

# LOCAL LINES

## Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls: Not Just A Problem “Over There”

Martin Lee, Local 415 Secretary

*C/W: This article will mention acts of violence against women and Indigenous people.*



The saddest emails for us to receive in our inboxes are the notes from the college about the death of a student. Such a loss of potential affects us all, and as faculty who often interact with these students in a very personal way, these losses hit us hard.

The horrific news of the murder and potential sexual violation of Savanna Pikuyak, a 22-year-old student from Nunavut who was studying in the Pre-Health Sciences Pathway program, struck us all in different ways. I will not name Savanna’s murderer in this article, and invite those who are unaware of the details of her passing to use Google for any information that they seek (warning – this is heavy reading).

It is important to put Savanna’s death into some context. The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Report was released in early June 2019 and [the full 1200+ page report](#) (with supplemental reporting for Quebec) makes for sobering reading. It addresses the role of relationships, human and Indigenous rights, the history of colonization, and how each of these contexts can inform our understanding of the issue of violence against First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people. Personally, I recommend reading the executive summary—I found it to be confronting, and it challenged me to reflect on my role in a system which has neglected this topic for too long.

This can all feel overwhelming for us to address, but we, collectively, have the power to pressure systems to respond to the real threats to human lives in the MMIWG Report. As a union, one of the major wins from the [Kaplan arbitration award](#), which we should all be proud of, is the recognition of Indigenous ways of learning that is now enshrined in our new Collective Agreement. This has given us the leverage to advocate for better recognition of our Indigenous peers. Additionally, the Letter of Understanding on equity has been incorporated into Article 4 of the CA, enabling the union to grieve college practices that are deemed to be prejudicial to our more vulnerable members.

But each of us, individually, must pressure the college to do better for our First Nations and Indigenous colleagues. While it’s important that the language used in college documents and the signage/images that we see throughout the halls of the college are updated, these elements are simply a start to a very long process of reconciliation. There is much talk (and limited action) at Algonquin College on the calls to action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Reports](#), but the MMIWG Report draws our attention to spaces where the college needs to do better.

Our Indigenous supports on campus are horrendously under-funded and under-supported. Our faculty in those spaces are overworked, especially during times like the appalling murder of Savanna Pikuyak. The entire workload inevitably falls on the few Indigenous representatives that the college has. Imagine grieving one of your community members AND being instructed to conduct additional work on campus to ensure the college has ticked a box.

Algonquin College bears the name of some of the original stewards of this land. Algonquin College has a lot of work to do before it can live up to that name. Your Local 415 executive is committed to amplifying the voices of our Indigenous community and aiding them during challenging times with all the resources we can.

### Inside This Issue...

Standing Against the Notwithstanding ...	2
A Word from Annette.....	3
Jack Wilson Steward Solidarity Award ....	5
Important Changes to Article 4.03 .....	6
CAAT-A Update.....	7
Faculty: The College’s Greatest Asset.....	7
Day 10: Why Are They All Leaving?.....	8
Health and Safety: Fire Hazards .....	9
Steward Profile: Rob Chabassol .....	10



**EDITORIAL:**  
**STANDING AGAINST THE “NOTWITHSTANDING” CLAUSE**

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I’ve decided to use this space to attempt to take back a word that Doug Ford’s government has so flagrantly abused in recent weeks: “**Notwithstanding**.” Simply translated, the term is nothing more than fanciful legal doublespeak for the more banal “in spite of....” For example, “**Notwithstanding** the fact that I usually try to avoid being overtly political in my editorials, Ford’s recent use of the **Notwithstanding** clause against CUPE’s education workers has made me so upset, as both a parent of school-age children who require the support of education workers, and as a unionized worker in Ontario, that I’m dedicating this space to discuss it.”

As you will recall, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes a clause (Section 33—better known as the “**Notwithstanding**” clause) that allows provincial and federal governments to temporarily override certain other sections of the document. **Notwithstanding** the fact that this clause has rarely been used in Canadian history (and only once previously in Ontario, by none other than Ford himself...), it was somehow deemed appropriate and necessary by the government to invoke the clause in Bill 28, ironically and patronizingly named the “Keeping Students in Class Act,” aimed at pre-emptively ending an impending strike by CUPE education workers.

**Notwithstanding** your opinions on the specific bargaining demands of the CUPE education workers, and also **Notwithstanding** your opinion of Ford’s government, this use of Section 33 to strip away CUPE’s Charter-given right to strike needs to be understood as an abhorrent and authoritarian attempt to stifle organized labour union activity in the province.

**Notwithstanding** the fact that Bill 28 was recently repealed by Ford, the very fact that the use of Section 33 was even considered as a means to end a perfectly legal labour protest—in lieu of good-faith bargaining or arbitration—represents a serious threat to the rights of every worker in Ontario, unionized or otherwise.

**Notwithstanding** Bill 28, CUPE courageously threatened to engage in an illegal strike, serving as a rallying cry for all of Ontario’s workers and culminating in preparations for a General Strike.

**Notwithstanding** the fact that Bill 28 was targeted at a different union, and that it may have felt separate and distant from us in the CAAT-A division of OPSEU, you should know that even though things didn’t escalate to the point of needing to inform our membership about the logistics of this General Strike, our OPSEU CAAT-A division would absolutely have participated, and you would have been asked to picket in solidarity.

Why? Because, **Notwithstanding** the fact that Bill 28 was aimed at CUPE education workers, Ford’s attack on one union’s right to strike is an attack on the rights of all unions. And **Notwithstanding** the fact that Ontario’s unionized workers are represented by 54 different unions affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Labour, the image of dozens of Ontario union leaders, including former CAAT-A President and current leader of OPSEU, JP Hornick, [standing on stage and chanting “shame” in solidarity](#) (“Standing against the Nothwithstanding” as my *punny* mind wants to call it) is one that will not soon be forgotten.

Unfortunately, **Notwithstanding** Ford’s ridiculous overreach in using Section 33 to end a CUPE strike that hadn’t even started yet (the difference between this and the often-used act of legislating education workers back to work is significant), he is likely to remain the Premier of Ontario until the next provincial election in 2026, and there is absolutely nothing stopping him from trying to use the **Notwithstanding** clause again.

This directly concerns us, because, **Notwithstanding** the resounding and significant victory of having Bill 28 repealed through an unprecedented demonstration of labour unity in the province, the threat of Ford using Section 33 in a similarly cavalier way moving forward remains a blight on all future hopes of bargaining in good faith. Unfortunately, we *will* have to bargain with this government again, through the College Employer Council, when our current Collective Agreement expires in 2024.

Therefore, **Notwithstanding** the victory for organized labour that the repeal of Bill 28 represents, labour groups in Ontario need to remain vigilant: we must remain prepared to withstand the continued threat of **Notwithstanding**.



## A WORD FROM ANNETTE

### Annette Bouzi, Local 415 President

**T**he fall is my favourite time of the academic year. It is a moment of new beginnings and there is a vibrant energy across our campuses. With most of our courses returning to face-to-face delivery, this fall in particular has felt special. After the challenges and losses we have all experienced over the last few years, reconnecting feels good.

#### **Bargaining**

This fall has also brought about newness in our working conditions, as we finally have a new Collective Agreement. We are pleased with the outcome of [Arbitrator William Kaplan's decision](#). At a time when wages were not negotiable because of the government-imposed 1% cap, our Bargaining Team was able to present compelling arguments to push forward the matters that our membership had mandated them to prioritize. We secured "reopener" language, which means that in the event Bill 124 is struck down, our Bargaining Team will get back to the table to negotiate a fair wage increase.

This round saw important enhancements to Partial-load faculty rights, including how courses are to be assigned and how service credits are calculated. These changes significantly affect some of our most marginalized colleagues and ensure greater dignity in their working conditions. Workplace precarity affects our entire college system and community—the enhancements to Partial-load job security impact us all.

Arbitrator Kaplan's award incorporated the Letter of Understanding (LOU) on Employment Equity into Article 4 of our new Collective Agreement. Here at Local 415, we have been pushing the college for several years to stand behind the letter and spirit of the LOU, which has been an understanding between the parties since 1989. We will continue to hold the college to account on issues of equity, with specific attention to Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism. This work is long overdue.

After the provincial bargaining town hall, our Local held numerous bargaining information sessions to discuss the implementation of our new CA. We hosted meetings at each of our campuses as well as online.

It took more than fifteen months to resolve bargaining. During that time, the college community was bombarded by aggressive and anti-union messages from management. Our Bargaining Team used every tool in its kit to negotiate before calling a strike, including requesting interest arbitration nearly a year before the college finally agreed to that process. Bargaining should have been resolved long before it was settled. The hostility demonstrated by the CEC and colleges has caused harm to labour relations and will, in my view, take a lot of time to repair.



*Local 415 Treasurer and CAAT-A Bargaining Team Member, Shawn Pentecost, prepares to lead a bargaining information session.*

#### **Provincial Activities**

Local 415 continues our long tradition of being an active participant in OPSEU/SEFPO's provincial activities, both inside and outside of the Academic Division. As representatives of Local 415, we ensure that we are sharing strategies from within our Local with our union colleagues across the province, and that we, in turn, bring back to our Local information from any provincial activities we are engaged in. This makes us stronger as a Local, Division, and union.

Six representatives from our Local attended the second biennial Coalition of Racialized Workers conference from October 14-16. The theme of the conference was *Mobilization: Past, Present and Future*. There were many effective messages from the conference, but the one that resonated with me the most came from Dr. Gaibrie Stephen, an emergency room physician, labour activist, and member of the Decent Work for Health Network. The thesis of his presentation was that labour is a determinant of health. Dr. Stephen shared some of his experiences with patients in the emergency room, who were forced to make ill-advised decisions that negatively affected their health, based on their employment status and working conditions. This point emphasized for me the importance of the work we do as labour activists and educators. *Good jobs have a direct impact on people's lives and health.* Furthermore, our strength as workers is in our collective voice. We live and work in a system that rewards resilience rather than looking for root causes of structural problems, like workload and paid sick days. This is why Algonquin College's offers of wellness workshops, rather than addressing these concerns, keeps us in this vicious cycle.



*Local 415 representatives Chinedu Mba, Alton Wu, Ala' Qadi, Martin Lee and Annette Bouzi attending the OPSEU/SEFPO Coalition of Racialized Workers conference from October 14-16 in Toronto. Missing from the photo is Colette Garvin, who attended virtually.*

*(continued on next page...)*



## A WORD FROM ANNETTE (CONTINUED)...

Several members of our Local attended the College Faculty Educational and Divisional Meeting from October 27-29. The OPSEU/SEFPO Divisional Executive (Div Ex) is the governing body for academic employees across all 24 Ontario public colleges. At least once per year, our Div Ex holds a provincial meeting for delegates where we get to discuss, vote, and action issues that pertain to our work in post-secondary education and the promotion of quality public education.

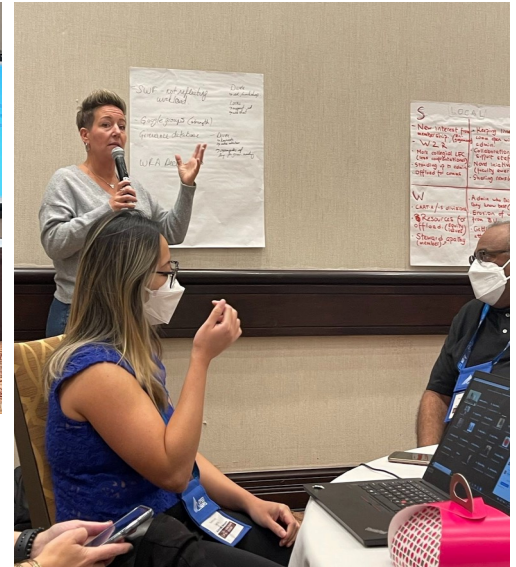
Once again, Local 415 was well represented, with 13 people from our Local participating. Our Local executive team made the decision to send all elected Delegates, Alternates, and Observers to this provincial meeting. We did so as part of our continued commitment to grow interest in the affairs of our union and to encourage people to step into union leadership roles.

On the first day of the event, Local 415 Secretary, Martin Lee, and Chief Steward, Tracy Henderson, both co-delivered compelling workshops to our CAAT-A colleagues. Martin, along with Jonathan Singer (Seneca), and RM Kennedy (OPSEU/SEFPO), presented on data as a core tool for member engagement. The workshop stressed the importance of leveraging technology to map our membership so that the union can be in a better position to engage and service our members.

Tracy, along with Anna Ainsworth (Seneca), co-facilitated a debrief on the results of the stress survey and led a brainstorming session about how we can use the results in our locals.



Above: Local 415 Secretary Martin Lee, OPSEU/SEFPO Staff RM Kennedy and Local 560's Jonathan Singer presenting "Data-weaving 101"



Right: Local 415 Chief Steward, Tracy Henderson, at the 2022 College Faculty Educational and Divisional Meeting

On the second and third days we debated and voted on issues important to us as a Division. This included the passing of a motion to create an ad hoc provincial committee on precarious work. We also spent time discussing concerns around international students and passed a motion to request that OPSEU/SEFPO take more action on this front.

We held elections for several provincial committees and I am pleased to share that several representatives from Local 415 were elected.

### Local Priorities

Local 415's focus has shifted away from being a grievance-generating Local to one that uses a multi-pronged approach to problem solve and attempt to proactively resolve conflict. While labour relations remain challenging, the mindset of the Local leadership team remains pragmatic and results-oriented. Our priorities this year include

- Ensuing proper acknowledgment of workload, including multi-modal delivery and coordinator responsibilities;
- Pushing the College to action health and safety concerns in our classrooms and labs and college community;
- Holding the College to account on commitments to truth and reconciliation, Indigeneity and systemic equity;
- Addressing challenges with the accommodation process through the third-party provider, LifeWorks

Guided by our Local 415 pillars of education, advocacy, and activism, we will continue to be strong defenders of our Collective Agreement rights.

Thank you for your continued trust.



## Jack Wilson Steward Solidarity Award: Congratulations Colette Garvin!

Annette Bouzi, Local 415 President

**A**t our June 27 General Membership Meeting we presented Local 415's inaugural Steward Solidarity award, named in honour of longtime steward Jack Wilson. This award is about honouring the efforts of our stewards and encouraging increased activism among our membership base.

Jack Wilson is a retired Algonquin College faculty member and former officer of our Local. Jack retired in 2018 as our Local's 1st Vice President, after serving in union leadership roles, at the local and provincial levels, for more than 30 years. Jack is known for many things including his excellent writing skills, having penned many letters to the *Ottawa Citizen* editor over the years and serving as the editor of *Local Lines*. He is also known for being reasonable and level-headed and for bringing a sensible approach to resolving conflict. Nobody would ever mistake Jack's kindness for weakness, as he was always a tough customer in any interactions with college management. What many appreciate most about Jack is his authentic community mindset and generosity of spirit. He has mentored many stewards and has continued to provide that same guidance and support well into his retirement. If you don't know Jack, you certainly know the impact he had on Local 415—we all do.



*Jack Wilson, long-time Local 415 Steward and Executive Officer*

Colette Garvin, the steward being recognized this year, was put forward by all six officers of the Local. After being elected a steward in 2020 she immediately went to work for our membership—never missing a union meeting and always saying “yes” when the leadership team reached out for help. From supporting members through salary calculations, to participating in the tedious task of SWF reviews, working with members on workplace accommodations, and sitting on selection committees, Colette is known for her calm demeanour and the empathy that she shows our members who are battling challenging situations.

We are grateful to Colette and Jack for their many contributions to our Local!



*Colette Garvin holds the Jack Wilson Steward Solidarity Award in front of a new plaque listing the winners of the award in the Local 415 office.*

### Editor's Thanks

The Editor would like to acknowledge the writing and proofreading assistance of:

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- Martin Lee
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- Judy Puritt
- Rebecca Wakelin
- Jack Wilson

## The Importance of the Changes to Article 4.03 of the Collective Agreement

Shawn Pentecost, Local 415 Treasurer and CAAT-A Bargaining Team Member



On September 23, 2022, Arbitrator William Kaplan handed down his award that will form our Collective Agreement for the next three years. His award contained several improvements for faculty including moving the Equity Letter of Understanding into Article 4 and adding language pertaining to Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous Racism. He agreed with the bargaining team’s position that this change was needed in the system to ensure our members, particularly our equity deserving members, work within an environment that is free of discrimination and racism.

Later that same day, administrators, including a vice-president, from a southern Ontario college, were allegedly making offensive, bigoted statements in the public space of a Via Rail car. Their comments were simultaneously transcribed and published on Facebook by a witness who overheard them. Their comments included anti-Indigenous, anti-trans, and racist opinions. All these comments were made within earshot of other passengers and remained on Facebook at the time this article was written.

It is difficult to believe that the timing of this racist and anti-trans behaviour is coincidental.

The published record of the conversation includes the following:

- The managers were “making fun of some concession an arbitrator awarded Indigenous employees.”
- “Everyone [was] laughing” at the idea that “There’s going to be a subcommittee on pronouns...” (This is presumably in response to the arbitral decision to incorporate gender-neutral language in the Collective Agreement).
- Two of the administrators are described in the process of misgendering a trans person and making references to “[name withheld for privacy]’s boobs.”
- Another colleague participating in the conversation, whose name was not known to the transcriber, was simply described as “racist woman” on the basis of her comments. She was quoted as stating she chaired a provincial council for post-secondary education.
- Another colleague—possibly identified as a college’s Dean, International—was described as follows: “She keeps complaining about international students.”

To say that this behaviour is inappropriate would be an understatement. The College Employer Council and the college president where these administrators are currently employed have been made aware of the situation. An investigation should be undertaken and appropriate action taken.

This is one public example that illustrates the issues facing our equity deserving members. How often have discriminatory conversations happened at colleges? In public? In private?

It is not enough to call out this type of behaviour when it occurs and follow the appropriate complaint processes. We must use Article 4.03 as the guiding principle for our work. We must continually remind the colleges of that guiding principle. And the colleges need to do better.



## CAAT-A Update

Tracy Henderson, Local 415 Chief Steward



It has been an exciting month across the CAAT-A division. We have received William Kaplan's arbitrated decision on our Collective Agreement which will now expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This new Collective Agreement contains significant gains including, but not limited to, new language for our Partial-load members and language on equity, diversity, and inclusion incorporated not only through a Letter of Understanding but embedded into the body of our Agreement as a whole. It has been a long fifteen months, but our bargaining team has worked hard and continues to do so as it works to articulate the outstanding components such as the remainder of the 1% as it relates to benefits and compensation.

The Local has provided opportunities for members to attend information sessions to look at and understand the new provisions of the CA. If you have been unable to attend these sessions and have questions regarding the new agreement, please feel free to contact me or drop by the Local 415 office in C215b.

Another exciting event that happened recently was the Divisional Meeting on October 27-29<sup>th</sup>. This was the first Divisional Meeting held since 2019. The conference included an Education Day at which several of our own Local executive team presented. The delegates who attended were tasked with electing our new Divisional Executive, as well as filling all other provincial committee positions. I am pleased to report that Local 415 brought a full complement of delegates to the meeting, as well as alternates and observers in record numbers. This is one way the local is looking to build capacity within our Local.



## Faculty: The College's Greatest Asset

Ala' Qadi, Local 415 2nd Vice President

During this last round of bargaining with the College Employer Council (CEC), I could not help but feel unappreciated—almost unwanted—and I am sure many of my fellow faculty members shared this feeling. When you dedicate so much of your time, life, and career to both teaching in the college and improving yourself technically in your field in order to teach materials that are as relevant and current as possible, it is insulting that the CEC then treats you as though you are disposable and replaceable. You cannot help but feel unappreciated, disrespected, and unwanted.

What makes an education system great is not the buildings, rooms, labs, or state-of-the-art software that we are using, but the faculty who deliver the courses and curriculum, the teachers who deliver the courses in the classroom, and all of us who engage with the students on a daily basis. It is faculty who produce the quality education needed for our community to thrive and prosper.

Post-secondary faculty have proven time-and-time-again that they are the backbone of educational institutions, including our colleges. The pandemic has proven that it is faculty who bear the burden of generating quality education—we were (and still are, in many cases) physically distanced from the buildings, labs, and classrooms that make up the physical college, but we improvised quickly and managed to deliver our classes to the best of our professional abilities.

A course is not defined by the materials posted to the Learning Management System (Brightspace at AC) or the labs or classroom that the course is held in. It is defined by the qualifications, experience, and love of teaching of the professors teaching the course. Quality education requires faculty members to have secure jobs, to have proper professional development in their fields, to have adequate time for professional development, and to have adequate time for course prep and evaluation.

Overloading faculty with work, or hiring faculty on a precarious basis, does not lead to quality education. The CEC needs to recognize that faculty are their greatest asset, and they need to start acting accordingly during bargaining.

Since the strike in 2017, the CEC's attitude towards bargaining has been a take-it-or-leave-it approach, combined with a desire to replace full-time faculty with precarious contract faculty. In this latest round of bargaining, our union stood its ground, refused to accept the unreasonable demands put forward by the CEC, and received some tangible gains through arbitration. But we still have a long way to go, and we need to continue to fight for an updated SWF formula, more academic freedom, and academic senates, among many other issues.

College faculty are not disposable. Our desire to deliver quality education, above all else, makes us the colleges' greatest asset. It is time for the CEC and college management in Ontario to start treating us that way.



# The Educational Developers' Corner: Why Are They Leaving?

Rebecca Wakelin, Local 415 Steward



**T**he college is not doing well financially. This is no secret; budgets are being cut, and freezes are being put on hiring. The impact can be felt everywhere in the college, and most especially in our classrooms. How does this happen?

Quite simply, colleges make their money by getting more students here and making sure they stay until graduation. If fewer students come to college, or too many students leave once they get here, budgets turn red, and we cut costs everywhere to make up for the shortfall. When lots of students come to college and most of them graduate, our budgets are flush and we put more money into important things, such as hiring more professors into stable, full-time jobs.

Currently, domestic students are not staying at the college past 'Day 10' in numbers that the college's budget would like. Day 10 is an important date for the college: it is the last day that students can withdraw from our programs without financial penalty. Domestic students are either not coming to college or are leaving before Day 10, and this is negatively impacting our budget. We are not alone in this trend; in fact, colleges and universities across Ontario are all experiencing this as the after-effects of the educational disruption caused by the pandemic continue to ripple through the system.

After two years of on-again, off-again virtual learning, isolation, anxiety, and so many other factors, our students are coming to us ill-prepared for college. They tell us they are leaving college before Day 10 because they are overwhelmed, anxious, unable to handle the rigour of their studies, and unable to negotiate these new, uncertain times. It would be easy to dismiss these students' concerns. It would be much easier to go back to teaching the way we did before the pandemic and hope that the students would eventually "get over" the trauma and impacts of the last two years.

However, the greatest thing we can do as teachers has always been to focus on teaching the students we have, not the students we wish we had. And so, we do our best in the classroom, knowing that we, more than any other factor at the college, have the greatest impact on whether or not students stay past Day 10. Yet, this fact seems to be forgotten in the race to find a solution to the budget shortfalls.

Colleges and universities appear to want to look elsewhere to solve the problem. Perhaps more mental health services can be explored (I am not arguing for fewer mental health services here... there can never be too many services!). Perhaps there can be more things external to the classroom for students to participate in.

Our mental health services do no good for students if the students are not here long enough to access them. Our clubs and campus-wide community-building events don't work if students have already left the college before they happen. We know that the first point of contact for most of these students is the classrooms, and the first ambassador of the college they'll meet is the professor. If we can help them make the transition to college in a nurturing, meaningful way in our first-term courses, they might just stay past Day 10. They might even stay until graduation.

*I propose a teacher-oriented solution.* The first step to solving this problem is to ask first-term professors what they're seeing in their classrooms: what teaching adjustments are needed to keep students here? Are they seeing a massive jump in learning disabilities, accommodations, mental health concerns, etc.? Are students lacking study skills, time management skills, and organizational skills? Then, we could ask professors if they feel properly equipped to deal with these things. If not, we need to ask ourselves how the college can support professors to ensure they are trained extensively, deeply, and continuously to improve the learning and support in the classroom. Moreover, if the college is relying on part-time professors to teach first-term courses, are we giving these industry experts the time, financial compensation, and recognition to expertly and intentionally keep these students at the college past Day 10?

I propose having better-trained first-term professors in the classroom. This would call for a massive shift towards creating a teaching excellence culture in our college. This would mean wrapping good pedagogical practice at the heart of everything we do when it comes to professors. Teaching would be seen as a core function at the college and treated accordingly.

Professors, both full-time and part-time, but especially those teaching first-term courses, would have the time to build their teaching skills and learn new techniques that retain students. This time would not just be granted when new teaching trends emerged, but would be system-wide and comprehensive. Faculty members would be given opportunities to work with each other to strategize ways to engage students and teach them the skills they need to stay and graduate. In this way, faculty members would be encouraged to set goals for themselves and their teams to shift from being more teacher-centered to more student-centered in their teaching, and would be supported in doing this every step of the way.

Centers for Teaching Excellence, the heart of every institution, would drive strategic direction around pedagogy to ensure that every decision made is one that upholds teaching quality in the classroom. Experts in teaching and learning know what it takes to empower teachers to make shifts in practice: a commitment to comprehensive, long-term faculty training. Taking a thoughtful, measured approach to implementing shifts in teaching practice is the only way to ensure these shifts "stick." And we need these shifts to "stick," now more than ever.

Investing in teaching will always yield success in the classroom, and success in the classroom is what our students, and our budget, need right now. I'm not sure we can afford to not create a culture of teaching excellence in our institutions anymore.



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## Health and Safety Tip: Be Aware of Fire Hazards

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Judy Flieler and Tara Ettinger, JOHSC Faculty Representatives



**A**s we are all settling back to life on campus, your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) faculty representatives would like to bring to your attention a common fire hazard observed during inspections: daisy chaining.

### What is daisy chaining?

We're glad you asked! The term "daisy chaining" refers to the connection of two or more power bars or extension cords together. This is usually a result of inadequate access to power outlets and can lead to overloaded circuits and fire risk. While most power bars/extension cords are able to power multiple items, when power bars/extension cords are connected together, the power bar/extension cord plugged into the outlet is providing much more power than the safety-rated approved amount.

### How can you avoid daisy chaining?

The following are some alternative safe solutions in place of daisy chaining power bars and extension cords:

- Replace a power bar with a power cord of adequate length to reach an outlet.
- Move equipment or desks or whatever needs electrical power closer to existing outlets.
- Choose the appropriate kind of power bar that will meet the electrical power needs.

### The following list of Do's and Don'ts can help keep you safe:

#### Do

- If possible, rearrange desks, workstations, and equipment to an area with a power outlet.
- Check the condition of extension cords and power bars to be sure they are ready for use.
- Ensure that power bars and surge protectors are equipped with internal fuses.
- Have an adequate number of outlets installed when power outlets are scarce.
- Ensure that the extension cords you are using are never covered, or under carpets and high traffic areas. This can lead to an additional tripping hazard.

#### Don't

- Overload power bars or power outlets; this can result in a fire or could cause the circuit breaker to trip.
- Use an extension cord for permanent connection. At this point, the wiring is no longer temporary.
- Feed extension cords through doorways, walls, or floors.
- Have furniture rest on any electrical cord.

Should you require an appropriate power source for your work area, please contact your Manager/Chair. For additional information on this topic, please feel free to contact Judy &/or Tara at [healthandsafety@opseulocal415.org](mailto:healthandsafety@opseulocal415.org)

Resource: [Environmental Healthy & Safety Fact Sheet on Electrical Safety and Daisy Chaining](#) (2016, January).

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## Get To Know Your Steward: Rob Chabassol

Interviewed by Jordan Berard



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**R**ob Chabassol is a full-time faculty member who serves as the Introduction to Canadian Healthcare Studies program coordinator and academic advisor for Woodroffe, Perth, and Pembroke campuses. This is Rob's first year as a Local 415 steward.

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

I am interested in acquiring a clear and comprehensive understanding of how our post-secondary systems (mal)function. I want to learn more about our governance; I want to see for myself how decisions are made and by whom; I'm curious to discover how & why our policies and protocols are determined, framed, and applied as they are, and I'd like to get a more informed sense of whose interests they are designed to (best) serve and why. Finally, I want to know more about how our Local intersects with and mindfully actions our collective interests throughout these bureaucratic processes to the genuine benefit of our students, our faculty, and our college operations.

### **How long have you been at the College and what roles have you had?**

This year marks 10 years for me at Algonquin, and I have held quite a few roles over that time. I started teaching in the Police and Public Safety Institute (PPSI) and in Health and Community Studies. After getting a little bit of exposure to teaching in the College system, I wanted to grow and assume more responsibilities, so I started looking to join committees and task forces. My first opportunity came in the form of acting as a faculty representative on the President's Part-time Pay Task Force. That exposure and opportunity, combined with the incredible, poignant, and revealing discussions at the town halls, organized and facilitated by so many fantastic folks across all employment sectors here at the college, sparked an interest in strategic operations. From there, I went on to co-chair the Vice President's Task Force on Part-time Hiring, Mentoring, and Professional Development. Assuming this role gave me a shot at wider leadership; however, more importantly, it also gave me a chance to work directly with some incredible colleagues and learn about their working realities. Right now, I am sitting on the Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Prevention Task Force as a faculty representative and working with some truly amazing people. Beyond committees and task forces, I also worked as a subject matter expert and program writer for the Introduction to Canadian Healthcare Studies (ICHS) program, for which I now serve as program coordinator and academic advisor.

### **Since becoming a steward, how have you become more active?**

I am very new to this role, so I am spending a chunk of time inundating my far more experienced and knowledgeable colleagues with questions about processes, protocols, and expectations. I am also trying to find avenues of advocacy that align with matters I feel strongly about. At the moment, I intend to tackle matters pertaining to mental health supports for students and staff.

### **What has been your biggest discovery since becoming a steward?**

I think it would have to be the creative avenues available to stewards when it comes to advocacy on issues they see as important. I have never felt pushed toward a particular agenda; I feel supported in the endeavors I choose to pursue and the issues I wish to address in order to affect change. The autonomy, creative license, networking opportunities, and direction to accomplish my goals that stewardship affords me drives me to do more. I was not expecting that.

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

We have an incredible executive team in Local 415; moreover, we have some brilliant, affable, and approachable colleagues who serve as stewards. Talk to them! Let them know where you see gaps in our services or problems with our policies. Your voice matters and can be a driving force for positive change.

### **Final Comments?**

Look after yourselves and take care of each other. We do not live in "normal times," and we all need support now more than ever. My door is always open (A131-C).