LOCAL LINES

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College misses its target on employee engagement

Jack Wilson

"The results are not stellar," admitted President Jensen at a Town Hall meeting in May as the college community got their first glimpse of the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey results.

In fact, the results showed that for all the efforts of the college administration since the last survey two years ago, employee engagement has actually declined by four percentage points to 56%. By contrast, the average level of engagement for Canadian employers (for whom AON, the survey administrator, has done similar surveys) is 65%.

Here are some of the more compelling results lifted from the survey:

- My performance has a significant impact on my pay (16%)
- Senior leaders make good business decisions (39%)
- This organization delivers on the promises it makes to its employees (39%)
- I get the support I need to successfully manage others (45%)
- I am confident that appropriate action will be taken as a result of this survey (32%)

By contrast, the few high levels of engagement could be found in statements such as these:

- I get a sense of accomplishment from my work (76%)
- My job is a good fit for my abilities and experience (82%)

In the previous two surveys, "Tiger Teams" were created to identify action plans for the college. Given the results, one Town Hall participant questioned the worthwhileness of establishing another team, to which the president seemed to concur.

Last February, the Board of Governors in its Business Plan for 2017-18 set a target of 62% engagement for 2018. However, given the disappointing results, the mistrust by staff in the ability of senior leadership to make good decisions, and the lack of confidence that anything beneficial will come of the survey, it is unclear how the college is going to turn things around in the near future. Said one Town Hall participant after the meeting, "I am not sure the college is up to the task with the current leadership. Short of a dramatic shake up of the senior administration, I am not confident the appropriate actions will address the growing malaise at the college."

The survey results will be on the agenda of the June 12 meeting of the Board of Governors.

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Editorial

How to breed skepticism

When the college revealed its five -year Strategic Plan, one of the six goals was as follows: "Be recognized by our employees and the community as an exceptional place to work."

To that end, the metric the college devised to establish whether it was meeting that goal was "employee engagement." It even set the objective of reaching 62% in 2018. However, as was reported at the May 18 Town Hall, not only did the college not meet its target, it dropped four percentage points to 56%.

The AON survey representative commented that "change takes time" likening it to trying to change the course of a ship. Except in this case, the ship isn't changing course — it is going in reverse!

For some insight as to why the SS Algonquin is adrift, there are three key points from the survey: (a) low confidence in the ability of senior administration to make good business decisions (39%); (b) equally low confidence that the college will honour its commitments to staff (39%); and (c) even lower confidence that the college will follow through on the survey results (32%).

If senior administration (and for that matter, the Board of Governors) want some appreciation as to what is fueling the high degree of skepticism, then they need look no further than the Board's recently approved 2017-18 Business Plan. Buried in the fine print of the plan, the college asserts one way to achieve employee engagement is — hold on

to your hat — reduce the number of job vacancies and improve the ratio of full-time to part-time positions! Now, who could argue with that?

But, alas, here is the reality. While the college has 612 academic positions on the books — fully budgeted for according to the most recent college figures — upwards of 40 of those positions are unfilled. By way of example, in the Police and Public Safety Institute, three faculty from different programs provided notice of retirement well in advance, but not one of the positions will be filled for fall 2017, leaving each program short-staffed for 2017-18.

So, when the college chooses to deliberately not apply the very solution it has identified as a means to improve employee engagement, is it any wonder staff have lost not only their trust in senior administration but also their faith that in the end anything meaningful will change?

Meanwhile, the SS Algonquin blithely continues its backward journey.

Word from Pat, President Local 415

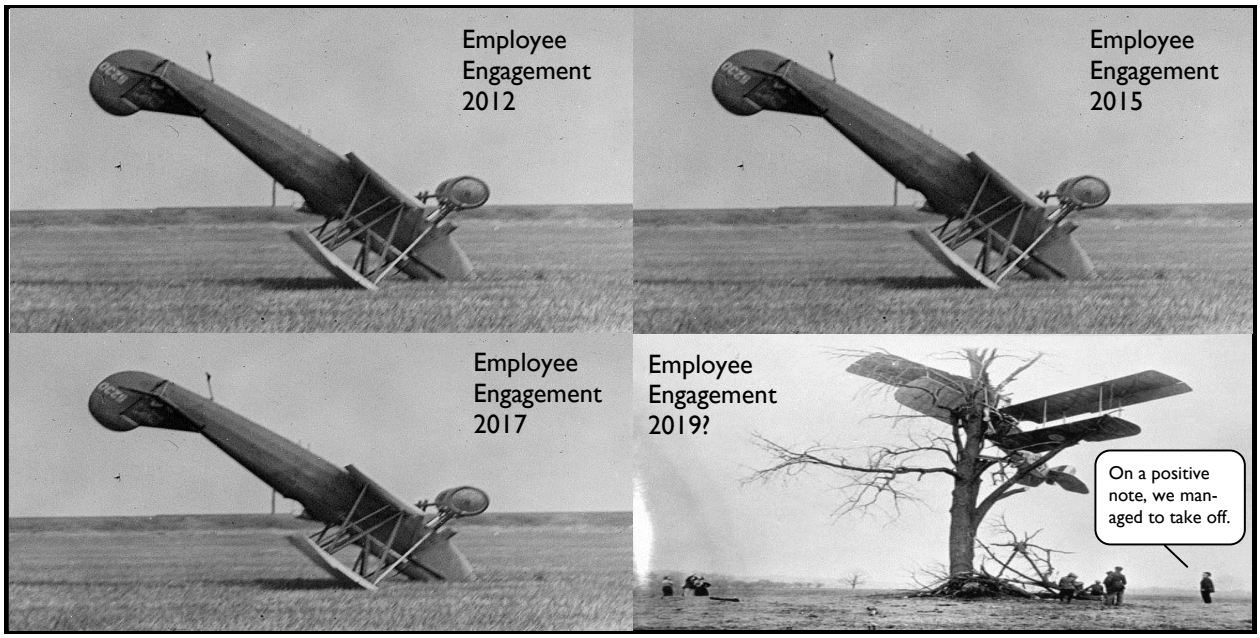
Declining engagement and upcoming bargaining

The current Collective Agreement expires in less than 90 days. Therefore, we need to concentrate on what we need from the upcoming round of bargaining such as control over our academic material, improvement in benefits and salary, as well as improvements for counsellors, librarians, and partial-load faculty. We also need to be prepared to put pressure on the management side to get a positive outcome. The bargaining team has been communicating with all locals across the province and will need our determined support during August and September. This will ultimately come down to provide a strike mandate if we are to be taken seriously.

Survey results and bargaining
The recent publication of the recent Employee Engagement Survey points to how dysfunctional and out of touch the president and senior management are in terms of their performance. (It is difficult to believe that the president would have the audacity to look for a 52% increase in pay while producing these results.) The declining lack of faith by staff in the decision-making abilities of senior management points to the need for us to look after ourselves which we have the opportunity to do this round of bargaining. And the area where we clearly need to make gains is academic freedom unless we wish to continue to be at the mercy of either inept and/or unsound decisions affecting our programs and how we deliver them.

Lack of engagement
The local recently had a grievance meeting with respect to a termination of a full-time employee. The union reps took over an hour making the presentation. The president was required to be there but chose to participate by phone as did the SVP Academic. They were asked at the end of the lengthy presentation if they had any questions – they had none. And the college wonders why engagement has declined!

To conclude
We need a change from the top down at the college, but that is up to the Board to undertake. However, where we can take matters into our own hands is by supporting our bargaining team and achieving better engagement through a better contract. Enjoy your well-deserved summer vacation, and stay tuned for bargaining developments as they unfold.



Top employer? Then walk the walk

JP Lamarche

The college, again, is touting itself as a top 25 employer in the Ottawa area. Let's have a look at what (apparently) helps an organization get this wonderful distinction.

Chronically underpaying employees

Not only has the college improperly classified and paid many faculty members incorrectly for years, it also has shrugged its obligations to retroactively pay those faculty members for lost income. The college has chosen to hang its hat on a technicality in the jurisprudence that suggests limiting retroactive pay to 20 days. Even when the college acknowledges that the person has been incorrectly paid for years, it refuses to do the right thing (think: "caring, integrity and respect") and pay hard-working faculty what they are owed.

Full time positions

The college "does everything it can to avoid hiring full timers" according to its legal counsel. This is apparent with the multitude of staffing grievances that have been filed over the years, and one need only to look at next year's approved budget that contains a grand total of "zero" new full-time hires planned for the 2017-2018 academic year. In fact, the union local has to grieve every retirement, resignation, termination, death, and transfer that happens at the college. The fight for full-time faculty positions has not changed in ten years, and there has been no sign from this employer that things will change.

Arbitration is the college answer

The college continues to rely on the extraordinarily expensive arbitration process to deal with the majority of grievances. The reality is that most grievances end up settling on the first scheduled day of arbitration. Very few grievances (individual or union) proceed to full hearings. So why waste public dollars on issues that could easily be settled internally? The only people who benefit from this approach are lawyers and arbitrators. Hundreds of thousands of dollars that ought to be spent improving the learning environment for students flow out the front door of C building every year.

Effective resources

The college's vision is to be a "global leader in personalized, digitally connected, experiential learning." Given our on-going problems with our current LMS, E-texts, Outlook, and antiquated internal payroll, HR, and timetabling systems, the college's vision is stopping incredibly short of 20/20 to say the least. Providing employees with the proper resources to effectively do their jobs is a fundamental responsibility of any employer – top 25 or not. The college has dropped the technology ball so many times, it might want to change its vision statement.

So, you have to ask yourself what an organization needs to do to ***not*** be included on the list?

How alternative facts help the college in getting its Top 25 Employer Award

Jack Wilson

When we heard the college "won" Top 25 Employer in Ottawa (again!), we thought a bit of fact checking was in order. Below are the highlights as published by Mediacorp and the claims purportedly made by the college to the judges.

Highlights	What the college claimed	Reality check
Full-time Employees in Canada	3,384	1,388 according to the 2017-18 budget presented to the Board of Governors. Of those, there are 612 academic positions, but the union has to grieve in most instances to get them filled when a vacancy occurs
Long-term savings	Defined-benefit pension	It is a provincial plan, not an Algonquin specific plan
Health Plan Premium	As part of the health plan, the employer pays up to 100% of the premiums	It is a provincial plan, not an Algonquin specific plan
Alternative work options	35-hour work week (with full pay)	It applies to counsellors and librarians only; most teaching faculty have SWFs closer to 44 hours per week
Vacation allowance	New employees receive 3 weeks of paid vacation after their first year on the job	For academic employees, it is actually 43 days or 9 weeks
Outside survey period	Outside consultant surveys are held every 24 months	True, but to be clear there have only been two. The first one pegged employment engagement at 60%; the second one at 56%.
In-house training initiatives	In-house training, online training, leadership training, mentoring	Access to funding for Professional Development is one of the biggest complaints among faculty; the process for accessing is not transparent and is inconsistent from department to department
Scope of charitable involvement	Local, national, international	Yes, the college participates in the United Way, but national? And International?
Employee charitable involvement	Employees receive paid time off to volunteer	News to us!

Bargaining, for one and all

Claire Tortolo

As you hopefully are aware by now, 2017 is a bargaining year for CAAT-A, and that process is already well underway. To help keep you aware and involved in the process, Local 415 has put together a Local Mobilizing Team (LMT). We're a group of stewards whose specific goal is to help you understand and follow bargaining as it unfolds. We've already been hard at work creating four videos that were rolled out starting in January; our most recent one came out April 3 and wrapped up the demand-setting process. To check out our videos. go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVsVXJpntCE for video one and links to the other three.

In addition to our videos, the LMT has undertaken several activities to get you the information you need and keep our lines of communication open.

Members of the LMT Team clockwise from upper left: Judy Puritt, Claire Tortolo, Annette Bouzi, Tracy Henderson, Maria Taylor, Landyn Blais, and Judy Flieler

Bargaining Coffee Breaks

We met with members in our union office (C215b) mid-April to offer them a chance to take a break, enjoy a cup of coffee and get caught up on bargaining details. We held a second coffee break took place in J link for anyone who couldn't make it on the 13th. In both cases, we were able to let our members know about the 16 demands that our bargaining team is advancing during this round and answer any questions members might have had about bargaining.

Annual General Meeting

In May, we were joined by two of the bargaining team members – Shawn Pentecost and Ravi Ramkissoongsingh — in providing a bargaining update.

Kaleidoscope

We had a CAAT-A Bargaining Information table set up in the hallway outside the bookstore in H building during Kaleidoscope, and we were pleased with the number of partial-load members who came by.

Upcoming Spring Information Sessions

The LMT has blocked off a series of days and times before the summer vacation period for any of our members to book us for an info session. All you need to do is get a group of members together -- full-time, partial-load, anyone who's a member – and choose one of our meeting times. We'll come to you and provide you with an update and detailed information on bargaining. It's a chance for you to ask any questions you might have and stay current. Big groups, small groups, we're happy to meet with anyone. The invitation email was sent to your non-college email inbox. Or you may call the union office at 7716. So feel free to book us for a session this month.

Fall events

Fall 2017 will be a major moment in the bargaining process, as much will have developed over the summer months. In order to get you caught up, we will be holding a **Welcome Back/Bargaining Update Event** during the week of August 28. At present, the details of the event are still underwraps, but we will be providing you with a lot of bargaining info and a little bit of fun as well. Look for more about this event soon!

In addition, we're planning to host a meeting specifically for our **partial-load** members in late summer/early fall. Our demands for this round of bargaining prominently feature the

needs of our partial-load members, and we recognize that they have different concerns than our full-time members do. To address these and organize a meeting that will reach our partial-load members successfully, we will be sending a quick survey out to all partial-loaders. If you are partial-load, please take the time to respond to the survey, as the information that you provide us will help us keep you better updated about both the proposed meeting and bargaining as a whole.

Finally, as bargaining ramps up and we see the results of our team's efforts, we will reach a critical stage where you will want to be fully apprised of the situation. To address this, we will hold information sessions during the early part of the fall term, as needed, to make sure you don't miss any vital information.

We're really looking forward to helping you stay current on all things bargaining during the spring, summer and fall, and we're all hopeful that this round of bargaining will be positive.

To help keep yourself updated, the single easiest thing you can do is provide Local 415 with a non-college email address where we can regularly reach you. Without a personal email address, we cannot guarantee that you will receive all the information that you will need going forward. We want to make sure that we can reach you – so, if you have not already done so yet, please send an email from a non-college email address to contactlocal415@gmail.com . This way you'll be on our list and kept in the loop throughout the process.

You asked us David Haley

Assigning PD

Q. Can my manager dictate what professional development I must undertake during my allowable professional development time?

A. No, that would be an assignment of work. If such is the case, ask your manager to record the professional development on your SWF.

Retroactive accommodation

Q. At a departmental meeting, the chair raised the topic of retroactive accommodation. How might this affect a faculty's workload during the semester if they are tasked with having to create multiple supplemental assessments for a student who has been accommodated?

A. If a faculty member discovers that the workload described on a SWF does not reflect the reality of what actually has to be done, he or she has the right to request a revised SWF at any time in the semester. If the non-SWF work happens for any reason, including the reason you cite – creating assessments for students who require an accommodation – the faculty member is advised to e-mail the chair indicating that a revised SWF is needed with the amount of time required for the additional work. If you have any questions, or if this situation arises in the semester, feel free to contact me as Co-Chair of the Workload Monitoring Group:

dhhaley.opseu415@gmail.com

From the college web site (May 26, 2017):

"Strategic Mandate Agreement Town Hall provides engaging update"

…well, perhaps not for everyone

Grievance Update

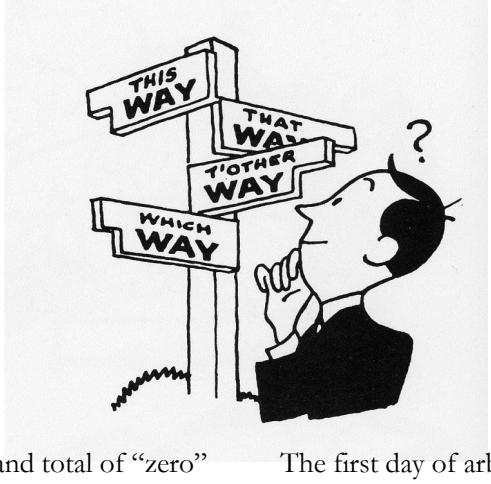
JP Lamarche and Jack Wilson

And still the grievances continue to arbitration unabated

Things on the grievance front remain largely unchanged. Members keep marching through the office door to file individual grievances on matters ranging from salary calculation errors to bullying and harassment. Most grievances end up at arbitration where they rarely proceed to full hearings because the college is typically looking to settle on the first day of arbitration. This leads to the inevitable and often repeated question: Why couldn't we settle this grievance *before* arbitration? I suspect that I'll never get an answer to this question.

In terms of policy grievances, the local continues to file grievances around processes, job postings, classifications, and various other violations of the collective agreement. The college, for its part, does a good job at keeping us busy with its creative interpretations of the CA! Some of the interpretations leave me shaking my head, while others nearly make me laugh out loud. Another problem stems from the inconsistency with these interpretations. HR gives one set of directions, and some managers follow it, while other managers seem to go rogue and come up with their own interpretations: a clear recipe for disaster.

With the expiration of our collective agreement on October 1, the moratorium on Article 2 (full-time staffing) will be lifted, and I anticipate the local will be pursuing staffing grievances right away. Given that the college's approved budget for 2017-2018 includes a grand total of "zero" new full-time academic positions, I anticipate a fight about every position that we grieve.



Luckily, the local had many staffing grievances filed before the moratorium. So far we have been successful with getting full-time positions replaced, and new positions posted throughout the three years of the moratorium. Other locals were not as lucky and lost positions over the last three years. As full-time staffing is always a priority with our local, we intend to pursue new positions with our usual determination and vigour.

15A43: Incorrect salary placement – GAS

A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter had its first day of arbitration in November and has since been resolved to the satisfaction of the member.

15A57: Harassment and bullying – Business

A member grieved bullying and harassment in the workplace. The first day of arbitration was last month.

16A14: Incorrect salary placement – Language Institute

A member grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter was resolved to the satisfaction of the member at an arbitration in March.

16A17: Incorrect salary placement – Language Institute

A member grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A32: Incorrect salary placement – Language Institute

A member grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A34: Incorrect salary placement – Media & Design

A member grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter was settled at arbitration.

16A34: Incorrect salary placement – Media & Design
A member grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A48: Incorrect salary placement – Hospitality & Tourism
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The first day of arbitration is in October.

16A50: Incorrect salary placement – Business
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The first day of arbitration is this month.

16A51: Incorrect status – Media & Design
A non-full-time teacher is claiming full-time status on the basis of having been a sessional for more than 12 months within a 24-month period. The first day of arbitration is in September.

16A55: Loss of teaching assignment – Business
A member has grieved that work was taken away punitively from the member for having raised issues within the department. The first day of arbitration is in September.

16A57: Incorrect salary placement – Business
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A61: Incorrect salary placement – Business
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

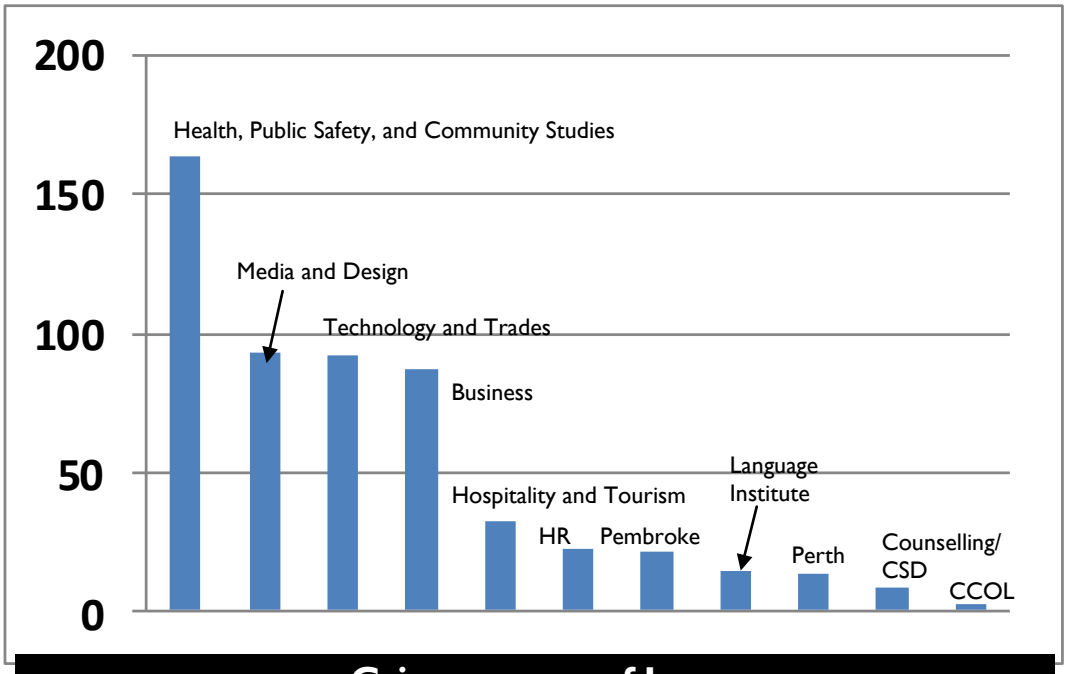
16A62: Incorrect salary placement – Media & Design
A member has grieved incorrect classification and placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A64: Incorrect salary placement – ACCE
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A69: Termination – Hospitality & Tourism
A member has grieved termination, and there have been three days of arbitration to date.

16A70: Incorrect salary placement – Community Studies
A member has grieved incorrect placement on the salary scale. The matter has gone to arbitration.

16A71: Bullying and harassment – Hospitality & Tourism
Two members have grieved harassment and bullying. The matter had already been scheduled for arbitration, but there have been three days of mediation in the interim.



Grievances as of June

Contract Faculty Forward (CFF) — Fairness for Contract Faculty

By Pam Johnson, CFF coordinator

"Dickensian" and "sweatshop labour" are two terms that have been used to describe the reality for a majority of faculty and many support staff working for Ontario colleges.

Contract faculty now make up a whopping 70% of all faculty. These faculty have the same qualifications and often teach the same courses as full-time faculty, but they are underpaid and have few or no benefits. Contracts are only four months long, and many faculty must work at more than one college to make ends meet.

"I have to work at three colleges to make ends meet. 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," says one Algonquin contract faculty member.

This situation not only impacts faculty, but it also impacts students and the quality of their education.

Time to celebrate?

Ontario colleges are currently celebrating 50 years of existence. They pride themselves on promoting human rights, diversity, environmental stewardship, and other progressive values. Yet, the conditions for faculty and staff who work at colleges has been deteriorating over this period, and student tuition has skyrocketed—nothing to celebrate.

Is this a money problem? No, it is a priority problem. The same administration that has been creating these precarious jobs and raising tuition has been padding its own ranks. Highly paid administration jobs have increased 55%while full-time teaching jobs have increased only 22%. Money has been siphoned to schemes with private colleges and overseas projects that could have gone into better jobs for faculty and better education for students.

Grassroots initiative

To challenge these priorities, Contract Faculty Forward (CFF) was created in 2015 by contract faculty. It is a grassroots initiative to advocate for better working conditions for precarious contract faculty in Ontario colleges.

CCF has held two province-wide days of action for fairness for contract faculty. We maintain a confidential website and we encourage contract faculty to join: www.contractfacultyforward.ca and a Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/contractfacultyforward/

We are on Facebook!

You can "like us" at www.facebook.com/opseu415

Precarious work: Conversations with Algonquin contract faculty

Judy Puritt

Earlier in April, Randstad Canada, a staffing agency, conducted a survey and reported that there is an immense shift happening in Canada's work force toward "agile employment and non-traditional work."

Your local has supported various initiatives to change the stressful and increasingly common problem of precarious work. Contract Faculty and Contract Faculty Forward have spotlighted the inequities experienced between full-time and part-time colleagues working side-by-side.

On a broader level, our governments also realize there are big changes happening in the workplace, and they are examining outdated policies and legislation. Last July, the Ontario Ministry of Labour released an interim report (followed with an update this past February) presenting The Changing Workplaces Review.

Recently, a casual survey of professors, who have worked in various contract roles at the college, revealed feelings of frustration, stress, and uncertainty linked with their work situations.

Currently, under Article 26, partial-load (PL) faculty are covered by the Collective Agreement with the understanding that a PL teaching load is 7-12 hours per week on a regular basis. Partial-load faculty have access to clearly defined steps on a pay grid, but such faculty members remain in a very delicate—precarious—position. For example, what if your PL pay is

wrong because you were misplaced on the grid? Or what about benefits? What if you find you are frequently overlooked for Professional Development (PD) or not even considered to go to some PD of your choosing, just because you are not full-time? Below are a few short questions which guided the discussions with assorted professors and instructors who have worked as partial-load at some point, perhaps even just now in the 2017W semester.

What do you enjoy about your role at the college?

Typically, PL faculty enjoy their work in the classroom. They are passionate – they have to be given compensation rates. Many like the variety of teaching opportunities, the chance to connect with different chairs, the flexibility of the schedule, and the non-conventional work environment. Some like the ability to teach part-time so they can also work in another capacity—be that in another profession or for their own businesses. These contract faculty have energy and enthusiasm and like to see the payout when students begin to 'get it.'

What is your biggest worry as a contract faculty?

Foremost is job security. The uncertainty and ongoing anxieties associated with not knowing what next semester will look like was a recurring theme. Some spoke of political vulnerabilities, and the fragility of work with no sense of how likely renewal really is, even though many chairs do their best in terms of trying to maintain a PL status for faculty. There is the added stress that individuals feel as they float between part-time and partial-load and how it impacts on access to job competitions and benefits. There was also an ethical conflict identified, in terms of continuing to put significant effort into the courses being taught versus spending that time to find additional work outside the college and/or to just unplug when leaving campus.

Further, there was some discussion about the nature of the job competitions, and how skewed the process appears to be. With some 15 positions posted earlier this spring (2 were there and then removed), it becomes uncomfortably obvious how specific the requirements are and how we can be "good enough" to continue in a part-time / PL capacity but are not good enough for full-time positions.

How long have you been contract faculty? What is your long-term goal?

Answers to this question ranged dramatically. To start, several

have worked part-time (and even sessional) more than partial -load. Working at the college in some capacity or other (not all of it in teaching) that is not full-time ranged anywhere from 2-15 years for these interviewees.

Those in the 2-8 years of part -time and PL largely expressed hope and optimism about maybe becoming full-time, but a few noted that there is no clear trajectory to becoming full-time. Some in the 4-10-year range noted that the ongoing uncertainty has really taken a toll, and they are looking to leave the college. Others who are nearer to retirement would just like steady PL work for fall and winter semesters with holiday time over the summer without worrying about being forgotten if they aren't available for the summer.

The disheartening and telltale phrases that surfaced included "tired" and "tired of not knowing," "unsympathetic to the impact this kind of uncertain work has on me," "want to remove the worry of my family's future," "worry about my security in my role as an educator," and "feel valued as far as they can demonstrate, but it should be more."

What would you like the college administration to know about your work?

"The college administration overall does not seem to realize how much we do." This message of wanting to be valued, coupled with a desire for the college to fairly recognize the time contract faculty contribute and then to compensate that work appropriately, was the dominant message here. Contract people put in long hours, and the expectation that they do

full-time work is unreasonable. PL faculty have passion and commitment, they are invested in course development and delivery, and they work hard, but they feel this is not recognized adequately. So, not only is it hurtful, but it is also counter to the qualities that the college wants to foster in its faculty and students, effectively quashing the desire to learn and be the best.

Some participants simply want the college to consider any one who is teaching or has just finished teaching a semester to be considered "internal" rather than restricting this privilege to partial-load only, as some managers are loathe to fill needed teaching on a full-time, let alone PL basis or appear to assign PL schedules on an arbitrary basis.

What should the bargaining team know as they enter negotiations?

The responses to this question ranged from "keep up the fight" to "think about what could happen: be aware with any decision there are intended and unintended outcomes." There was a focus on pay and the need to recognize the category—part-time, partial-load, or sessional—doesn't change the real work load: all work should be remunerated fairly.

Finally, there was also a request that the bargaining team focus on reducing precarious work overall – the need for stability and future planning was heavily emphasized as something that currently eludes contract teachers in the college. A couple of people indicated they have been working strategically to become niche or specialized people for managers. The targeted specialization appeared to be related to availability: being willing and able to fill a needed gap rather than saying no to an opportunity is the key route to keeping options for full-time work more likely.

Final Comment:

In closing, the message that came through resoundingly was that contract faculty would like the same opportunities as full-time faculty. As one respondent noted quite bitterly, "Despite the college's claim to 'caring' as part of the core values, the Employee Assistance Program is ONLY available for full-time employees." Apparently, caring does not extend to all employees, even though contract faculty outnumber full-time faculty almost three-to-one.

Steward Profile: Shawn Pentecost

Judy Puritt

As we were wrapping up the W17 semester late in April, I took some time to chat with Shawn Pentecost, steward at the Pembroke campus. Shawn, who has been tremendously active in Local 415 for just over a decade, is also currently on the provincial bargaining team. All in all, getting some insights into what made him choose to be an active steward in our Local made for a very interesting conversation.

You are a steward with Local 415. In a period where some unions have seen a decline in active membership, what made you step up to this role?
Well it all started back in the fall of 2005, when a couple of colleagues approached me to become an active steward. At that time, Treena Lemay had been a long-standing steward at the Pembroke Campus, but she wasn't putting her name forward again, as she was planning to become active as a city councillor in Petawawa. Of course, when I decided to step forward in January 2006, I didn't think I would become as involved as I am currently.

You know, it's true that we saw a decline in active membership a while ago, but based on my trips to Toronto over the past two years, both for Divex (the provincial divisional executive for college faculty) and bargaining purposes, I would say we're seeing many new faces. So, we're actually seeing an upswing in active membership, with several new folks early in their careers and eager to learn from those of us with experience and just as eager to share their ideas and views.

How long have you been at the college?
That goes back a good distance. Let's see, I started in the School of Hospitality and Tourism as a part-time professor back in January 2002. Timing is everything, and I won my current position as a full-time professor in Pembroke in August of 2002 as the result of an Article 2 grievance settlement. Beyond attending information meetings on campus hosted by the two stewards (Treena Lemay and Pauline Edmonds, who is still a steward with us), and going to the AGM, I then became a coordinator of GAS in September 2006. In January of 2008 I stepped up to become the local's treasurer. From there, it's been a busy few years. I have continued coordinating GAS this whole time and, in addition, I have undertaken several extended union roles. In 2013, I was elected as alternate to the Joint Education Qualifications Subcommittee, and the next year I stepped up to be a full member on the committee due to a member retiring. In 2014, I became a member of Divex and served until June 2016, and then in October 2016, I was elected to the bargaining team.

Since becoming a steward, how have you felt about becoming more active in Local 415?
This has been a rewarding experience. It's especially good in that I am from a rural campus and very active, and yet I don't have to be at the main campus to maintain that level of involvement. I have learned so much by being very active and have truly been able to help many members at my campus through my involvement with the local.

You know, I have also learned a lot more about how the college operates. Specifically, I now have knowledge that I would not have had, had I not taken this more active role. By attending arbitrations in support of members, I began to understand where the power and decision-making lies in the college. With a better understanding of the administrative structure here

at the college—the true power dynamics—I have repeatedly seen cases that never needed to go to arbitration. In many cases, if front line managers had been given the authority to deal with a given situation, the resolutions that eventually occur at arbitration could have been reached much sooner and without the costly arbitration process. I think that's too bad, and I definitely think it's counter-productive to employee engagement.

Have you undertaken any training to increase your understanding of the role of being a steward or about union activism more generally?

Yes! I have taken many opportunities for training, going back to fundamental courses like Steward 1 and Treasurer training. Further, I have taken a workshop on local capacity-building training and then a similar 'divisional specific' local capacity-building workshop.

Beyond that, I have attended Convention for 11 years now which has provided me with a deeper understanding of OPSEU and unions more broadly. And then I learned a lot about OPSEU's international work through Convention, and I have attended the Labour Law Conference where I again learned quite a bit about conduct and practice across the country. More recently, I attended OCUFA's (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations') training on precarious work in post-secondary education designed to help build awareness on improving working conditions for contract faculty.

Shawn shortly after being elected to the Bargaining Team

And then, perhaps the most interesting and latest training has been around bargaining training. I went to a session put on by CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) and one by OPSEU for a few days. It was very engaging, as it was specifically targeted for teachers, and so the whole team went.

Let's backtrack a bit. I know that you have been very active at Convention in the past and now; this year, you are on the Bargaining Committee. Can you tell us more?

Well, I put my name forward to be on the bargaining team because I believe we're at a crossroads with the employer. Since the change in 2008 with the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act (CCBA), we have been losing ground. The employer (college management across the province) has been engaging in tactics frowned upon in labour relations, but still allowed under the CCBA (such as the imposed terms in 2009).

More specifically, there were two key reasons. Firstly, many members were dissatisfied with the results of the 2014 round of bargaining, and I myself was concerned with that settlement. So, between that, my general union experience, and then my stint on Divex and the Employer-Employee Relations Committee (EERC) where I got even further insights into how the employer operates, I thought it was time to step forward.

Secondly, I'm alarmed at the statistics around the number of precarious positions in the college system and the lack of stability in this kind of work. This is a situation that is particularly close to my heart because in the 15 years that I've been at the college, I've seen increases in student numbers and either decreasing or static growth in full-time positions (unless they're grieved), and by extension an explosion of the use of precarious workers.

You know, in 1989 there were more full-time faculty province-wide than there are currently. More directly, when I started in Pembroke in 2002, we had just over 400 students and now we're over 1000. The student population has more than doubled while the full-time faculty component has not kept pace—we have only gained 3 to 4 full-time faculty positions, bringing our total to 24.

Do you have any particular suggestions for anyone considering becoming more active in Local 415?

I do. For starters, if you don't know who your area stewards are, stop by the office (C215b) or look online. Your stewards can tell you how to step up and become active, or you can learn about it independently.

Back when I first started attending information sessions, I asked 'What are the expectations?' 'What can I do?' And I would say that's where you should start. Come and ask any one of us and we'll be happy to give you that information. Also, you don't need to be a steward; you can just stop by for some information, become more informed and then share that information in your area.

What has been the most interesting or surprising discovery since being active?
Despite the fact that I've been a steward for 11 years, I'm learning something new every day.

Surprising? Unfortunately, I'm surprised about the increase we've seen in recent years from individuals filing grievances about bullying and harassment. It doesn't have to be this way. There are many instances where final settlements are reached after months or years of protracted and truly unnecessary negotiations and obstructions, and these settlements reflect either fully or quite closely the remedy sought in the first place.

Final comments?
Yes. Just one: I hope the colleges use this 50th anniversary to find a better way.

Local wins two CALM awards and a human rights award

Jack Wilson

At the recent Canadian Association for Labour Media (CALM) Conference, *Local Lines* won two print awards. This follows last year's win (for best social media) for the Local 415 Facebook page maintained by Judy Puritt.

The first was the Katie Fitz-Randolph Award for best overall regular print publication (best combined use of writing, graphics, design, editorial content and judgment, volunteer produced). Said the judge, "Excellent, professional quality publication. Every piece was well-written, polished and well presented. Headlines are strong and the publication includes an interesting variety of sections and topics. The You Asked Us section is informative and helpful, the grievance update must be a fan favourite – great way to keep readers' interest -- and updates on president's as well as college activities are well done. Graph charts are easy to read, the steward profile and Q&A is newspaper calibre."

The second award was the Fighting Oppression Award won by Peter Biesterfeld for "a communications initiative that raises consciousness and contributes to struggles against racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of oppression and discrimination." Peter's article provided the untold story about the college's involvement in Jazan. "For more than two years," noted the judge, "OPSEU 415 campaigned to get Algonquin College out of Saudi Arabia – a country with one of world's worst human rights records. The local kept up the pressure with news releases detailing concerns about the male-only campus and filled *Local Lines* with articles based on news tips from members in Saudi and scathing editorials. Local 415 refused to let members or the general public forget about the issue of human rights. In May, the newsletter included a simple but powerful infographic with several shocking human rights violations that made headlines (and links to the news stories) that took place in 2016 alone – including the beheading of a cleric who called for peaceful change. The local also made public the long list of logistical problems for members who were teaching at the campus. In August 2016, the college announced its withdrawal from Saudi Arabia."

The local was also the recipient in 2017 of the first ever OPSEU Region 4 Human Rights Award for its ongoing work on exposing the college's involvement in Saudi Arabia. The award was presented at a Region 4 conference for new activists held in Cornwall.

Safety footwear: College falling short in its commitment to non-full-time faculty at Perth

Rod Bain

When viewed from a health and safety stand point, the college is a very diverse workplace with faculty, support staff, and administrators alike all working at the college's three campuses. Ongoing efforts to ensure the college remains a healthy and safe workplace are further complicated by the addition of other factors that the majority of businesses are not affected by.

Primary among these are the additional users of the facilities — our students — who share our work place, but they are not the only additional users of the facilities. The college also plays host to a number of visitors, ranging from advisory committee members, to guest speakers, and the multitude of prospective students who are routinely tour our facilities to name a few.

The Perth Campus, much to its credit, has recently purchased approximately 30 pairs of safety boots (in various sizes) that are made available to all visitors who will be touring the Carpentry and Masonry shop facilities, and have arrived without them. Additionally, the Perth Campus maintains a number of hardhats that are also made available to visitors who may have arrived without one.

This attention to the health and safety of our visitors should be applauded, and full credit is due to the individual(s) who instituted this policy and approved funds for these purchases. As a member of the Perth Campus Health and Safety Committee, I am heartened to see such a concern and commitment to the visitors who grace our campus.

Certainly, this is a sign of positive change, but it leaves me wondering why this level of concern and commitment is not extended to all of our employees. The college has a safety boot allowance for faculty who require this type of footwear for their job. At the Perth Campus, there are several full-time faculty who teach Carpentry or Masonry shop classes, and are granted this allowance on a yearly basis.

For some unknown reason the partial-load and part-time faculty who teach these shop classes are purposefully excluded from this safety footwear allowance despite the fact their job (just like full-time faculty) requires this gear in the performance of their duties.

The college has a contractual obligation under the Collective Agreement which states, *"The Colleges and the Union agree there will be no intimidation, discrimination, interference, restraint or coercion exercised or practiced by either of them or their representatives or members because of an employee's membership or non-membership in the Union"* and *"where the employee in the performance of duties uses safety equipment as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, the College shall provide such equipment to the employee at no cost"*

Given these requirements, it is hard to understand why the college would choose to not extend the safety footwear allowance to its partial-load and part-time faculty. How the college rationalizes showing more concern and attention to the health and safety of visitors than employees boggles the mind.

Faculty Corner

Your Centre for Organization Learning (COL) is pleased to be offering new and ongoing Professional Development during the 2017 Spring/Summer semester. To register for any of the sessions listed below, please go to https://plato.algonquincollege.com/pd/Login.aspx For additional information on ongoing programs such as the Algonquin Leadership in Education Institute (ALEI), the Leadership Mentorship Program, the Teaching Adult Lifelong Learners program (TALL) or any of our Eastern Region programs, please visit the COL website at: www.algonquincollege.com/pd/ or contact Leigh Ridgway at: ridgwal@algonquincollege.com

June

* Part-time employees registered in workshops with an ***asterisk*** will be remunerated for the session(s) they attend. For more information on remuneration, contact **Jessica Brown ext. 6105**. For more information on workshops, please contact **Nicole Sammut ext. 6013** or **Val Sayah ext. 5531.**	6	7 • **Part III: Assessing with Objective Response Tests:* **Rebecca Wakelin & Albert Dudley** (9:00-11:00) • *What does a great Program Orientation Look Like?:* **Linda Crane** (1:00-2:30)	8 • *Everything you Need to Know about Retroactive Accommodations:* **CAL Team** (9:00-10:00) • *Performance Management Info Session:* **Penny Dockrill & Helen Huang** (9:00-10:00)	9 • **Spark Up Your Learning Activities with Adobe Spark:* **Louisa Lambregts** (9:00-10:30)
12 • *Providing Student Feedback using a Google Chrome Extension:* **Marieke Kalkhove** (12:00-1:00)	13 • **So You Want to Teach a Hybrid Course?:* **Kilmeny West** (10:00-12:00 • **Collaborating with OneDrive & Office 365 Apps:* **Joshua Garbo & Nicholas Robertson** (1:00-3:00)	14 • *Icebreakers-a Practical Session Learn by doing! :* **Linda Crane & Rebecca Volk** (9:00-10:00 • *Everything you Need to Know about Retroactive Accommodations:* ***CAL Team*** (12:00-1:00)	15 • **Blackboard Creating Quizzes/Tests:* **Louisa Lambregts** (1:00-2:30)	16 • **Instructional Design:* **Albert Dudley** (9:00-12:00)
19	20 • *Collaborative Video Conferencing with Skype for Business:* **Kris Greeley** (12:00-1:00)	21	22	23

Retirement Notes

Doug Brandy @ brandydoug@bell.net

Human tendencies

There are two that are regrettable - using violence to resolve disputes and disrespect for the environment.

Since the first proto-humans used clubs to beat each other senseless, we have been quick to reach for weapons when we disagree with our neighbours. This was bad enough when weapons were simple and had limited effect. It's much worse today when chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons can cause death and destruction on a massive scale.

For ages we have thrown garbage into piles, flushed sewage into waterways, and sent pollutants into the atmosphere. When humans were few and far between, our disregard for the environment had little overall impact; the Earth was able to absorb or naturally recycle our waste. That's not the case any more as climate change is threatening us. It's no longer justifiable to ignore the impact of our actions on others who live downstream in space or time.

Rather than simply despair about violence and environmental destruction, we should speak out at every opportunity to tell our families, friends, neighbours, and governments that we must do better. On an international scale, there needs to be coordinated action by those who think similarly.

Limits of solidarity

When a fellow member of our union was accused of misconduct with a student, our Local ensured the best possible defense for that member. We did not pass judgement on the member's conduct -

that's not our role. There's a difference between assisting the member with advice and making judgements about the alleged conduct.

In my opinion, therefore, the local police union acted inappropriately in the case of the officer recently accused of manslaughter. That union should have made sure the accused officer had the best possible legal advice but refrained from further inflaming the situation. Instead, their issuing of armbands gives the public the impression the union has made a judgement that the officer's actions were justified. While the arm band organizers may think they are supporting the officer, the public may think they are supporting the officer's conduct.

Pension facts

Our pension plan website is a valuable source of information: www.caatpension.on.ca. You may be particularly interested in "The CAAT Plan's most recent actuarial valuation (January 1, 2017) shows that the Plan is 113.3% funded, with a funding reserve of $1.6 billion." The Plan is well able to handle all current and foreseeable obligations.

It's very important to understand that our Plan is a defined benefits plan (DB), in contrast to a defined contribution plan (DC). A DB uses tax deductible active employee contributions, matching employer contributions and investment returns to generate funding. With our DB, you can calculate your expected pension even before you retire as it's based on length of service and best years of earnings. Ours also provides modest inflation protection.

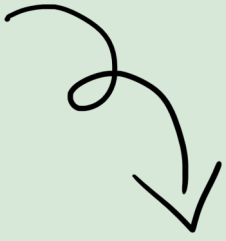
A DC depends on the investment performance of contributions. When planning retirement you cannot be sure of your level of DC pension. Even worse, your pension funds may run out during your lifetime. The last thing you need when retired or planning to retire is financial uncertainty.

Both plan types are discussed at the CAAT Plan website. You can also find info at Wikipedia and elsewhere. There is a trend among employers to having their employees switched from DB to DC. If that ever comes up in the colleges, members should emphatically reject DC.

While actively working, you should also invest in RRSPs to provide additional income support in your retirement.

Confirm or deny...

... that the college has a Workload Monitoring Group (WMG)
... that there are four management and four union members on the WMG
... that the WMG meets in response to faculty workload complaints
... that the WMG met during the third week of May to review a complaint
... that a faculty member had a workload complaint regarding work not recorded on the SWF
... that the Collective Agreement stipulates the SWF shall include all details of the total workload
... that the manager involved in the workload complaint recognized the missing workload as teaching
... that said manager, however, would not agree to put the workload on the SWF
... that said manager wanted the faculty member to "volunteer" to do the workload
... that said manager is also a management member of the WMG
... that the WMG resolved that the faculty member would not be required to perform the workload
... that management training regarding SWFs has been ongoing in the college for some time now
... that it is clear some managers need remedial training
... that not all managers understand that the Collective Agreement is both the Union's and the Colleges' Collective Agreement and must be followed by all parties
... that the union local will continue to support faculty rights under the Collective Agreement
... that any faculty who have questions concerning their workload should contact the union office at 7716
... that the college conducted an Employee Engagement Survey in 2017
... that the survey found engagement was 83% among brand new hires
... that the level of engagement for those who had worked after just one year at the college dropped to below 70%
... that disillusionment comes fast for some at the College
... that in the Language Institute, staff were told in a PowerPoint that their engagement score was 49%
... that in the same PowerPoint, they were told that three "key messages" emerged from the survey
... that, first "The College continues to commit to working on Employee Engagement"
... that, second, "Manager effectiveness at the college is up 3%"
... that , third, "77% of college staff were happy with their work tasks"
... that no other departmental stats were provided in the PowerPoint
... that the PowerPoint stopped momentarily due to the excessive sugar-coating
... that the PowerPoint presentation may help explain why engagement is 49% in the Language Institute



Exhale

Doris Fiszer

We have forty-eight hours to clear your room.
We take down photos:
a wedding portrait of you and Mother
my brother and I as teenagers
your first great grandson sitting on your lap
the great granddaughter you didn't meet
born a week before you died.

We remove packages of oatmeal raisin cookies
a box of chocolate covered plums
cans of ginger ale from the bar fridge

pack your favourite vest with seven pockets
your bridge books, tool chests, Polish cassettes,
Silesia porcelain tea pot and Seth Thomas clocks
and unplug your electric shaver.

We offer your wheel chair to the home
leave the flat screen TV and La-Z-Boy chair

stack boxes of binders
that hold your life.

I open the door
let the room exhale
the space
you've left behind.

Doris is a retired faculty member.

"Exhale" was previously published in her chapbook, The Binders.