
LOCAL LINES

Algonquin College

OPSEU

Local 415

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Students with disabilities – Learning at AC and breaking some myths about CAL

Susan Blundon

C **LAIM:** “The Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) gives every student what they want.”

FALSE: CAL counsellors are rigorous in their demands for documentation and support for any accommodation requested by a student. It is true that we can grant interim accommodations, but for the accommodation to carry through the life cycle of a student’s career at Algonquin, strict and complete documentation must be submitted.

CLAIM: “CAL makes demands on faculty that are impossible to meet.”

FALSE: CAL counsellors have a “[duty to accommodate](#)” under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#). Under this provincial guideline, colleges must ensure facilities and services are accessible, and students are required to self-identify to receive accommodation.

CLAIM: “CAL counsellors allow anything for a retro-accommodation.”

FALSE: CAL counsellors are challenged by the retroactive accommodation confusion as well. We always ask, ‘What’s new?’ and ‘What’s changed?’ We are also amazed at how many requests we are seeing for retroactive accom-

modations. We are trying to understand how to best serve the student who must be accommodated and how to not cause undue hardship. CAL is aware that additional time and resources are required, but we cannot deny a retroactive accommodation based on costs involved.



Ontario
Human Rights Commission
Commission ontarienne des
droits de la personne

CLAIM: “CAL created the brain-child of retro-accommodations.”

FALSE: A few years ago, the Ontario Human Rights Commission came out with a report on mental health and students. This report outlined that mental health issues really come to the fore between ages 15-24. A lack of understanding, fear of stigma, and the episodic nature of mental health all combine to make situations for students with mental health issues problematic. We must acknowledge and support students who come to us with requests. Sometimes, the students are only diagnosed after the fact, and that may include after courses have been completed, and in some cases, students may not have self-identified for

various reasons. Each time, we need to consider the request.

Setting the Stage

So, what does it mean? Firstly, it is not a case of us versus them. Accommodations should always begin with and ensure the respect, dignity, and individuality of the student. Students do not just decide to have a significant incident to disrupt their lives and studies. Historically, CAL primarily served students with learning disabilities as our biggest group. These days, however, students with mental health issues lead the way.

Providing assistance to students with learning disabilities is relatively easy – aiding students with

CAL.... cont'd on p. 8

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The editor would like to acknowledge the proofing and writing assistance of

Jamie Baynes	Susan Blundon
Annette Bouzi	Doug Brandy
Carolyn Cote	Marie Durocher
Pat Kennedy	JP Lamarche
Martin Lee	Brenda Mahoney
Colleen Mayo-Pankhurst	Shawn Pentecost
Ala' Qadi	Maureen Sheppard
Judy Puritt	Claire Tortolo
Rebecca Wakelin	Jack Wilson

Officers of OPSEU Local 415

President	Pat Kennedy	7716
First Vice President	David Haley	7716
Second Vice President	Annette Bouzi	5910
Chief Steward	JP Lamarche	7716
Treasurer	Shawn Pentecost	2766
Secretary	Judy Puritt	5872
Office Administrator	Diane Brulé	7716

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Pauline Edmonds	Rm 323	2715
Shawn Pentecost	Rm 104	2766
Perth		
Patrick Murphy		5616
Woodroffe		
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Dan Anderson	CA535	3427
Landyn Blais	B382	7056
Louise Boudreault	B237c	5427
Annette Carla Bouzi	B434c	5910
Sharleen Conrad-Beatty	PI12	7066
Enrico DeFrancesco	H204N	5405
Tara Ettinger	A102	5840
Scott Fewer	B122C	3242
Judy Flieler	B382	6136
Richard Hagemeyer	T325	5974
David Haley	T307L	5932
Tracy Henderson	B217	7006
Jennifer Houselander*	B444C	5262
Pat Kennedy	C215B	7716
Howard Kravitz	B139	3106
JP Lamarche	B334D	2569
Martin Lee	B311a	6642
Sharon Lightfoot	B215B	5274
Chinedu Mba	B443	7758
David McCue	J215	5750
Michael Nauth	CA503	5232
Judy Puritt	B334C	5872
Ala' Qadi	CA532	6599
Audrey Rosa	E335	5432
Maria Taylor	E315	5396
Claire Tortolo*	B433	7351
Andrew Tyler	T322	3468
Leslie Wyman	B147C	5843

*on leave

**vacant

Correspondence should be sent to
Judy Puritt, Editor, *Local Lines*
via jpuritt@hotmail.com



Editorial

Personalized Learning—the LDP at AC

Early in June, before many faculty leave for the traditional summer break, the Board of Governors will receive the final report on personalized learning or the [Learner Driven Plan](#) (LDP) at Algonquin College. After extensive consultations seeking input, including ideas, comments, and suggestions from “thousands,” the final plan is going to be revealed.

Whereas the participation rate didn't reach the goal set out initially, the final count appears good. So, while this looks inclusive, three times as many non-faculty employees participated in the personalized learning investigations as overall employees. Emerging themes are identified, and the college's LDP page explains how we are addressing current and future approaches to learning and work, because there is a growing expectation that content be personalized.

It turns out that there is already a high level of personalized learning at the college. Students can claim credit for experiential learning and for studies completed elsewhere. Students can choose among modalities for some of their learning. Efforts are being made to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate diversity in identity, as well as to anticipate and provide support for individuals who are disabled or disadvantaged.

So, what's the concern? Personalized learning needs more reach. The four identified themes include responsiveness and proactivity, forging connections, flexibility, and employee excellence. I would propose that for these goals to be met for AC learners, AC faculty, counsellors,

and librarians should also experience greater responsiveness and proactivity, connections, flexibility, and employer excellence.

Yes, let's hold this same standard of personalized learning to personalized working. Why not? It's part of a new way of thinking and is widely touted as the way of employment future.

A responsive and proactive employer might hear and start to take action on chronic concerns faced and identified by faculty, counsellors, and librarians. At a March playback session, a faculty member asked about the intended funding of professional development for faculty to learn how to be *intentionally intrusive, responsive, and proactive*. Claude Brule, VP Academic explained, “We will need to carve out this cost, if we choose to distinguish ourselves with the Learner Driven Plan.” (If you missed attending a stakeholder playback session, you can download a narrated PowerPoint [here](#).) We'll see soon enough how distinguished AC plans to be, when the budget comes out later in June.

In the meantime, the full-time versus part-time balance continues to be problematic, and those with multiple contracts (often critical for part-time employees to cobble together a living wage) are being closely monitored and restricted. It would seem that a responsive and proactive approach might have started with opening up more full-time positions to address the 156 comments from students expressing concerns about *access to faculty*.

For now, whether you did or did not attend a session, here are the [Faculty Stakeholder Results](#). In October, the “detailed implementation plan,” is coming out. For now, enjoy your summer!

Public Sector Wage Consultation

Pat Kennedy, President

As you may have heard, the government has announced a consultation through the Treasury Board on how to "manage Ontario public sector compensation growth." On Friday, April 26 there was a consultation specifically for OPSEU, which included Executive Board Members and Sector Chairs, and on May 3 there was another just for the post-secondary sector. The first session began with a government lecture about debt and "unsustainable" wage growth. We believe they are engaging in this consultation to try to insulate themselves against future Charter challenges,

although any interference with free and collective bargaining will likely result in labour Charter cases. The entire consultation took 55 minutes.

The consultations should wind up by late May. Overall, for now, I cannot say they will try to open up collective agreements and interfere with current wages or defined wage increases because this would be the clearest kind of Charter violation. It is more likely that they will impose restrictions on future collective agreements or apply regulations. I assume some type of direction from the government will be forthcoming prior to the start of bargaining this fall in the

provincial school systems. I will keep you updated as information becomes available.

On top of the outsourcing of both faculty and counsellors' work, this is clearly a sign the collective agreement is being scrutinized and provides us with a wakeup call that we need to focus on building strong and engaged locals so we can fight back against cutbacks that are undoubtedly coming our way.

Finally, CBC News has learned more details about how the Ford government will measure the performance of Ontario's colleges and universities to determine the funding they receive. For more, follow this [link](#).

Growing solidarity through challenging political times

Annette Bouzi, Second Vice President

In order to continue to stand tall and united during these challenging political times, our local has been involved in a number of solidarity building initiatives. The conversations we are involved in are important for many reasons, including the need to maintain unity across the labour movement and use our collective strengths for progress.

The Ottawa Post-Secondary Education Coalition is an ad hoc grouping of labour and student unions from colleges and universities in the city. The coalition gathers to strategize about issues on our respective campuses and to identify responses to the provincial austerity plan. By learning about what is happening on

campuses across the city, we can anticipate what could be coming to our campus in order to plan ahead, bring back information to our respective locals and, where appropriate, organize collective responses.

At a provincial level, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) created the *Power of Many* campaign. The idea behind it is for labour unions and activists to organize and resist the current government's pro-corporation, privatization policies. There are rallies, town hall meetings, days of action, and more happening province-wide to raise awareness about these issues and to show the government that labour is united.

One of many important solidarity building tools within our own union is the OPSEU Ottawa Area Council. We gather across sectors to support issues of common concern within our municipality.

Our local continues to practice and build solidarity every day. By doing so, we accomplish more together than we could alone. We break down silos, learn from one another and make our movement stronger. That is exactly the strength we need during these challenging political times.

Upcoming: [June 7 – Power of Many Day of Action](#) (to mark the one year anniversary of resistance to government cuts).

LMT Update

Judy Puritt

This spring, your Local Mobilizing Team (LMT) organized two events. On March 11, we ran a wellness table. Thanks to Carmen Hust, people who stopped by the J-link table walked away with a healthy snack and information on how to create a *flourishing healthy classroom*. The key steps are summarized via SELF:

Sleep well : Sleep is critical for our minds and bodies to develop, create, regenerate, and heal. Sleep sets the stage to flourish!

Eat Healthy and Exercise: Your body and mind need energy and exercise to strengthen, respond, construct, and shape how you will be able to respond and flourish!

Look for the Positive: Your thinking impacts how you feel and behave; it sets the stage to flourish. Look for the positive! Challenge your own negative thoughts; use affirming self-talk; seek potential.

Foster Connections: Your friends, family, and the folks you share the day with matter to your wellbeing. Find ways to connect to share challenges and celebrate successes to make a nourishing learning environment. Find time to have fun with others!

Then, on April 23, thanks to your donations and support, we ran an exam week outreach table providing students with healthy snacks. These portable snacks and words of encouragement elicited many appreciative comments and gratitude.

Grievance Update

JP Lamarche

The grievances continue to flow as the 2018/2019 academic year comes to a close. Many new individual grievances have been filed that seek to find remedies for a variety of violations of the collective agreement, and several new policy grievances have been filed seeking protection for members. The violations run the entire gamut of the CA including vacation pay, maternity leave, failure to manage, partial-load registry, retaliation, and union interference to name a few.

While not a new development in how the college responds to grievances, individual members are becoming increasingly frustrated in receiving canned responses to their complaints. In some cases, members are receiving identical responses. This cut and paste approach to their very real issues is creating a real sense of distrust, and outright contempt for the college. I've raised the issue several times at grievance meetings, and the only response I get from the human resource representatives is "noted." The managers who

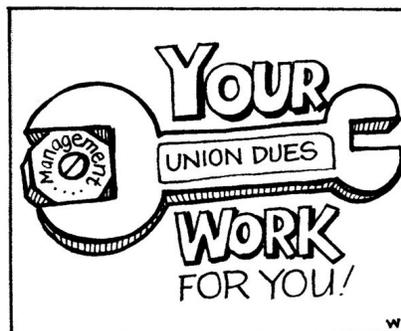
attend the meetings, either chairs or deans, essentially sit in the room like extra pieces of furniture. They contribute nothing to the discussion, and never have questions for the grievor or the union representatives.

On a more positive note, many new members have been by the union office seeking advice. In several instances, members were told by colleagues to go talk to the Local before reaching out to human resources. On a less positive note, those members who do reach out to HR are having trouble getting a response. I've had several instances of members not receiving responses to phone messages or e-mails, and I've had to personally contact either the director of labour relations, or the vice-president of HR to action items for members. While the faculty in question were happy with my interventions, I shouldn't have to step-in to solve routine administrative matters that are well within the purview of any competent HR "business partner".

GMM Notice

Tues., August 27 12–2 pm
General Membership Meeting
(Rm TBA)

Plan to attend and exercise your right to vote. Ensure strong representation on college committees, such as employment stability and health and safety, as well as regional meetings and OPSEU Convention.



The Educational Developer's Manifesto: Give us a real center for teaching excellence

Rebecca Wakelin

Where did you learn how to teach? How did you learn how to teach?

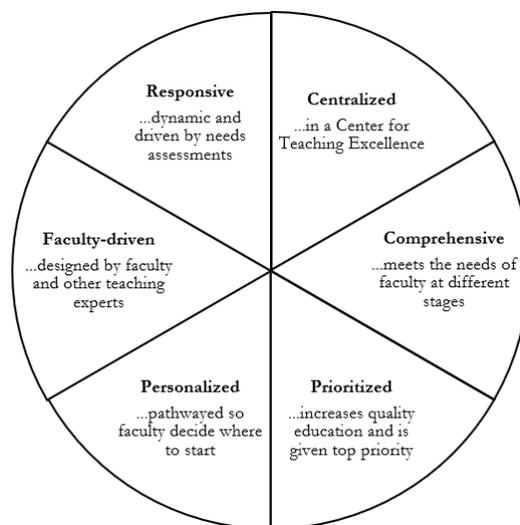
Was it by participating in professional development? Was it by observing peers ...or was it simply by osmosis?

These questions have interested me for the last ten years of my career. I am an educational developer – put simply, I teach people how to teach. Not surprisingly, I am very interested in figuring out how people learn how to teach, so much so that I dedicated a decade to studying it through two graduate degrees and working extensively in the field.

Whilst studying how college professors learned how to teach, I worked at another college at a teaching center as a fledgling educational developer. Our direct boss was the VP Academic, so we (and by default the practice of teaching itself) had a direct line to the executive team at the college. Teaching, our core line of business, was reflected in the priorities of the institution. We offered peer-to-peer faculty development; we brought together the best teachers to coach, mentor, and teach others. I joined a national network, first in Canada then the United States, of fellow educational developers whose contributions added much depth to the field and who operated dynamic, faculty-run

centers in their own institutions. Everyone was doing exciting things!

Fast-forward a few years and a few career shifts for me. I never left educational development; I only changed the location where I practiced it. I joined the Algonquin College team in 2015, hoping to work for the Center for Teaching



Excellence (note the deliberate choice of name here: doesn't "teaching excellence" sound great?) and continue to build my skills and career. When I arrived, I was surprised to learn that there was no Center for Teaching Excellence and while there was a good set of onboarding teacher development programs, there was not much more than that.

I remember the VP Academic at my previous college once stating (half-jokingly) that

having teaching development training without a Center for Teaching Excellence was an insult to teaching. While funny at the time, her words were seemingly the reality here at Algonquin. Her argument was that by not having a place where faculty go to talk about, train for and practice teaching, you send a message that the act of teaching is not as important as other employee functions, and that other college priorities take precedent over what we all came here to do: educate. In line with this way of thinking, most post-secondary institutions in Canada, Australia, Europe and America have moved towards creating faculty-driven Centers for Teaching Excellence. We have not.

How can we be a leader in delivering post-secondary education when we are decades behind in the field of faculty development? Are we ok with teaching not being a priority in this college? What I have learned throughout my time in the field is that faculty development is a dynamic, rich, bottom-up process. The best faculty development is as identified in the learning wheel: **centralized, responsive, faculty-driven, comprehensive, personalized, prioritized.**

Manifesto... cont'd on p. 6

Manifesto... cont'd from p. 5

My own department, Learning and Teaching Services (LTS), which provides all the “after care” of faculty development at the college, has tried to align faculty development to these ideals. Last year we introduced the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), which is in itself a grassroots, peer-feedback teacher training model. As a response to faculty concerns about increasing numbers of international students in our classrooms, we launched a training needs analysis to both determine what faculty need and source faculty experts who can provide content for training programs. We have launched a



faculty-led Teaching and Learning Advisory Group (TLAG) to help us hear the voice of faculty more accurately.

We have great vision and ambition, but still have to contend with not having a real Center for Teaching Excellence, not having control over all faculty-training programming and not having much say or priority at the executive level.

My manifesto is simple: we need a Center for Teaching Ex-

cellence to engage *all* faculty in faculty development practices. We need control over the direction of teaching in the college with a direct line to the executive team. We need the ability, through programming and strategy, to raise the profile of teaching here at Algonquin and have it reflected in strategic planning. We need one, centralized place to talk teaching, to exchange best practices, to develop our talented people into the best teachers they can be.

Together we can make a change in how we make and encourage great teachers at Algonquin. Let's chat if you too want a centralized place that celebrates all things teaching.

Attention contract teachers! Update on your job insecurity

Colleen Mayo-Pankhurst

In the current political environment, where the social safety net is being eroded and Ontarians' rights are under attack in many sectors, it is more important than ever to know your rights in your work environment.

A brief Information Session will be held on **Tues., June 11 from 12:00 – 13:00 in B184** to update all contract faculty (part-time, sessional, partial-load) on issues of concern. Full-time faculty are welcome to attend and encourage contract colleagues to attend—awareness is needed.

At the session you will get updates on

- Equal pay for equal work
- Transparent implementation of the partial-load registry
- Union certification vote for part-time and sessional workers

- Job security
- Access to permanent jobs, paid sick days, and benefits
- Opportunities to support efforts to improve job security and working conditions

The college strike in the autumn of 2017 broke significant ground for our sector. A groundswell of support and organizing for decent work in Ontario had culminated in the passing of Bill 148, a historic piece of legislation that won the biggest advances in workers' rights in over a generation. Among other major gains such as increasing the minimum wage, Bill 148 legislated equal pay for equal work.

Our strike was part of this wave of change, and although the new provincial government rolled back most of the Bill 148 gains, our sector continues to fight to protect these advances through

the collective bargaining process. Staying up to date will allow part-time faculty to be knowledgeable about sectoral developments and reveal opportunities to get involved in defending these gains - so that we can win fairness for contract faculty and set the bar for decent work in the post-secondary sector and beyond.



Woodroffe Library: A new take on space and use

Judy Puritt with input from Maureen Sheppard and Brenda Mahoney

Have you walked through the new library on the Woodroffe campus? Taken the time to admire the design and use of space? Have you noticed it's a vibrant area with students engaged in learning? There are big open areas, equipment to borrow, special collections, and so much more.

Take the time to get to know your librarians too. At Woodroffe, you will find two of Algonquin's three librarians, Brenda Mahoney and Maureen Sheppard. Between these energetic advocates, who are eager to help you solve your learning issues and willing to acquire new resources, and the support staff, you are bound to be successful.

DARE renewal

With the construction of the DARE District, the library rebranded and redesigned services. The hours of operation refer to times when staff is available, but the vision was for the library to be open 24-7. As you can imagine, the openness, while appealing, also presented problems since some of the collection and loan items (i.e., laptops, peripherals, DVDs, and AODA equipment) must be lockable. Currently, the library has 80 laptops, 45 of which are newer and circulate heavily, with average circulation totaling 1100 per fall and winter months!

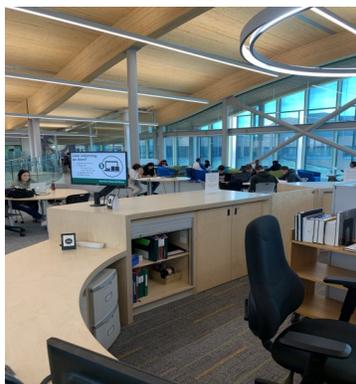
For the collections, the process of checkout has been automated to allow self-checkout through one of two control points. And, not to worry if technology concerns you—there are forever students willing to help newbies manage the process. Of course, certain materials cannot leave the secure areas, such as the

particular law or reference collection titles, but students are good about conducting their research at the tables in the stacks' area.

Another exciting new feature of this library is the self-check lockers. If you are unable to get to the library before it "closes," your resource will be waiting in one of the afterhours lockers.

So much more ...

There's not even a question that the space looks clean and modern. Mahoney and Sheppard are quick to point out, however, that the library is much bigger than what is



visible! The digital resource collection is huge, and it's very valuable. Although Sheppard is on the Program Review Committee, she needs faculty to voice demands when resources are inadequate.

The growth in technology has meant more and more resources are accessed online. Whereas many journals run \$2-3000 per year, some titles can run up to \$11,000 per year. In such cases, Sheppard emphasized that they try to look for bundled packages.

Fortunately, for most studies, students can use the One Search functionality. While Mahoney pro-

vides instruction on library use and research, Sheppard works on the backend making resources findable. Searching has to be easy and intuitive, as students give up quickly after their first attempt comes back with no results.

The efforts at making searching easy and accessible appear to be paying off, as the annual usage figures for 2018 clearly display how extensively our students use the library:

- Academic Search Complete (the library's largest journal databases) – 421,229 full-text retrievals
- Business Source Complete – 15,088 full-text retrievals
- CINAHL (nursing) – 21,408 full-text retrievals
- College complete ebook collection – 26,789 ebook section requests
 - Films on demand – 13,888 views

Beyond Woodroffe Campus

Access to online [resources](#) is common across the campuses, although much of the technical work for the libraries is done through Woodroffe. An extensive inter-library loan system allows sharing of print materials among the campuses. Of course, Algonquin is also part of the Ottawa area [SmartLibrary](#) network, allowing students to access 12 libraries in the National Capital Region.

Did you visit the Library Learning Lab (L3) on the second floor during Kaleidoscope? In conjunction with Counselling and the [Student Learning Centre](#), the library hosted workshops promoting services. Workshops are there to help you learn how to use resources or review plagiarism, but you can also

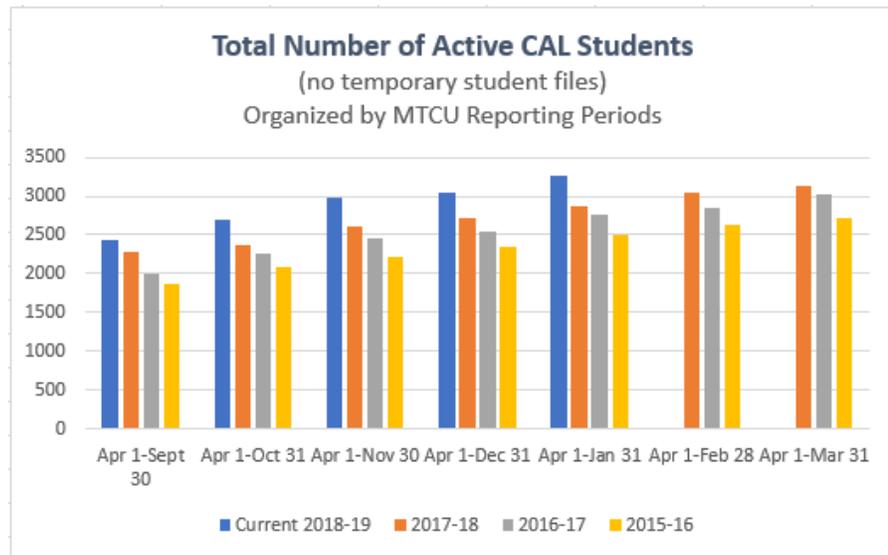
CAL... cont'd from p. 1.

mental health-related issues is more complicated.

Let's consider some numbers at CAL as our student numbers are increasing at an astonishing pace. This past Winter 2019, CAL accommodated 1544 requests for accommodation needs during final exams in the test room and office spaces (in E building), as well as at other locations across campus. This is a 42% increase since 2015, and it does not include semester tests, which numbered 2742 for W'19.

This might also help faculty appreciate the challenge of individuals submitting their tests late. We have deadlines in place because our numbers are off the chart. Last minute drop-offs are problematic when we are supporting 20 students writing tests at any given time. From year to year, the increase in students seeking and needing accommodations across the three campuses has grown by 7% - 14% per year. It is a real challenge keeping up with this demand and, for things to change, we need faculty to speak up.

Currently, there are 3264 students registered with CAL. We have a team of seven full-time disability counsellors (one just approved in May) and two part-time counsellors. Our actual caseload is heavy. We must document, review, and request full support. We must look at the documentation students bring to their college life and review the fit and needs for post-secondary. Most faculty know of the test requirements, but accommodations can be far reaching, including notetaking, occasional extensions on assignments, alternatives



to presentations, recording lectures, etc.)

Also, accommodations are not cast in stone. Accommodations can be a conversation. Remember, their point in attending college is to acquire information, and as counsellors, we are intermediaries, helping them get that information. Parameters need to be established, and dialogue is encouraged. While an accommodation cannot be declined outright, faculty do have the right to, for example, ask a student to stop recording for others' privacy and confidentiality.

Where is the Retroactive Accommodation Policy for AC?

Since 2016-17, counsellors have been asking the college to create a definitive policy to address the matter of retroactive accommodations. President Jensen received a letter in March 2016 from the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) outlining the needs of students with accommodation needs. CAL is figuring out the process, trying to standardize reporting forms students take to their medical team, and forms we can send to chairs.

There are no standard retroactive accommodation procedures

across higher education in Ontario. It's important to understand that students do not come to us saying, 'This is what I need.' Rather, we have generated forms to standardize the process, to reduce discrepancies, and to ensure doctors respond to questions we must have answered. This is all highly challenging in an atmosphere where there is no policy. We can point to issues and problems, but we really need faculty to pick up the momentum and add their voices to this cause.

Some of the confusion comes out of questions around [AA21](#) (Deferred Evaluation) and retroactive accommodation. It doesn't help that there hasn't been any further guidance out of the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) since the initial [2015 report](#) release. We hear many complaints. The administrative workload is frustrating, but we're doing what we can in an environment where there are no clear guidelines beyond meeting the Ontario Human Rights and AODA "duty to accommodate." Add your voices: we need a clear policy now!

Solidarity works!

Shawn Pentecost

Ontario college faculty know that solidarity works! We proved it when we made significant gains in negotiating our latest collective agreement. Despite the constant pressure from the employer to agree to concessions, no concessions were made in the 2017 round of bargaining. We were even able to get Academic Freedom included in our collective agreement, something many experts believed we would never get. The one reason we were able to do it was because we were united in solidarity for a common cause.

We need to channel that same energy and resolve to work in solidarity with our fellow comrades in the health, education, and public service sectors. The current government has not spared any sector in its cuts. Families with children who have autism will have to choose between continuing to support their children's needs and other necessities of life. Elementary and high school classes are going to increase in size. And, college funding will be linked to graduate income. Early Childhood Educators, Social Service Workers, and Developmental Service Workers, to

name a few, do not make as much money as graduates from many of the other programs that the college offers. Does that make their contribution to Ontario less than others? Does

the Ford government. We need to raise our individual and collective voices to combat these terrible cuts.

The various divisions within OPSEU are working together to support each other, and develop common strategies for fighting back against these cuts. Our local is working with other post-secondary education unions in the Ottawa area to raise awareness, and we have held rallies to lobby for change. The CAAT-A division is working with the other education unions to develop strategies for combatting this austerity agenda. There is amazing collaboration going on in the effort to stop cuts.

So what can you do?

- Contact your MPP to voice your opposition to the cuts to education, healthcare, and support services.

- On social media, share news articles and stories of how these government cuts are going to hurt Ontarians.

- When you are advised of a rally, attend: there is strength in numbers.

- Contact the academic union office (x7716) and ask what you can do.



that mean our programs that train workers to work with our most vulnerable deserve less funding?

These are questions we often don't think of as we believe they may not directly impact us. We need to remember that we are not only faculty members in Ontario colleges, we are also clients of services being cut by

Get to know your stewards— Ala' Qadi (Electrical Engineering Tech)

Interviewed by Judy Puritt

Recently, I connected with Ala' Qadi, who became a steward with Local 415 after the Fall 2017 strike. He has been active a relatively short time, but his passion is genuine and his concern for fellow colleagues palpable. He is acutely aware of the changing times we live in, and he is eager to be part of a forward-looking and proactive group.

You are a steward with Local 415 – what made you step up to this role?

For me, the strike was a big eye-opener! I felt very passionately about the causes we identified as worthy of walking out on. I was attentive to the details and stayed informed throughout the process leading up to and then while we were out. The suspension of Article 2 and the inability to grieve for positions was unjust, and I began to realize the importance of standards and supporting part-time faculty who were in highly vulnerable and precarious positions. Jack Wilson, former 1st VP of the Local, nominated me and I haven't looked back since. In fact, I continued to stay informed and up-to-date on post-strike developments, sharing that knowledge with my colleagues who did not follow developments as closely.

Also, I had various issues that I was uncertain I could get corrected without help. The Local helped me get through those issues, and that support made me want to give back and help other



colleagues get more informed. I want others to know the benefit of getting help through and from the union – it makes such a difference knowing there is someone there supporting your position.

How long have you been at the college?

Back in February 2013, I was working part-time at the college planning the Bachelor of Automation and Robotics and working on curriculum. Since I was still in the private sector and just investigating possibilities, this early arrangement suited me. Fast-forward to August 2014, and I was hired full-time to Mechanical and Transportation Technology, where I had been working part-time and continued to teach for the first four years of my tenure here at Algonquin. In August 2018, I successfully attained an internal transfer to Electrical Engineering Technology, and so now, I have experience in two

different departments, which of course also means, I have experience under different management styles.

Since becoming a steward, how have you felt about becoming more active?

The decision to become more active came out of the strike and other interactions with the Local. Basically, it meant that I became a steward in January 2018, which was followed by sitting on five to six selection committees and joining the Local Mobilizing Team (LMT). Joining the LMT has let me make a better connection with faculty and students. I enjoy this activity; it's acting in a consulting capacity – supporting members, reviewing the Collective Agreement, and taking questions from members to officers.

You know, I was not initially involved with the Local. I was active in the student union during my undergrad and then in grad school, as a TA, I was a member of that union. Between that period and working here at the college, I was in private industry, and that was not unionized.

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

My suggestion? Be proactive. Don't be scared to talk to your union steward or any of the union representatives. We're a friendly bunch and willing to listen. If you would like to be active and don't know how or where to step up, stop one of the LMT events or

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Welcoming new members—Martin Lee

Winter is finally over and (at least according to the calendar) summer is soon to be here. Traditionally, this is the time when changes are reflected upon and there feels like a lot of ‘activity’ inside and outside of the work place. In Aboriginal teachings, the Spring portion of the medicine wheel is associated with infancy and re-birth. So, too, at Algonquin we are about to welcome a new cohort of full-time professors, counsellors and librarians who bring new skills, voices, viewpoints and (importantly) energy to the college. As new full-time people arrive, they often create space for new part-time and

(sometimes) partial load faculty in their wake.

New professors are on-boarded officially at the college with the Faculty Learning Program. Counsellors and librarians undergo training in their areas. All three groups, naturally, find themselves part of the OPSEU Local 415. Unions are important for all of the usual reasons: working with management to help resolve workplace issues and advocating for employees in those situations, as well as mitigating in situations where human rights have been violated.

Unions also serve social functions, and it’s in this time where comradeship is very im-

portant. Welcoming new people, ensuring they know their rights, explaining our hard-fought-for Collective Agreement, and getting new hires on the right step of their salary scale are all important activities of the local.

Watch out for the Local Mobilizing Team (LMT) in your emails and around the college. We’ll be running sessions teaching people how to understand their SWFs. In the Fall, we’ll have sessions to welcome the new hires into the fold.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer! And if on campus, enjoy the respite from the crowds.

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attend a rally – notices are sent through OPSEU Local Comms and posted on Facebook. Just get connected. Currently, we have a non-steward on the LMT, and her input has been appreciated.

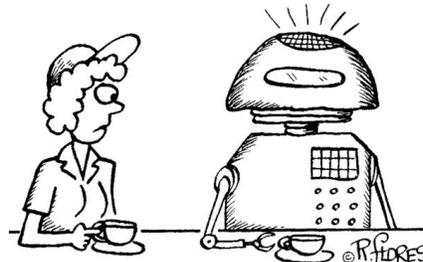
What has been the biggest discovery since being active?

My biggest discovery to date has been that some of the issues I faced in my former and current departments are not unique to me and our area(s). It didn’t take long to figure out the value of sticking together to make change happen. When we share our situations and take the pieces together, cases can be built. Discussing situations brings to light differences in management styles and might help reveal repeated issues that need to be stopped or changed. For exam-

ple we have common experiences around curriculum development, and yet the allocation of time varies from one to another department. Just check in to see if your efforts are being addressed similarly to others.

Final comments?

What I really hope is that I can contribute to change by raising awareness about the rights and duties we have in the CA. I hope to get faculty more engaged with the union and with each other. We shared and learned a lot during our weeks of walking the pavement in the fall of 2017, and it would be good to still be talking to each other more. We need a strong faculty to have a powerful academic institution. I find it hurtful that we are seen as a disposable commodity by some of the



“Believe it or not, I used to be a person but then I became non-union.”

leadership. We, the faculty, are the college’s greatest asset and should be treated more respectfully. I take pride in my work. The reason I’m in education is exactly that I know that I bring quality and have knowledge to transfer. We are not machines, and when we band together, we can remind management that teacherless classrooms are not the future—talented and human faculty make the difference in genuine and applied learning.

OPSEU Convention 2019—Indivisible

Annette Bouzi

Several stewards and officers from our college attended OPSEU Convention 2019 to represent the interests of our local as your elected delegates. It was an empowering and inspiring few days, where we were able to share with and learn from other OPSEU activists. Convention is described as “our union's highest-ranking authority, where delegates debate and vote on policy and motions.” The theme of this year’s convention was *Indivisible* and many discussions focussed on the importance of unity to build strength and resistance.

Our CAAT-A 2017 bargaining team received the [*Leah Casselman Award*](#) in recognition of their “mobilizing to win” effort. JP Hornick, bargaining team chair, gave a moving speech which was met with a standing ovation by the nearly 2,000 people in attendance. Hornick spoke of the importance of democratizing our collective bargaining processes, building alliances across the labour movement and the need to map our membership so that our needs can be well reflected in bargaining. Hornick also spoke of the mantras the team held dear: “educate – organize – mobilize” and “all of us or none of us.”

The leaders of both the provincial and federal New Democratic Party addressed convention. Andrea Horwath spoke about the importance of public services to Ontarians and how we must fight back against austerity. Jagmeet Singh’s speech was punctuated with many messages of unity, like his belief that problems



L-R Judy Puritt, Annette Bouzi, David Haley (standing), Shawn Pentecost, Tracy Henderson

can be solved if we come together. His core message was that when we help people around us, we all rise together.

This was an election year at OPSEU. Smokey Thomas (President), Eddy Almeida (1st VP/Treasurer) and Sara Labelle (2nd VP) were all re-elected to their respective positions. From our division, Anna Ainsworth, faculty at Seneca College, is newly elected to the [Executive Board](#) for the 2019 to 2021 term

At our CAAT-A Division caucus meeting, the Divisional Executive updated delegates on issues specific to college faculty, making it clear that they continue to champion our issues. We discussed plans for resisting the current government’s attacks on post-secondary education and received updates on the partial-load registry, including the status of grievances. We learned more about the Feet on the Ground effort and upcoming Contract Faculty Info Sessions across Ontario (including the June 11 session at Algonquin College). Faculty delegates were briefed on how we are challenging the cancellation of the Provincial Joint Task Force via the courts and other mechanisms, such as

the re-established Employer Employee Relations Committee.

Convention always provides an opportunity for those in attendance to learn and grow in their roles as activists and leaders. We are tasked with bringing that information back to our locals to empower our membership. Convention also provides important opportunities for delegates to be a voice for the membership we represent and contribute to how our union is built for our future.

Retirement Brief

Doug Brandy (retiree)

Getting ready for retirement? You will want to know what pension income to expect.



Your OPSEU steward should be able to help with calculations. You will also want to discuss survivor pension benefit - by default your surviving spouse will receive 60% but you may opt for 75% if you’re willing to accept a smaller pension for yourself.

I have found my CAAT pension is quite adequate for month to month expenses. If you want to be able to do more like travel, buy a new vehicle, etc., you will want a supplement such as an RRSP. If you were hired before 1991 and have not cashed in your sick leave gratuity, you may pay it into an RRSP on retirement. That’s what I did, and it has made a big difference.