

Examiner



www.opseu240.ca

June, 2013



Prez Sez by Geoff Ondercin-Bourne

I don't know if it's a rule that the employer is required to make the first year of a newly-elected Local President as "interesting" as possible, but the good folks at Mohawk have done their best to "make it so". From workload to employment stability to employee dismissal, they've thrown everything at the Local except the kitchen sink (and the year's not over yet).

It has been my good fortune to have the very best team any president could ask for. Fred Deys and company cannot deny that VP, Sam Maga, has the knowledge, skills and experience to keep management on its toes. Ann Bennett, your Chief Steward, pays attention to detail like no other. On those rare occasions when I miss something, Ann is there to make sure it's covered. (Do I hear Ann laughing?) Greg Cormier, Treasurer, has the Local up to date and in the black. Flaherty and Souza, eat your heart out. Finally, Kevin MacKay, Communications Officer, keeps the fire in our bellies burning by constantly reminding us how our issues are part of a much larger struggle. Finally, the stewards make sure that every department has our ear when issues arise. Many thanks to the whole team for all they do and for the support they've given me over the course of the year.

Blended Learning: the Little Engine that Couldn't

Of course, the main event at Mohawk has been the College's blended learning experiment, which, apparently, all the other colleges are watching with keen interest—like the car accident on the other side of the road that you just can't look away from. As I've said before, 'when people who don't teach tell people who do teach how to teach, the results are seldom good'. No change there, I'm afraid.

However, Mohawk is definitely ahead of the curve when it comes to dispelling the myths around teaching and learning. For example,



Mohawk takes blended learning in a whole new direction.

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1. **Myth:** Students have different learning styles. **Mohawk Fact:** We're leading the pack in the 'one size fits all' method of teaching.
2. **Myth:** Over three quarters of communication is nonverbal. **Mohawk Fact:** Students require only a few videos and a "lecture-captured" talking head, and they'll get the point every time.
3. **Myth:** Learning on a computer is

impersonal and alienating for students. **Mohawk Fact:** With a few emoticons, problem solved.

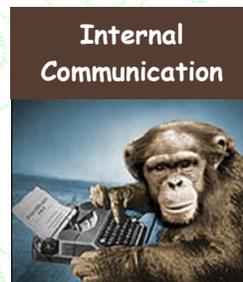
4. **Myth:** *Students come from different socio-economic backgrounds and, therefore, don't have the same access to and knowledge of computers.* **Mohawk Fact:** What a load of neo-Marxist tripe.

Like many students, the Local believes that providing choice (i.e. differentiated learning) is the key to success in any blended learning strategy. Mohawk's "damn the torpedoes" approach to blending may give a boost to our competitors, if we're not careful.

Speaking of choice, consider the latest discussion of "lecture-capture". There appears to be a tug of war within management over the use of lecture-capture. Is it mandatory? Is it up to the professor? I don't know; is it Tuesday?

Management Trips Over Its Own Policy

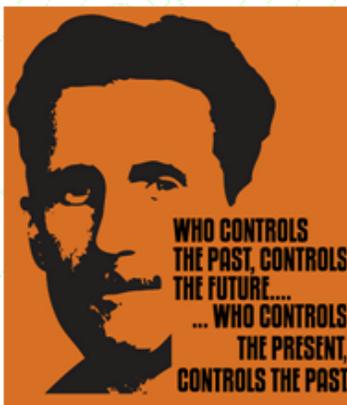
The College has imposed strict conditions on the use of MoCoMotion for messages to the College community, particularly as it applies to employees. This semester two retiring faculty members fell victim to yet another one-size-fits-all policy when the College refused to announce their retirements. Management finally backtracked after criticism from many corners. Quelle embarrassment.



Mohawk's last hope

Collective Bargaining: Standing Up Against the Corporate Culture Vultures

The last topic is probably the one that will have the most lasting impact on your career: the upcoming round of collective bargaining. It's no secret that the colleges are looking for ways to pay for their baubles and bonuses, and they've got their 'guns' trained on their employees. Increasingly, management is looking at using lower-paying job categories, both full-time and non-full-time, to save money.



Also, they are keen to see senior employees retire, because of their cost and their institutional memory. Remember **1984**. Those who remember the past are seen as a threat to those who seek to obliterate it. The new corporate culture has replaced academics, and we must forget a time when we were, at heart, an academic institution.

How do we respond? We must use the bargaining process to resist the fast food culture that threatens to de-skill and de-professionalize the work we do. The Collective Agreement expires at the end of August, 2014. Consequently, we'll be going through the process of demand setting, probably in January, and then preparation for actual bargaining. In the last round we were beaten on the question of academic freedom and intellectual property rights. However, we made some modest gains, particularly in the area of partial load rights.

If we stick together, we can accomplish great things. The other side is strong, but in solidarity, we can achieve results. We mustn't be afraid to stand up for ourselves. We mustn't be afraid to make our demands heard. Finally, we mustn't be afraid to challenge the *ideology of austerity* that is being used to attack our jobs, our families and our futures.

If you're returning to work in July, welcome back and all the best as you begin the 2013-2014 academic year. If you're almost ready to start your summer holidays, I hope you enjoy a relaxing and safe vacation. Hey, maybe you can add **1984** to your summer reading list. Until September.

Greetings from the Board

By Heather Giardine-Tuck, Faculty Representative, Board of Governors



With my first year at the Board now under my belt, I wanted to provide an update. It has been quite the learning curve! In spite of the many years I attended Board meetings as an observer, it is a much different experience once you become an actual member. I have learned a great deal, feel more comfortable with each meeting and continue to participate with the interests of our students and the academic direction of the College, foremost in my mind.

Since my February update, I have attended the April and June Board meetings, the May Board Retreat and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Conference in June. Highlights included:

- Presentations at the April and June meetings: Theatre Ancaster; Institutional Learning Outcomes; Blended Learning; Walters Steel; MEDIC; Fennell Renewal; Building & Construction Sciences; Faculty of Health Sciences; and, updates on the completion of the David Braley Athletic and Recreation Centre.
- The fourth straight balanced budget was presented and approved at the April meeting. It was acknowledged that difficult decisions were made to get to the balanced budget and that the next few years will present similar fiscal challenges.
- Mohawk Talks featured Clara Hughes speaking in April on her struggles with depression and the stigma of mental illness as well as Robert Kennedy addressing the Green Gold Rush: A Vision for Energy Independence, Jobs and National Wealth in May.
- At the ACCC Conference, I enjoyed the National Governors Forum with its panel presentation on Human Capital Requirements Across the Economy and workshop on Essential Skills, Improving Student Success. Keynote Speaker Mark Milliron was excellent, with his talk On the Leading Edge of Higher Education (helping our students get clear on their purpose and develop learning competencies in order to achieve academic success). The workshop on Designing a PSE System that Works with Declining Government Investment showed strategies being implemented in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia to deal with financial challenges. Finally, the Knowledge Exchange focused on International Education strategies illustrated wonderful examples from Okanagan College, College of the Rockies and Centennial College for recruiting, welcoming and supporting our International learners.

This Fall, I am planning to attend each campus to connect with you and hear how things are going in your areas. Since it is always difficult to pick the ideal time for everyone, however, I invite you to email me at any time should you wish to talk: heather.giardine-tuck@mohawkcollege.ca. Have a great summer if you are heading out and a terrific Summer semester if you are back in teaching!

News from here and there

Compiled by Geoff Ondercin-Bourne, President, Local 240

The impact of government underfunding on students [and us]

Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario (January, 2013)

The substantial public investments that led to the expansion of universities and the creation of colleges in the 1960s were based on the belief that access to post-secondary education should be dictated by ability and desire, not financial means. Canada's public post-secondary education system, however, has become remarkably less public over the last three decades. [More...](#)



Tim Hudak looks to import anti-union politics from south of the border

By Dave Coles *From Rabble.ca (May 22, 2013)*

Tim Hudak recently turned to prominent Republican lobbying firm Greener and Hook for direction. It's a fitting move as the Progressive Conservatives most significant policy proposal comes straight out of the U.S. Right's empower big business and attack your opponents playbook. [More...](#)

Three strikes, you're out!

Pension funds force Canadians to invest in war industries

By Richard Sanders

From Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (July 1, 2012)

In the microcosm of our daily lives, many Canadians make politically-conscious choices about what to buy. Whether it's drinking fair trade tea or coffee, using eco-friendly cleaning products, eating locally-produced food, avoiding clothes made in sweatshops, or refusing to buy war-toys for their kids, many Canadians are voting with their pocketbooks.

By making all these penny-wise decisions, we assume the pounds will take care of themselves and, in the process, we'll help build a better world. Putting our money into businesses we favour, while avoiding those that contribute to environmental, health or social problems, we try to walk the walk and not just talk the talk.

And, over the years, while running on the occupational hamster wheel of earning and consuming, we contribute to our pension funds in the hope that one day we'll enjoy a secure and peaceful retirement.

Few Canadians, however, realize that our pension plans are forcing us to funnel our hard-earned cash into the coffers of the world's most destructive and polluting companies. Canadian pension portfolios read like a veritable "who's who" of multinational corporations that are on the pariah lists of virtually every existing movement for social betterment.

[More...](#)



Chief Steward's Report

By Ann Bennett



GRIEVANCE REPORT June 2013

A member of the local may file a grievance if the college has violated the Collective Agreement. Before a grievance is issued, complaint is usually issued to the manager or to the college (must be within 21 days of the occurrence of the incident). See article 32 of the Collective Agreement for grievance procedure



First the officers will try to help solve any disagreement or dispute with the college, but if that cannot be accomplished, a grievance is the next step.

Timelines must be strictly adhered to in the grievance process or the college can assume the grievance to be abandoned. Grievances go through an informal investigation at step 1 and then a more formal process with the college president at step 2. If the issue still cannot be satisfactorily settled, OPSEU will arrange an arbitration hearing where an OPSEU lawyer will present the case to the arbitrator.

Grievances currently in process:

- Two Termination grievances, Dismissal without just cause, violating Article 6, Management functions
- One Improper Layoff grievance, Article 27
- Seven Staffing grievances for 19 positions, resulting in 4 faculty hired, 2 in Business and 2 in Electrotechnology

Political Action Committee: Donations and Sponsorships

- Mohawk College MSA student food bank
- International Women's Day – "The Shoe Project"
- Sustainapoolooza – Humanities/Social Sciences Sustainability course event
- Jack Layton "Art in Action" book launch <http://www.quattrobooks.ca/books/jack-layton-art-in-action/>
- Reunite the Wilkie Family <https://www.facebook.com/ReuniteWilkieFamily>
- Stella-Puella girls' summer camp <http://stellapuella.ca/>

Honouring Roberta Burke

After 34 years at Mohawk College, Roberta Burke is moving on. As Life Skills coach in BJRT (Basic Job Retraining), in charge of PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition), teaching Psychology in post-secondary programs, or in the CTL contributing to faculty Professional Development, she has been consistently dedicated and professional in her various roles. Roberta is perhaps most well known throughout the college for her key position in the College Educator Development Program (CEDP) and as Communications Officer and Chief Steward of Local 240. Her thoughtful support and her balanced perspective, bring her respect from all who meet her. The college is losing one of its best assets; her shoes will be very hard to fill.



We sure will miss Roberta.

Local 240 Student Bursary Continues to Give

by Greg Cormier, Treasurer



Local 240's Memorial Bursary continues to make a difference for our students. Both Shane Callaghan and Melinda Moote have written to the Local, expressing their appreciation for the assistance as they continue their education in their programs. Both students have not only expressed their thanks but also their commitment to help future students achieve their goals through education.

What you as members have started through this bursary continues to pay off for the recipients, themselves, and for those to follow. Thank you to all our members for a job well done in supporting this important initiative.

**An innovative way to cut the fat
from college budgets!**

Forget MOOCs--Let's Use MOOA!

By Benjamin Ginsberg

As colleges begin using massive open online courses (MOOC) to reduce faculty costs, a Johns Hopkins University professor has announced plans for MOOA (massive open online administrations). Dr. Benjamin Ginsberg, author of *The Fall of the Faculty*, says that many colleges and universities face the same administrative issues every day. By having one experienced group of administrators make decisions for hundreds of campuses simultaneously, MOOA would help address these problems expeditiously and economically. Since MOOA would allow colleges to dispense with most of their own administrators, it would generate substantial cost savings in higher education. [Read more at ...

http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2013/06/forget_moocslets_use_mooa.html

But, but...I'm
indispensable!
(And so is my
bonus!)



Local 240 Officers and Stewards, Sept 2012-Aug 2014

Local 240 Officers

President: Geoff Ondercin-Bourne
 Vice President: Sam Maga
 Chief Steward: Ann Bennett
 Treasurer: Greg Cormier
 Communications Officer: Kevin MacKay

Local Executive Committee (LEC)

<u>Steward(s)</u>	<u>Extension</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u># faculty</u>	<u>Location</u>
For Interdisciplinary Studies (Fennell) – Alison Horton & Gary Jennings				
Ann Bennett	3085	General Arts and Science Pre-Health, Gen Ed, Music	32	F175
Kevin MacKay	3364			F175
Geoff Ondercin-Bourne	3952	Language Studies	33	A126
Leanne Forsythe	3210			A126
Sue Collins	3427	C&CP, ESL, DEP	16	J135
Mechanical, construction & Apprenticeship (STARRT) – Wayne Ostermaier & Doug Daniels				
Warren Hyde	5013	STARRT	51	STC C114
		Building/Construction Trades		
		STARRT – Mechanical		
Greg Neale	5278	Motive Power F + SC	23	B106
		Welding, Truck and Coach, Autobody, GM		
		Mechanical		
Engineering Technology (Fennell) Chris Blackwood & Bill Brimley & Tom Low				
Sabu Joseph	3172	Electrotechnology Post-Sec	16	E240D
Martin Weddum	3582	Comp Science & Info Tech	25	E131
Sam Maga	3248	Bachelor of Techn'y Program	18	E110
		Mech Eng Technician		
		Mechanical Techniques (CAD/CAM) Aviation		
		Math		
Monica Crawford	3258	Bldg & Construction Sciences	24	E310 C
		Chemical, Environmental & Biotechnology		
Counseling, Teaching, Learning and Quality (Brantford, Fennell, IAHS, STARRT) R Matthews & Ted Scott				
Roberta Bourke	3349	Library, Accessible Learning Services, CTL 20		A227
Health Sciences (IAHS) Donna Rawlins & Diane Barrafato				
Leslie Marshall	4624	Med Rad Sci Pharmacy, CVT, DCS, OTA/PTA	25	A227
Mary Allan	53-26826	Bachelor of Nursing	21	IAHS 340
Marie Stoneman	53-26760	Practical Nursing, & PSW	18	IAHS 227
Community and Urban Studies (Brantford & Fennell) Jo-Anne Procter & Neil McMahon				
Dennis Campbell	6054	Police Studies, Pre-Justice, LASA & PF, Private Security Health, Wellness and Fitness (& Co-op)	28	BTFDD207
		Instructor - Blind & Vis. Impaired, Orient & Mobility Rehab Teaching		
Shelley Rempel	3825	Human Services: CYW, ECE, EA,	31	A224
Heather Giardine-Tuck	3097	R&L, SSW, Autism & Beh. Sci, Concurrent Disorders, Developmental SW Apprenticeship.		J137
Business Communications and Entertainment (Fennell) Ken Wallis & Jane Cooper & Art Domenicucci				
Patrick Hanson	3175	TV, Radio, Journalism, Pre-Media	21	F108
		Graphic Tech Art & Script Fund, Graphics Media Foundation, Graphic Design Production		
Greg Cormier	3331	OA, T& Travel & Event	30	M wing
		Management Small Business Advertising		
Carl Weston	3073	Accounting, Insurance, Gen Business	20	M wing
Gaspare Bonomo	3193	Business Admin, Financial Services, Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Business Foundations, International Business		
Auditors/Trustees	Carol Tristani	Ted Russell		M wing
Union Office	3468			A06