

# Examiner Bulletin



## Human Resource Strategic Plan: What's the Real Agenda?

You've heard the old saying, "Just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean no one is following you". Well, employees at Mohawk could be forgiven for holding to that axiom, based on what's included in the new Human Resources Strategic Plan for 2013-14. One look at this draft document, and two things become clear: 2014 is a bargaining year and is likely an election year, as well.

The college states, "As an employer of choice, we ensure a high performing diverse workforce and quality work environment". Let's peruse the Strategic Plan to see if there's evidence to support this claim. In particular, what does the College reveal in its fourth strategic goal, which is

**"To foster the development of a modern and positive labour relations environment and provide strategic labour relations advice to managers."**

"Modern" labour relations. As soon as I read that phrase, I thought, "I've heard this term before, but where?" I kept reading until I came to page 14 where the College expands on the notion of "modern" labour relations. Two other terms used on that page caught my attention: *flexible work environment* and *culture of entitlement*. At once, the light went on, and I knew exactly where to find the inspiration for the college's take on employee relations. It didn't take a lot of digging to learn that the language comes right out of Tim Hudak's plan for labour "reform". To illustrate, I've quoted the Strategic Plan in the table, below, and then quoted the Conservative leader to demonstrate the similarity between the two.

HR Strategic Plan, Mohawk College (2013-14)	"Paths to Prosperity: Flexible Labour Markets", Tim Hudak (July 18, 2012)
"Employees are engaged and committed to delivering quality service in a <i>modern, flexible work environment</i> "	"We're better educated and trained, more mobile, and face greater time pressures and a need for more <i>flexible work arrangements</i> ."
"Employee Relations Committees are partners in creating / advancing <i>modern labour relations</i> strategies and outcome"	"Businesses Will Thrive With <i>Modernized Labour Laws</i> "
<a href="http://web.mohawkcollege.ca/announcements/HR_Strategic_plan_for_consult.pdf">http://web.mohawkcollege.ca/announcements/HR_Strategic_plan_for_consult.pdf</a>	<a href="http://www.ontariopc.com/news/article/businesses-will-thrive-with-modernized-labour-laws-hudak">http://www.ontariopc.com/news/article/businesses-will-thrive-with-modernized-labour-laws-hudak</a>

It's no secret that Hudak's goal is to repeal every significant labour law from the 20th century. Ironically, he criticizes current labour laws, because they date back to the 1940s,

even as he promotes a labour relations model based on the 19th century. Of course, Tim's attitude toward workers is not new. The Ontario Progressive Conservatives have used public sector workers as 'whipping boys' since the days of Mike Harris, and Hudak served as a cabinet minister in that government. We believe HR is signalling through its Strategic Plan that it is in agreement with the Conservatives' view, so, in effect, the College is basing its labour relations on radical conservative ideology. Faculty must therefore be cautious in its dealings with HR, given its position on "modern" labour relations.

Now, let's look at the question of entitlement. The College maintains that a

**"Culture of entitlement has resulted in lax application of management rights"**

This from an institution that strives to be an employer of choice. However, since the College has referred to a culture of entitlement, let's "drill down" to see exactly what we're entitled to.

**Partial Load faculty are entitled:**

1. not to have their contract renewed
2. to have their signed contracts torn up the day before classes begin
3. not to be hired full-time
4. to have unlimited numbers of students in their classes
5. to be asked to volunteer their time to attend meetings and workshops, without pay

**Part-time and Sessional faculty are entitled to:**

- all of the above without benefits

**Full-time faculty (the real offenders) are entitled:**

1. to have their salaries frozen for at least two years
2. to have their teaching loads maxed out, and be told at the same time to blend their curriculum in the middle of the academic year
3. to be asked to blend curriculum without adequate resources
4. to have their non-teaching periods filled with busy work by their ADs
5. to be asked to mentor other categories of faculty, with no recognition, when they're not doing all of the above
6. to be targeted by management when they reach 'that certain age'
7. to be told they are the problem, even when it's management who makes the decisions

The Local's position is that, at the very least, Strategic Goal 4 on labour relations needs to be re-written with language that commits management to working with all employees to create a respectful, inclusive work environment that befits an employer of choice. Both faculty and support staff must be at the table for this discussion. We also believe that the College should leave Tim Hudak to do his own campaigning. A public institution should think twice about supporting a leader who has demonstrated nothing but contempt for the public sector.

Finally, the College is asking for your comments on the report by Tuesday, January 21. I know it's always a busy time for you, but please take them up on their offer, and email your thoughts to : [carol.mushing@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:carol.mushing@mohawkcollege.ca) . For further background information on the College's view of "modern labour relations", visit <http://www.ontariopc.com/> .