

# NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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## College faculty set October 16 strike deadline

TORONTO – College faculty represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) have set a strike deadline of 12:01 a.m. October 16 in contract talks with their employer, the College Employer Council.

“Today was another frustrating day of bargaining, during which our employer once again refused to consider key faculty issues. They have walked away from the table,” said JP Hornick, chair of the union bargaining team. “The purpose of setting a strike deadline is to get negotiations moving – before it’s too late.”

OPSEU represents over 12,000 professors, instructors, counsellors, and librarians working at 24 public colleges across Ontario. Union members include full-time permanent and “partial load” contract faculty who teach seven to 12 hours per week.

“Our union team has been clear about its goals since bargaining began in early July,” Hornick said. “We have put forward concrete proposals to improve education quality by including the voices of faculty and students in academic decisions; we have made the case for strengthening the complement of full-time faculty; and we have called on the colleges to read the signals from Queen’s Park and start treating contract faculty fairly.

“Unfortunately our employer is not moving forward on the issues faculty care about most – even in the case of no-cost items like academic freedom or longer contracts for contract faculty.”

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas cautioned the College Employer Council to get back to the table and not wait until the last minute to negotiate.

“Students already have enough to worry about with their courses and exams and tuition fees,” he said. “They don’t need the stress and anxiety of not knowing if they will be in class next week.

“I encourage the colleges to get down to business now.”

The OPSEU strike fund sits at \$72 million.

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**For more information: JP Hornick, 416-806-9526; Mona Chevalier, OPSEU college faculty bargaining team (French only) 613-606-2238**