look like if we considered how we're filling our colleagues', managers' and students' buckets each and every day?

How would our level of engagement shift? What if we listened more and reacted less?

As I write this article, there are workshops across the country teaching senior executives how to fill buckets of leadership competency and organizational excellence. But we don't have to travel far to find real-life bucket fillers. Just yesterday, management approved my request to invite a faculty member into my 2-person office during the 18-month renovation.

That's 4 buckets full in a span of 2 hours.

**How will you fill your bucket today?**



## Broke on Purpose: Decoding Messages from Management

Darryl Bedford, Local 110 (Fanshawe College)

As bargaining approaches, you'll likely see e-mails from your management about the budget process. The timing of these messages is not coincidental. Broken down to their core, the gist of these messages is that your college is "broke." However, there's more to it than that.

It is true that the funding from the province is not sufficient. And on that point, faculty and management should agree. We invite you to read OPSEU's funding formula consultation submission, [Balancing the Books: Access, Pathways, and Co-Governance as Keys to a New College Funding Formula](#).

**But when it comes to being "broke," the colleges are actually "broke on purpose."**

The operating budget cupboard is being laid bare by decisions made by the college administrators themselves. How? Look around the province and you'll see evidence of large amounts money spent on:

**1. Lots of shiny new buildings.** Much of this construction was made possible by colleges transferring funds from their operating budgets to capital projects. This is permitted by the ministry, but ends up starving operating budgets that are already overburdened. The cuts to operations in favor of capital are why you see new buildings open but with few new hires, or no new hires, or worse yet, cuts to faculty.

**2. More full-time administrators.** The College Employer Council (CEC) reports that the number of full-time administrators has increased from 1,595 in 2002-03 to 2,825 in 2015-16, an increase of 77 per cent overall, with the number doubling in some colleges. Of course that doesn't include the consultants and retired managers that are regularly hired.

**3. Salary increases for administrators.** We're sure you've noticed the fairly significant management salary increases in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act ("Sunshine List") data over the years. This doesn't tell the full story either; the CEC itself and some other college-related entities believe (erroneously) that they are exempt from the law and do not report their salaries.

**4. Extra benefits for administrators.** Managers earning more than the Income Tax Act (ITA) limit, currently \$160,970, have an additional retirement package known as a Retirement Compensation Agreement (RCA) in addition to the CAAT Pension Plan. Unlike the CAAT plan, where all risks and costs are shared, the RCA is not designed to be fully funded and any RCA shortfalls are the responsibility of the employers. As of today, the employers contribute 44.4 per cent of salary above the ITA limit to the RCA. (For example, when a college president earns \$300,000/year, the college contributes \$61,729/year to the RCA during their active employment – not to mention what the college may need to pay during the retirement period). *Continued on next page*

## **Continued: Broke on Purpose: Decoding Messages from Management**

Darryl Bedford, Local 110 (Fanshawe College)

You won't hear any of those four explanations in management's spin. During the run-up to bargaining, and throughout bargaining in 2017, watch out for the following messages. We've heard them before and you're sure to hear them again at your college:

**"We'll look to everyone to be innovative."**

When you hear this, management is looking for you to tell them what to cut. This is a convenient cover should anyone criticize the cuts; they can simply say that their faculty agree with the changes. As faculty we must consistently promote initiatives that improve quality education for our students.

**"We need to modernize our benefit offerings."**

This language has already seeped out from the CEC to Boards of Governors at the colleges. As you likely can guess, the word "modern" is code for "less." Based on what the CEC put forward in 2014 bargaining, you can expect a "use it or lose it" sick day system to be proposed.

**"We must be more flexible."**

You'll hear this as an excuse for hiring such large numbers of precariously employed faculty, consisting of approximately 70 per cent of the system. Is such "flexibility" really needed? The Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) projections are fairly sound. Colleges often know well in advance from OCAS what their enrollment is going to be; they know how many sections they can afford to offer in the coming intake.

**"We're pleased to offer improvements to our faculty."**

In the past we've seen **modest wage increases tied to offer packages that include hidden traps**. Watch out for management proposals that are simply too good to be true. Consider the unlimited overtime proposal from 2014. Although that might seem like a great opportunity for some full-time faculty to make a bit of extra money, it will take work away from partial-load faculty and other full-time faculty, possibly resulting in layoffs. Not to mention the faculty who could be pressured into consenting to the additional overtime, sacrificing their home life.

**Perhaps the best strategy when reading management missives is to apply the very same critical thinking skills we teach our students! What are they really saying? What have they left out? What are they really trying to achieve?**

We can't control what management writes, but college faculty can stand up for what is right. We can stand up for quality education, academic freedom, collegial governance, and fairness for contract faculty. Those are the messages you'll be hearing from your faculty bargaining team in the months ahead.



## OPSEU Local 352 Awards: Students Showcase Union Values

Karen Bateman

What a wonderful celebration of our award recipients! Every year I attend the awards ceremony I am re-energized listening to the students' achievements through academics, volunteerism and enthusiasm throughout their journey at Fleming College. It is especially touching listening to the memorial awards and how the students recognize the significance of each one.

It is a touching tribute not only for the recipients but also for the faculty who remember. I heard a true testament to the hard work faculty put in working with students. The "Aha!" moments, the crying in the offices. Many students commented they didn't feel like they belonged anywhere until they came to Fleming College.



I couldn't help but think, as a mother, that I would have taken great comfort in knowing that my child was in a place that was safe, warm and inviting. I am so privileged to be a part of this community. This morning as I get ready for convocation, I can't help but smile and burst with pride!

**The OPSEU Local 352 Faculty Union Award is presented to a student or group that demonstrates exemplary involvement in social justice, advocacy or diversity initiatives reflecting union values. Our winners this year:**

**Adam Veleke** demonstrated a commitment to not only academic success but to improving the lives of those around him. Adam was very active in volunteering and working with youth and the elderly in sport, leisure and academic endeavors.

**Rebecca Seabrook** is committed and invested in advancing the field Child Youth Care through continuous learning and community initiatives

**Jennifer Bernard** is a passionate advocate for high standards of relational care for children, youth and families.

**Rachel Warren** bravely plunged into the frigid Trent River to raise over \$500 in the Campbellford Memorial Hospital Polar Bear Plunge. The money purchases medical equipment for the hospital.

**Nicole Soanes** has a keen interest in social justice. She advocates for and supports individuals who may become involved in the criminal justice world. Due to her great work and solid values, she is now the Restorative Justice Coordinator at the John Howard Society.

**Teresa Macdonald** has been active in unions for decades. She is passionate supporter of workers' rights, and her fierce advocacy is grounded by an open heart and mind.

**Carly Shewen** is a multi-dimensional health care provider. Her volunteer work with the Fire Department foregrounds mental health challenges.

## Academic Freedom is Not an Abstraction

*Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose*, sang Janis Joplin. Catchy, but what's it mean? People die for "freedom." Herbert Marcuse tried to demystify the word by noting that we have freedom, the freedom to choose between fifty types of toilet paper.

Step sideways to academic freedom: why should you care? Whether you care about quality education, workload issues or who (faculty or management) decides what happens in classrooms, academic freedom is at the heart of our work. We ignore it at our peril.



**Academic freedom = academic decisions lie with faculty.** This should be a no-brainer, but we do not have academic freedom. Faculty hired for their educational expertise—not managers, bureaucrats or corporations—should determine what happens in a classroom. Faculty do not have final say over curriculum design, evaluation, e-learning, course materials and support from technicians.

Without academic freedom, instead of dynamic, personalized courses, management can create courses that can be sold. RM Kennedy notes that "When courses are 'locked down,' they become stagnant and the teaching faculty are reduced to technicians whose creative power to engage students is stripped away. Education is a living, dynamic relationship between the student, the curriculum and the professor. This requires faculty who can utilize their own creative expertise and autonomy, not online data entry operators tied to an archived script."

Academic freedom includes intellectual property rights. Without these, Kennedy states, "Our materials—the fruits of years of research and development—can be seized and outsourced to third parties in ways that undercut the very existence of our own jobs. A number of Ontario colleges have agreements with for-profit, private colleges to deliver the public college's curriculum [!]. Individual professor's materials, including online video lectures, are licenced without faculty consent to the private college, which operates in direct competition with the public system."

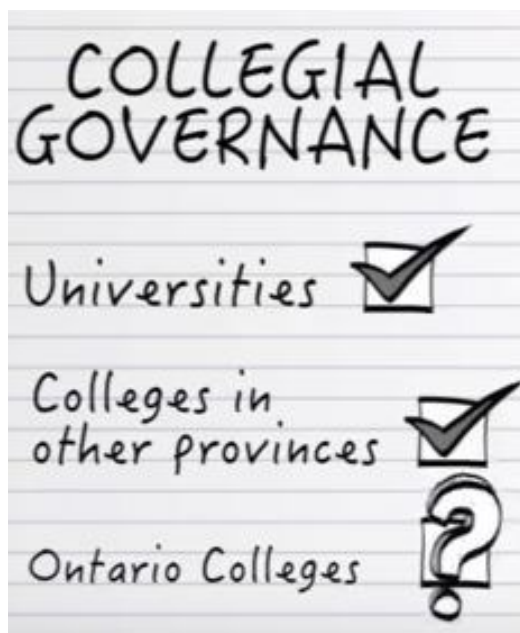
When education is a commodity, the irreducibly social and personal nature of learning is ignored. Packaged online material is easily transferred to underpaid contract faculty "easily slotted into an existing shell."

Perhaps most obscene is the "wholesale replacement of actual faculty teaching hours with 'self-directed' online modules. In these cases, faculty or publisher materials are pre-packaged and offered to students without the guidance and support of an actual instructor." Students pay good money to learn from professors only to be told, in effect, read-this-and-figure-it-out. If that worked, they could save their tuition and read their iPhones at home.

[Academic freedom is good for your health](#): workers with more decision making power live longer. Academic freedom is not an abstraction. Remember this as we negotiate. If we underestimate the importance of academic freedom and see it as a tertiary issue, we may give away our work, sell students short, and dig our own professional graves.

## Collegial Governance

OPSEU has created a fantastic [video about Collegial Governance](#) and why it matters (the transcript follows below).



Ontario's college system turns 50 this year. It's a perfect time to look at what is working well and what could use a little tune-up. One area that needs a little work is how academic decisions are made.

Right now the decisions that impact quality education or academic standards are made by administrators who are focused on balanced budgets, not on how to best educate students.

Faculty are proposing a different model called Collegial Governance. In it, everyone focuses on the areas they know best so that students get the best that colleges offer.

It is not about reinventing the wheel; Collegial Governance is already a reality in Ontario universities and colleges in other provinces. Why shouldn't our students expect just as much?

With Collegial Governance, colleges would have a balanced model including a Board of Governors where administrators would decide on financial matters, and an equivalent body where faculty make academic decisions. Canadian universities and many colleges have this in the form of an academic senate where faculty make decisions about how courses are taught and other academic matters.

This lets everyone focus on their strengths; administrators trained in the business side can make sure colleges are making the best use of the funding they have. Faculty trained in how to teach can use that expertise to support student learning.

What is wrong with the way things work right now? First of all, students trying to get into jobs or advance programs suffer when their degree or program isn't valued the same as those from institutions that have Collegial Governance. Also, the college's reputation risks damage when administrators make decisions without understanding the academic consequences.

The public can also be put at risk. Just think, do you want a paramedic or an administrator deciding whether a student is ready to graduate as a paramedic. What about an airline pilot?

As Ontario's colleges turn 50 we have a choice to make. Do we follow the path we are on and allow administrators focused on budgets make decisions about students education or will we take a different path, one that lets everyone focus on what they know best so our students have the best shot at success?

## What's Fair Benefits Everyone: Lessons from the 15\$ Minimum Wage

It is intriguing that the default response to the new minimum wage was a lot of concern for business owners. This posits a simplistic zero-sum outcome: what's good for workers is bad for bosses. If we look at places that have raised the minimum wage, we see this is not the case at all.

Fries might cost more, but somebody making minimum wage will have thousands of more dollars of disposable income. That's a lot of fries. The 1% send their money offshore. There are only so many cars and yachts they can own. Those making minimum wage spend their money locally. A higher minimum wage circulates money, boosting the economy for everyone.

Just as it is penny wise and pound foolish to panic about the minimum wage, the financial "benefit" of hiring contract faculty is an illusion. Colleges save a few bucks, but what do we lose? What could we gain if colleges gave talented faculty full-time contracts? Consider this testimony from a part-time faculty member:



"Full-time faculty provide important stability, and improve the quality of the student experience. Contract faculty are committed to their jobs, and often go far beyond what they're compensated for to support their students. But the precarious conditions of contract work mean that colleges are exploiting these workers, and their concern for their students, in a way that's simply not sustainable.

As a contract faculty, I don't have the opportunity for enough one-on-one feedback time or office hours with my students. I also cannot lend my experience and expertise to curriculum and program development because my contract status means that I am generally not included in meetings where these issues are discussed. I have the same qualifications and responsibilities as my full-time counter-

parts but I feel isolated and marginalized because of my contract status.

I never know if I will be rehired and whether I can get all of my courses scheduled so that I can get from school to school. This creates a huge amount of stress for me and my family. Job security, and for me a full time job in one school, would allow me to feel stable and put my full energy into teaching" (Contract faculty member).

A little bit of investment (like raising the minimum wage) would leverage a huge benefit. Colleges, students, employers and the community would gain so much if Ontario committed to sustainable, quality education.

## Targets: Strategic Mandate Agreement (Draft 2)

The [second draft of the Strategic Mandate Agreement](#) is out and is fascinating reading. The deadline for comments is June 23rd (send them to [sherry.gosselin@flamingcollege.ca](mailto:sherry.gosselin@flamingcollege.ca)).

Dig in, look at what you care about, and see where we will be going.

For example, the document suggests “specialized programs for international students” with an example about accommodation. Does this mean specialized *academic* programs, investing some of the financial windfall they bring into programs supporting the specific learning needs of students who don’t speak English as a first language?

The “Overall International Student Satisfaction Rate” target for 2020-2021 is 69.25%. What does this mean?



The “Overall Indigenous Student Satisfaction Rate” target for the same time period is 81%.

Why the different rates? How does that change the college’s focus?

The “Overall Female Satisfaction Rate” target for the same time is 81.25%— a bit higher than Indigenous students and way higher than international students.

The “Overall Male Satisfaction Rate” target is 76.75%.

These differences are confusing, albeit really interesting.

I wouldn’t want to project a single, homogenous universal human subject. That usually ends up being Fred Flinstone or an old white guy on the Sunshine List.

I applaud the college’s parsing of different subjectivities. Still, these varied targets are confusing.

If 30% of international students aren’t that satisfied, we have met the target, but we can only leave 23% of men and just over 18% of women with a similar state of dissatisfaction?

I await guidance from management about how to design, teach and evaluate courses based on these targets.

*What do you see in the document?* Please take a look at the draft and use your expertise to provide feedback.