

Examiner



Examiner contains satire, sarcasm and wit, and is intended for a mature audience, specifically members of OPSEU Local 240. Readers' discretion and sense of humour are advised.

Prez Sez: Change Management not "Change-Management"

By Sam Maga

Mohawk College is undergoing rapid organizational change. As a result of this change, there have been new goals and initiatives that have caused employees to feel stressed and unappreciated. When leaders are so focused on re-organizing they may not realize the effect they are having on staff. The ups and downs of change are expected but eventually there should be a positive result.



It is counter-productive to expect employees to comply with management initiatives that will only cause them stress and anxiety. Here are four examples of Mohawk College corporate initiatives that have resulted in employees feeling they have no voice in how they work.



Simply the Best

For many employees, the very mention of these three words brings back bad memories. Employees have struggled to figure out what Simply the Best was about. Was it customer service training? Was it brainstorming? Was it relationship building? Was it preparing employees for change? Why is Mohawk College Enterprise involved in Mohawk College operations?

The College is planning an STB event to “celebrate” the success of the training. However, this is one project that employees don't want to celebrate. Let's put STB behind us and move on.

Blended Learning

Few would disagree that on-line learning supplements enhance students' learning experience or that they are necessary for post secondary students. George Siemens, a Canadian professor and expert on blended learning, strongly suggests, “Colleges should invest in learning, not in buildings”. But, blended learning, where students lose face to face time with professors, and with each other, should not be just another form of distance education. Mohawk is already known as a “commuter college”, where students come to the college only when they are required to. What is missing with this model is opportunity for real social learning

Inside This Issue:

Prez Sez.....	1
Off with Your Rose-coloured Glasses.....	3
Grievance Report	4
Modified Workload Arrangements	5
Who is responsible for the Collective Agreement?...6	
Testing 1, 2, 3.....	7
Know Your rights.....	7
Drinking water at Mohawk College.....	8
Wisconsin goes to war against public sector.....9	
Where Does Free Speech Exist?.....	10
Nursing programs struggle to operate.....	11
On-line Learning Open Forum	13

connections with professors and other students that enhance learning in an informal, but crucial, way.

Our community needs a post secondary institution that demonstrates a commitment to a variety of learning styles and creates a learning environment that enables students to communicate and collaborate. Applied effectively, blended learning can change commuter students to engaged students who are independent learners, but students need to work, study and develop socially in a college environment on campus that blends these needs.

At this point in time what constitutes a blended learning course delivery remains vague. It is an area for further investigation to determine the work value needed to implement this teaching method. Despite many unknown factors, some Mohawk managers have rushed to the conclusion that specific course delivery efficiencies can be achieved. For example, many assume that a three-hour course can be delivered by two hours of face to face and one hour online. The union is very concerned over how a blended teaching contact hour will be documented on a SWF if there is not a scheduled contact time period.

The college should provide the tools and resources professors need for their blended curriculum, not impose rigid rules for using eLearn@Mohawk



Valued Employees

Recently, we have seen many employees leave the college to pursue other options or to take a Voluntary Exit Option. Consequently, we have lost many of our best Mohawk ambassadors who have left the college feeling bitter and disrespected. As the community hears about their experiences, public perception about the college can be affected in a negative way.

Employees' perception that the focus at Mohawk is on the corporatization of education isn't helping the situation. Education should not be about profit margins and cost reductions or building financial reserves. Education is an investment in Hamilton's future. The cost of building that future is determined by how Mohawk College effectively meets the educational, societal and economic needs of the community.

Mohawk College and Mohawk College Enterprise: Where does the money come from?



"Hey, you're supposed to be arms length!"

Off with your rose-coloured glasses

By Ann Bennett, Communications Officer



In response to increasing incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace, the Ontario government recently amended the Occupational Health & Safety Act with Bill 168.

It is indeed unfortunate that these amendments are necessary, but the realities of our society and some people's increasingly cavalier attitude toward violence justify these amendments and the changes they will bring. Bill 168 is about being prepared and knowing what to do when violence occurs. We need to be informed, aware, and vigilant, because rose-coloured glasses won't help us when push comes to shove or when shove comes to worse.



Bill 168 became effective June 15, 2010. Its purpose is to address, and hopefully help prevent, violence and harassment in the workplace. **The bill mandates employers to:**

- **Prepare policies** with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment.
- **Develop and maintain programs** to implement their policies.
- **Provide information** and instruction to workers on the contents of these policies and programs.

• **Communicate:** Employers and supervisors must provide information to a worker about a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if the worker can expect to encounter that person in the course of work, and if the worker may be at risk of physical injury. Personal information may be disclosed, but only what is reasonably necessary to protect the worker from physical injury.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour website provides information about Bill 168; click on the following link for further information:

http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs_workplaceviolence.php

What changes is the College making to address the new legislation?

Information, instruction and training on Mohawk's policies and programs will be made accessible to employees in the near future in an electronic format on the College's eLearn system.

Crisis Prevention sessions continue to be offered through the PD department and according to Karen Pashleigh, Chief Human Resources and Organizational Development Officer, these courses "support our workplace violence prevention policy and programs."

Current methods of communication for risk of violence may not meet Bill 168 requirements:

Access to information regarding security threats is limited to a specific group of individuals. Alan Hayward, Manager of Security and Parking, claims that the Security Reports group who receives information is selected "In the best interests of balancing the needs of the

College Community and those of the individual involved”. If you are not receiving this information, you can request to be added to the group.

An indirect communication system is set in motion “where there is a direct, specific and identified threat. Information will cascade from HR to the appropriate Deans and Associate Deans who in turn will share it with affected staff” claims Hayward.



Bill 168 says it is the employer’s responsibility to communicate to employees; we should not have to ask for information or request to be added to a group list. Most employees do not know that the list even exists, so why would they ask? Furthermore, the indirect “cascade” system may not be reliable enough as it could disconnect at any of its multiple decision points. We need a direct communication system to address the requirements of Bill 168. Email would work.

Faculty and support staff are on the front lines all the time; in our classrooms, in the hallways, going in and out of our offices and inside our offices.



Hayward does assure us that “at the end of the day, College Security Services remain committed to maintaining a safe, secure learning and working environment, free from violence in any shape or form.” It is, however, time the employer realized that we are professionals who can handle the truth, will respect the privacy of those involved and can help protect the safety of the campus, the students and each other. It’s time for transparency, a dose of reality and a safer workplace. When there is a “direct, specific and identified threat” to any employee or student and a trespass order has been issued, the college should inform employees directly.



We should all take off the rose-coloured glasses, be informed, and keep safe.

Grievance Report – February, 2011

By Roberta Burke, Chief Steward

Local Grievance: March 9/10

- College failed to Post eLearn position as per Article 27.11
- Arbitration: Jan 28, 2011
Grievance Withdrawn

Article 2, Staffing: August 11/10

- Grievor’s course load and wages were reduced from Partial Load to Part time



after 23 years teaching in the program

- Arbitration: March 16, 2011
- ### Article 11.06, October 8/10
- BsCN filed grievance re: College interpretation of Article 11.06 (working outside the College)
 - Arbitration: April 6, 2011

Modified Workload Arrangements (MWA): Thin end of the wedge

By Geoff Ondercin-Bourne, VP



On Monday, January 31st, Sam and I attended a meeting of BSCN faculty to respond to questions about MWAs and SWFs. Several excellent questions were raised, and I suspect that some of you might have similar questions. What follows is a summary of those questions and the answers we provided.

1. What do we lose by signing a MWA?

Among other things, you lose

- your prep factor,
- your evaluation factor,
- any cap on class sizes, and
- complementary hours.



You lose all these benefits; it's not a multiple choice test.

2. Can a faculty member opt out of an MWA?

Yes, unlike a Local Agreement, which can be imposed on everyone, you have the right to ask for a SWF if you disagree with the terms of the MWA.

3. Can you agree to an MWA through individual negotiations with your manager?

No, the Union must sign off on all MWAs, because it is the Local's responsibility to ensure that an MWA doesn't undermine the interests of faculty as a whole. Otherwise, the College can and will use MWAs to divide and conquer, as they say. Hang together or hang separately is the rule.

4. How long does an MWA last?

It can run anywhere from one semester to the life of the current Collective Agreement.

5. Can a manager assign additional work, over and above what is agreed to in a SWF?

If you are asked to do additional work, such as filling in for a faculty member who is sick, you are entitled to overtime. It's not a 'freebee'. However, unless you ask for overtime, it's unlikely your manager will 'remember' to give it to you.

The bottom line is this: our protection comes from the SWF. Any time we opt for an alternative, be it a Local Agreement or an MWA, we are 'rolling the dice', not just for ourselves but for our colleagues, as well. Please contact your steward if you are contemplating an alternative form of documentation of your work.

Be Vigilant: ask what's in it for you!

Who is responsible for upholding the Collective Agreement?

Submitted by Roberta Burke, Chief Steward



Too often I hear someone, either an employee or manager, say that the “Union” won’t let them do *this*, or the “Union” is making them do *that*. I find this message confusing. Is the Union being **blamed** or is the Union being **praised** for upholding the CA?

Collective Agreements are negotiated by employers and unions with the aim of reaching agreements which regulate working conditions. So, why does it seem that the Union is constantly taking the employer to task for not meeting their obligations under the Collective Agreement? After all, this is an **agreement** negotiated by Union and Employer.

What causes an employee to question, “Why am I paying union dues?” when an article in the CA does not apply favorably to his/her situation? We should never take for granted the protection and securities provided by being a member of a union. Just look at the number of administrators who have recently left the College to pursue other initiatives. No longer does loyalty and hard work guarantee a job. These people were not in a union, and their hard work has been overlooked in the pursuit of new blood. Six months ago the part-time music faculty (nonunionized) had their hours and wages slashed.

We should never take for granted the protection and securities provided by being a member of a union.

The working conditions that we benefit from were gained thanks to individuals who sacrificed wages and walked picket lines to achieve pay increases and improved working conditions. Can you imagine if our pensions were in jeopardy like our brothers and sisters at Stelco? Who is fighting to protect their pensions? It is the union!

I recently got my knuckles rapped by a union lawyer at an arbitration hearing. I learned that an employee and the employer had agreed to a step increment that was not sanctioned in the CA. The lawyer demanded to know why I didn’t file a grievance as soon as I found out. I responded that my actions would hurt the employee (the one paying the union dues). The wooden spoon came out, and I was swiftly reminded that it was my responsibility as a steward to uphold the CA and not to undermine union negotiations! (ouch) This was a wake up call for me and I hope for all of my brothers and sisters that we have an obligation to uphold the CA.

One of the things that I learned from Fred Deys when he was union president, was that if you advantage one employee, you disadvantage another. For example, if one person gets his/her seniority date adjusted, another person is disadvantaged. It is our duty to get these things right.

In the past we have experienced good labour relations with the College – we have been able to resolve staffing issues rather than filing grievances. However, the culture at the College is changing. The budget is driving workload efficiencies that erode academic quality and put individuals and programs at risk. The environment is not likely to improve without Union involvement.

Whenever I hear people say, “The Union made me do it”, I remind them that it is a “Collective Agreement” and that we are ALL responsible for meeting our obligations under the CA – not just the Union. Collectively, we foster a respectful and thriving workplace.



OPSEU Local 240 Political Action Committee

invites you to attend an OPEN FORUM for Faculty and Students

On-line Learning and Quality Education: What's working and what's not

DATE: Monday March 21, 2011

TIME: 4:30 – 6:30

PLACE: room A010 Fennell Campus

Food and beverages provided!

“Testing 123”



In response to a union concern about reduced testing facilities, this comment was made by a senior manager, “Why build a church for people to only attend on Sunday?”

We've always been challenged during final exams to accommodate thousands of students writing hundreds of exams over a one week period. The problem is compounded by the reduction of testing invigilators. In response to these concerns, Associate Deans are telling professors you're “on your own” or “do your best”. This is cold comfort to teachers who are only trying to do their job and meet the needs of their students.

Know your rights under the Collective Agreement!

VACATION



Article 15 - Vacations

15.01 A A full-time employee who has completed one full academic year's service with the College shall be entitled to a vacation of two months as scheduled by the College. **A full-time employee may request and, with the approval of the College, may have a vacation that is scheduled in periods other than a contiguous two-month block.** A full-time employee who has completed less than one full academic year's service with the College shall be entitled to a two month vacation period and shall be paid the remainder of the employee's prorated annual salary. **The request of the employee shall be in writing and a copy provided to the Union Local President.**

Where the employee requests a vacation in other than a contiguous two month block, the employee shall be entitled to forty-three (43) weekdays of vacation not including any holidays as set out in Article 16. Don't leave yourself vulnerable: get to know your Collective Agreement.



Drinking water at Mohawk College

By Sam Maga, Health and Safety Officer



Testing of all water sources at Mohawk College started in the summer of 2010. The test results were surprising because elevated levels of lead were found in many Fennel campus water sources. Washroom sinks were a major source of contaminated water. Using washroom sinks for hand washing is safe, but using sinks as a source for drinking water is a health hazard. There are signs posted in all the washrooms that tested for elevated levels of lead and Mohawk College will be improving the signage by using a more permanent display.

The following Q&A will provide some basic information concerning drinking water and lead levels.

What is lead (Pb)?

Lead is a soft metal with a low melting point and because of its properties lead has been used in many products such as pipes, solder, brass fixtures, crystal, paint, cables, batteries and ceramics. Lead is a poison that can affect every system in the body.

How does lead exposure affect the body?

- Blood disorders
- Lead affects the central nervous system and causes: headaches, poor attention span, memory loss
- Kidney dysfunction
- Abdominal pain
- High blood pressure
- Miscarriages, stillbirths and impotence

Using washroom sinks for hand washing is safe, but using sinks as a source for drinking water is a health hazard.

What is the acceptable limit for lead in drinking water?

Many doctors and health advocates say there is no acceptable limit of lead in drinking water but the Government of Ontario standard is 10 micrograms per litre. Fourteen to twenty percent of lead consumption in children and adults comes from drinking water. Almost all lead in drinking water comes from plumbing systems. The most vulnerable groups to lead related illness are children and pregnant women but by taking precautions, exposure to lead can be preventable.

How does lead get into drinking water?

- New plumbing may have higher concentrations of lead during the first five years.
- Corrosive chemicals will leach lead out of plumbing fixtures and old lead solder joints. (e.g. acidic soft water)
- Hot tap water dissolves lead. (All Mohawk washroom faucets are mixed hot and cold)

How to get the lead out of drinking water?

- Flushing water lines by running a faucet for 5-10 minutes may help reduce lead levels.
- Water filters can be used to reduce lead levels.

Where are water sources at Fennell that tested over the limit?

All wings of Fennell campus had water sources that tested over **10 micrograms per litre** lead content.

Examples of Fennell campus high lead level water locations:

- G Wing Alumni Hall sink -150
- G Wing grill sink- 41H Wing Kitchenette sink – 12
- Learning Centre Storage room sink – 63
- E Wing Sink Drinking Tap – 560
- C Wing Health Centre sink – 450
- C Wing Hallway sink next to C109L – 100
- C Wing 2MATO sink – 30
- C Wing On the Go sink – 31
- C Wing Whole Sum sink – 30
- C Wing President’s office sink – 17



Most of these lead levels were reduced by running the water for 5 minutes. Running tap water for 5 is not sustainable and will be difficult to monitor.

Are there any filtered water drinking stations at Fennell?

New ELKAY EZH2O filtered bottle filling/ water fountain stations have been installed in the H wing, C wing and A wing. The filters in the ELKAY stations reduce lead and chlorine levels in water.

**Wisconsin goes to war against public sector...coming to a province near you?
By Geoff Ondercin-Bourne**

The editorial headline, [Class Warfare](#), in the Hamilton Spectator (Monday, February 28) says it all. The Government of Wisconsin is waging war against public sector workers on behalf of corporations, many of whom had their hands out for government money when the economic crisis brought the economy to its knees. Wisconsin is not alone; after a sustained assault on private sector employees, it appears to be open season on the public sector in many North American jurisdictions. In Ontario, the proposed wage freeze is the opening salvo of a battle between Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals (with the encouragement of the Tories’ Tim Hudak) and **YOU!** As the editorial, originally published in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, says, “This is class warfare, declared long ago by the wealthy upon everyone else.”

Okay, so it’s not Egypt or Libya. Nevertheless, government’s role in forcing everyone else to make sacrifices to subsidize the privileged few is a universal truth, here in North America, as much as anywhere else. See Smokey Thomas’ column, [Wisconsin in Ontario](#) for more on the precarious position of public sector workers like you and me. It’s not pretty.

Where Does Free Speech Exist ?

By Kevin MacKay, Citizens for Justice and Peace in the Middle East



Citizens for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), a national non-profit organization, booked a room at Mohawk College for American professor and Middle East expert Norman Finkelstein to speak on February 19th. The topic of the lecture was Israel and Palestine: Past, Present and Future. Dr. Finkelstein is Jewish and the son of two holocaust survivors. He has had a distinguished academic career at three universities in the United States, but his work has attracted controversy due to his strong criticism of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land.



A week before the lecture was scheduled to occur, Mohawk security contacted CJPME and requested an additional \$1,500 for eight security guards in case of violence. The College indicated that unless the extra security costs were covered, the event would be cancelled.

Dr. Finkelstein, in over 40 North American lectures in the past 5 years, has *never once* encountered a violent incident. Indeed, in his 5-city Canadian speaking tour, a recent talk delivered to 300 at Queen's university unfolded without incident, and without security of any kind.

The requested security fee made it unaffordable for the CJPME. Based on both finances and principle, the talk was moved to Centenary United Church in downtown Hamilton where 300 people attended. Again, there were no security guards, and absolutely no incidents. In fact, there was not so much as an argument or substantial disagreement throughout.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is widely considered to be one of the pivotal conflicts of our age and a subject of concern for international law, the international community, and major human rights organizations. It's too bad that Mohawk decided not to provide a forum for critical debate and analysis of this pressing social and political issue.

Our College advertises a mission of "Inspiring learning, leadership, citizenship and innovation", while espousing core values of "fostering academic excellence", "nurturing inquiry, problem-solving and innovation", and "embracing transparency, accountability and responsibility". These are inspiring and worthwhile values, but should also be embodied in practice.



Nursing Programs struggle to operate



The January 31, 2011 Mohawk College list of all Winter 2011 partial load teachers (7-12 TCH hours) shows an excessive use of this category of non full-time faculty in the Collaborative and Practical Nursing programs.

There are 21 partial load teachers in the Collaborative Nursing program delivering 231 teaching contact hours. The Practical Nursing program has 19 partial load teachers delivering 222 teaching contact hours. The 453 teaching contact hours in these programs would translate into almost 1,000 SWF hours. Partial load teachers don't get SWFs and are only paid for delivering teaching contact hours. Students don't have access to partial load teachers outside of scheduled classroom time and any student issues go to the shrinking number of full time professors.

The Nursing Professors have always been dedicated to the provision of quality education and to excellent program standards, but under the present conditions their morale is low; despite the soaring numbers of part time faculty, they are being threatened with layoffs.

The College has to provide the union with rationale for using non full time professors since the Collective Agreement indicates a preference for full time over non full time employment. The rationale we get from the College shows there will be even higher numbers of non full time professors in the Nursing programs.

Adding to the declining morale at the IAHS, all step two coordinators were demoted to step one in Fall 2010 . This cost cutting action has offended professors that volunteered for the role of coordinator. Nursing professor coordinators know the College has many step two coordinators at other campuses. After a Nursing professor resigned from a coordinator position the manager could not find a replacement. Now the Associate Dean is listed as the coordinator.



The IAHS Collaborative Nursing program is a unique partnership between McMaster University, Mohawk College and Conestoga College that attracts high performing students seeking a BSCN McMaster degree. The Mohawk College side of the partnership is struggling with "change" caused by cost cutting and several professors think Mohawk is cutting out of the BSCN partnership.

The last time a full time professor was hired in the BSCN program was August 2006.

Practical Nursing is a Mohawk College diploma program that attracts a large number of applicants (> 1000) for a limited number of student positions. The Mohawk Voluntary Exit Option attracted 7 full time professors into retirement June 2010. No full time professors have been hired to replace these professors. There are dozens of professors hired to teach in the nursing programs each semester, just not full time.

The last time a full time professor was hired in the Practical Nursing program was August, 2007.

The number of part time professors working in Nursing programs has grown steadily each year and shows no sign of slowing down.

Nursing program work has become a guessing game for professors. Some of the questions the union is being asked are:

1. Is the College dropping Nursing programs? (since we are so expensive)
2. Should I mentor part time faculty when it's not on my SWF?
3. Should academic research be included on my SWF?
4. Who is looking after Nursing students?
5. Can I be asked to work a 12 hour contact day?
6. Should the number of McMaster and Mohawk information/communication and learning platforms be reflected on my SWF?
7. Should I be doing support staff work?
8. Should I voluntarily replace a teacher off sick?
9. Should I attend meetings not assigned on my SWF?
10. Can the Associate Dean be a program coordinator?

This academic year the Workload Monitoring Group heard workload complaints mostly from nursing professors. The WMG meeting outcomes have been mixed but it's apparent, there's something wrong in these programs. At a Fall 2010 Workload Resolution Arbitration the arbitrator commented on the complexity of the Nursing program and the workplace tension between professors and management.

Let's hope that Mohawk College keeps these programs healthy so that we can continue to contribute positively to Nursing education in our community.

Got an issue you want to Examine?

We welcome your contributions but reserve the right to edit for length and appropriateness. Please submit your article, email, letter or cartoon to the editors.



Editors: Ann Bennett
Geoff Ondercin-Bourne
Phone: 905-575-1212 Ext.3468
Email: ann.bennett@mohawkcollege.ca
geoff.ondercin-bourne@mohawkcollege.ca



On-Line Learning What's Working?

What's Not?



Monday, March 21 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm
Fennell Campus Room A-010 Free Food and Drinks!

You are invited to an open forum for students and faculty to discuss online learning and the issues it raises about quality of education, student satisfaction and success, and teaching conditions.

We'd love to hear your experiences, feedback and suggestions. What kind of education works best for **YOU**, and what role should technology play?

Brought to you by the **OPSEU Local 240 Political Action Committee**