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# Standing up for Quality Education

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 10

FLEMING FACULTY UNION

OCTOBER 30, 2017

## A Rainbow of Support

Sign up for Remind phone updates at [bit.ly/remind352](https://bit.ly/remind352)

Class name is Local352

Follow our website — click the “follow us” link on the website and receive regular updates to your e-mail

[flemingfacultyunion.org](http://flemingfacultyunion.org)

New Facebook Page

[FlemingFacultyUnionStrikePage](#)

Follow us on twitter

[@flemingfaculty](#)



Week three, and we are strong. Some would say, stronger.

Our hamstrings, hearts and wallets feel these weeks. As do students missing classes, counselors, worrying about their programs, daycare, their future. This is not easy. But the pressure is mounting on Queen’s Park to act, and as we see in social (and traditional) media and on the picket line, momentum is on our side.

Jenn (on the right) knows precarity: she is head of the supply teachers’ local. Her Brothers and Sister from elementary and secondary panel unions joined our picket line.

The employer, at every state, has underestimated our resolve. Stay strong, and know this: we are strong.

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### Riddle:

What gets wetter and wetter the more that it dries?



## FLEMING STUDENT FOODBANK

October 31, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm

### Be a Superhero!!

Please drop off non-perishable food items  
or grocery gift cards  
at any Fleming College entrance  
Peterborough or Lindsay campuses

**“Unions increase the life satisfaction of citizens, and this effect holds for non-union members as well”** (Flavin, Pacek and Radcliff, 2009)

Look at the United Nation’s second annual “World Happiness Index” (2013). The happiest countries always have strong social welfare programs, fair taxation levels and a high level of unionization. Although in week 3 of a strike, it’s hard to put the words “happy” and “collective bargaining” in the same sentence, collective bargaining has a strong role in creating a strong middle class in the happiest countries. The top five countries (with unionization percentage in brackets) are Denmark (80% unionized), Norway (70%), Switzerland (51%), Netherlands (81%) and Sweden (88%). The top two have the least economic inequality in the West-ern world.

This is consistent with research that establishes a positive correlation between unions and personal satisfaction. As David Doorey notes, “Empirically, we know that collective bargaining raises incomes, contributes to a stronger middle class, results in better health benefits and pensions, and produces safer jobs and better job security... critics of strong government and unions like to deride these systems as ‘socialist.’ But whatever you want to call it, these systems consistently produce the happiest citizens in the world.”



City councillor and former General Electric local president Keith Riel reminds us that we are at the forefront of a larger struggle. “

Peterborough has the highest unemployment rate in Canada, yet “managers want you to be part time-workers so they can control you. They want you to apply every few months for work. How can you make a decision for your family? It blows me away. The highest unemployment in Ontario!”

He observes that the struggle is larger than any one strike: “Management is doing you a favour. You will have a stronger union.” Management has no idea what it is doing.”

**BRAVO !**

*Gosh, we can’t open email without opening D2L...*

You stood strong, and your outrage at the opening of our Fleming email was heard. It is now closed again. A tip of the striking hat to management for responding and valuing our long term labour relations.

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**Student Solidarity:** An open letter by a Seneca student originally published on collegeprof.ca (reprinted with permission)

I am a student at Seneca College, working towards an accelerated diploma in [my program]. I am writing in support of my professors and all Ontario college faculty.

As a student, it is very important to me that the College Employer's Council works with OPSEU to negotiate a fair contract for the faculty who work so hard to teach me. My education is important, but so are good jobs in Ontario colleges. Fair pay and stability for my professors are things that enhance my experience as a student. Poor working conditions, low wages, and precarious work all have a direct negative effect on my educational experience.

Not all of my professors have equal financial and job stability. Faculty with full-time jobs, job security and a dependable income can develop better curriculums and deliver quality classes to their students. They have the energy and time to be available to their students outside of class. There is nothing more frustrating than seeking out time with a professor only to realize that they are on campus just a few hours a week. Sadly, this is a reality for faculty who must work at multiple institutions to make ends meet.



I came to Seneca to better myself and get an education that will allow me to prosper and contribute to Ontario's economy. It is alarming to realize that some of my professors are in the same type of low-wage, short-term jobs that I am trying to leave behind. During the course of my legal education, my professors have trained me to recognise fairness and equity. I am certain that precarious work isn't fair for college faculty.

I am also certain that if the province continues to short-change the colleges, the quality of education students receive will decline. Our college system is vitally important. Not everyone in Ontario can afford to attend university. People of colour, immigrants, children of immigrants and those who struggle financially are often able to find opportunities through our college system. The students who attend college deserve the best education possible.

I have followed the news carefully and read press releases from each side of this labour dispute. It is clear to me that OPSEU and the faculty bargaining team are strongly committed to staying at the table right up until the strike deadline. It is also clear to me that the College Employer's Council has tried to strong-arm the union into capitulation by walking away from the bargaining table. As a student who is affected by a potential labour action, I am VERY angry at the CEC for refusing to work constructively with OPSEU and thus, compromising my education. I am currently using my life savings to cover my tuition and expenses during this year of school. I value every minute I spend with my professors because I want to learn as much as possible and be an effective and skilled paralegal after I graduate. I cannot afford a strike that will take me out of my studies. Please do everything you can to ensure a fair contract. I want to go back to school tomorrow.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

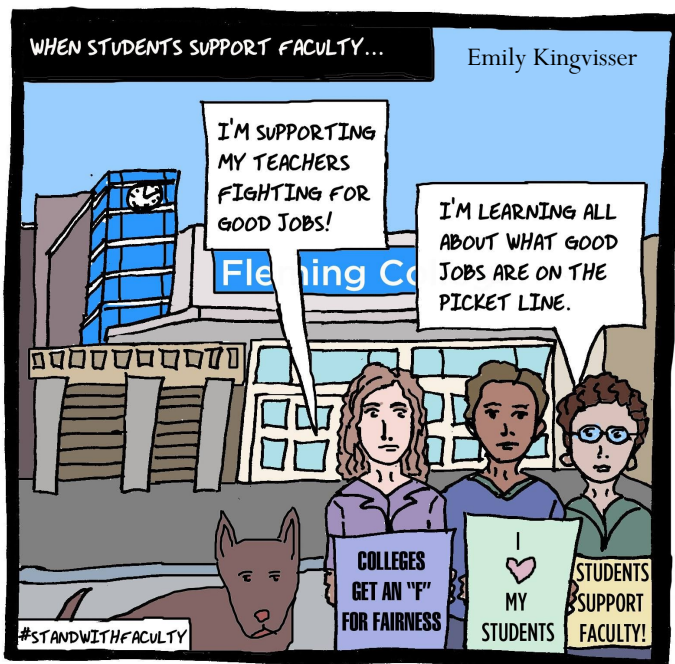
Student, Seneca College





Fancy technology companies use interesting questions in hiring interviews (or so says the internet, so it must be true, right?). Even if these are apocryphal stories, the following questions are fun and test your ability to estimate.

- 1) How many times heavier than a mouse is an elephant?
- 2) How many times more does a Canadian CEO make than the average worker? Okay, it's is not a tech company question, but this is a union newsletter, right?
- 3) How many firefighters are there in San Francisco?
- 4) How many trees are there in New York City's Central Park?



A flash mob sings a [Lady Gaga parody](#) to support hotel workers

- 1) Around 150,000. An average elephant weighs 4,000 kg; an average mouse 25 grams
- 2) A CEO mouse would weigh almost 4 kg (3.975 kg) because a [Canadian CEO makes 159 times](#) what an average worker does.
- 3) Around 350 firefighters are on duty on any given day, out of a pool of 1700.
- 4) here are over 26,000 trees (of approximately 175 species) in the Park.

Remember, the challenge is to plan and think and problem solve, not necessarily get the precise answer. Is your brain stretched? Good!

Answers

A bushel of thanks to Fleming student Trish Amyotte who lives across town but has made many trips to the line bringing tea. She says some students are surprised and incredulously exclaim “you’re on *their* side?” which sparks a spirited defense of faculty. She tells students, in person and online, that part-time work is everyone’s concern. It’s incredibly heartening to get such support!

A shout-out to Joan Connolly for going above and beyond with the yummy food she sent to strike headquarters. Thank you, Joan!



## Academic Freedom at Fleming by Andrew Bohart

The August 8 College Council's Bargaining Update provides a list of FAQs. One states: "Why are the colleges refusing to bargain on the issue of academic freedom? Colleges have established their own academic freedom policies based on their distinct cultures. We don't believe that a single policy on academic freedom in a central collective agreement can be responsive to those differences among the colleges." In February 2014, management organized a committee to develop an academic freedom policy that would be fair for the college and faculty. I was a member of this committee. We met numerous times between April 2014 and January 2016. The dispute resolution process our committee proposed was similar to how the Workload Monitoring Group (WMG) works to resolve disputes regarding faculty workloads.

The Academic Freedom committee recommended that an Academic Resolution Committee be formed to listen to disputes regarding academic decisions between faculty and supervisors. The committee would listen to both parties and render a decision regarding the dispute. The committee's decision would be a recommendation for the Vice President Academic (VPA), as the VPA still had the final say in academic decisions. The Academic Freedom Committee presented our proposal to VPA Laurel Scholen and Sonia Crook in January 2016 and was swiftly and flatly rejected.

The committee has not met since January 2016 which demonstrates a lack of interest by Fleming College management to create an academic freedom policy that is fair and equitable for both the college and Fleming faculty. Academic freedom needs to be addressed in our Collective Agreement not at the individual college level.



Click to sign one of the most creative petitions making the digital rounds: [We Demand that the College Employer Council Donate their Salaries to a Student Bursary](#)

Ikea workers in Virginia overwhelmingly voted to join a union. Workers cited low wages, forced overtime and long hours for joining the union. It's a paradox for Ikea. Their image is linked to Swedish social democracy: anti-union tactics would hurt their brand.

*And the brand of a college (that purports education leads to employment) running on precarious labour? Students—like part-time faculty—struggle in this gig economy, as do their parents. We have common cause & need to communicate this.*

Joanne Tully, Patty Thompson & their toques radiate solidarity.\*

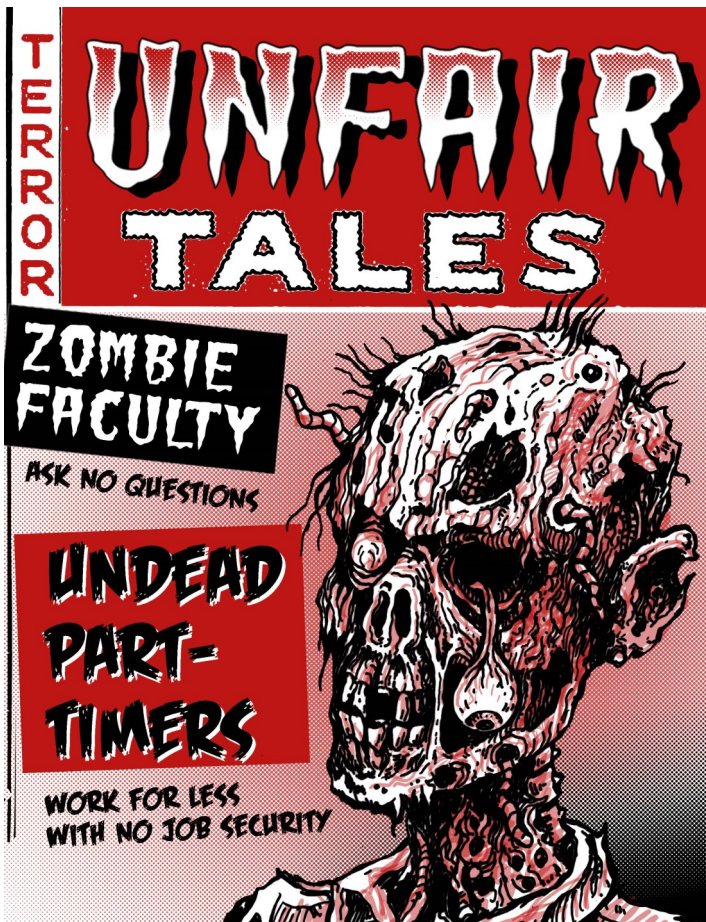
\*Only a revisionist management hack would call this a selfie. Instead of the narcissism of the selfie—a product of atomized, hyper-individualism—let's call such shots of solidarity a "We-ie."

Fun to say, more fun to take, every we-ie ruptures the moral, social and economic hegemony of the status quo (and offers a rousing slogan in French).

Send yours to [local352website@gmail.com](mailto:local352website@gmail.com)







## TRICK

The employer has a single undead trick: stonewalling. However, this is... tricky. Stonewalling zings back on management because this mobilizes us. Fine. Thanks. But let's end the strike and negotiate, shall we? A tricky and frustrating situation.

## TREAT

Halloween! Let's spook up social media with our message. Zombie Don Sinclair? Zombie College Council?

Avengers (Avenging Unfair Contract Work)!  
X Men/Women = X(tra) hard working, committed to finding a resolution.

Robot-teachers; Pumpkin head (Sinclair sold my brains); CEC Grim Reaper.

Send shots to [local352website@gmail.com](mailto:local352website@gmail.com) but most of all get them out on social media!

