

Examiner

Fall 2020



COLLEGE
FACULTY

Local 240



In this Issue:

- Prez Says
- Anti-Racism in Hamilton
- Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse
- Important Partial Load info and more...

Prez Sez

by Heather Giardine-Tuck, President, OPSEU Local 240



Hello Local 240 Colleagues,

With Geoff's well-deserved retirement in August, it is my sincere honour and privilege to serve as your first female President of Local 240. Since my involvement with the Union began, over 20 years ago, I have always been so proud to advocate for such a talented and dedicated group of faculty members. My respect for all of you, and the work you do, is beyond measure.

Throughout my career, I have worked to establish strong relationships across the College. I believe this is the foundation to getting work accomplished and resolving issues. Integral to strong collaboration is teamwork. Together, with your Executive Officers, Kevin, Shelley, Gaspare and Robert, and all your Stewards, we will continue to support you in your work and ensure the College hears your concerns.

The challenges of 2020 have been enormous and unprecedented. We have faced the stress of the Covid-19 lockdown; the mammoth task of converting our courses to the online environment; have had to master Canvas, while delivering our courses from home; juggled the demands of work and life while trying to maintain a balance; and, worried continually about the health of our families, students, colleagues and communities amidst the uncertainties of the virus and second wave. Yet, despite it all, you have risen beyond these challenges and exceeded expectations, once again. Rest assured that your Local remains here for you. You can count on us.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been meeting regularly with the College to deal with the multifaceted challenges Covid-19 has presented. Labour relations have been strong and enabled us to work through the Employment Stability process, Health and Safety concerns, and workload issues we have encountered. We have had one layoff related to enrollment but will be watching for our student numbers to rise for our member to be recalled. Targeted incentives and redeployments mitigated layoffs in other areas where low enrollment was a problem. We have been invited to attend Covid-19 response meet-

ings with College management which ensures the Local's perspective is provided and information is shared.

Reasonable workloads have always been a priority but never more so than now with everything else our members are facing in the current environment. We need to ensure that no one is using the pandemic to unfairly increase workloads. We have

The challenges of 2020 have been enormous and unprecedented. We have faced the stress of the Covid-19 lockdown; the mammoth task of converting our courses to the online environment; have had to master Canvas, while delivering our courses from home...

spoken to Alison Horton, VPA, about not maximizing SWFs and ensuring that all work done by faculty is captured. For our non-teaching faculty, we have asked for the same consideration around reasonable workloads. We continue to encourage you to communicate with your AD about your workload to ensure you have been assigned appropriate time for preparation, evaluation and any complementary functions you have been asked to take on.

Hiring is also a priority for your Local Executive. The College has recently posted administrative positions despite the budgetary constraints and hiring freeze. We feel strongly that faculty positions also need to be posted in areas where there is demonstrated need. We have analyzed the non full time staffing data from the winter and fall 2020 semesters and will be meeting with the College to pursue hiring in these areas.

We will continue to keep you updated and informed. Thanks to all of you who have reached out to us. Please continue to do so.

Take care and stay well,

Heather

Partial Load Registry deadline looms... don't forget to sign up!

by Rebecca Mills, Partial Load
Steward, OPSEU Local 240



Attention partial-load faculty, if you haven't already done so, and you wish to be employed as a partial-load faculty member in 2021, please add your name to the partial-load registry **by Oct. 30, 2020**. This ritual must be performed annually because “a currently or previously employed partial-load employee must register their interest in being employed as a partial-load employee in the following calendar year” (CA, 26.10 C, p. 58). That is a mouthful, so if you remember nothing else: Fill out the form!

Instructions are below:

Partial Load Registry Form

By completing this form I am officially submitting my intention to register as a partial load faculty member for Calendar year 2021.

Banner ID (Employee ID)

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

SEND

1. Sign into MyMohawk,
2. Click on the Faculty page on the left-hand navigation bar,
3. Scroll down to the bottom, left-hand side of the page,
4. Fill out the “Partial Load Registry Form,” and
5. Hit “Send.”

The form information was sent successfully.

6. A green bar will appear after you hit send with the message: “This form information was sent successfully.”
7. Although not required, consider taking a screenshot for peace of mind because the form does not currently generate an email receipt.

Anti-Racism: Mohawk and Hamilton

by Shelley Rempel, Chief
Steward, OPSEU Local 240



I am sure you will all agree that the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 was a shocking wake-up call that inspired a renewed urgent concern around the world about racism directed at Black, Indigenous Peoples and People of Colour (BIPOC).

Hamilton and Mohawk College also responded in ways that were both immediate and aimed at lasting change

Mohawk College have reported experiencing racism in the community and also in the halls of the College. If you are not already, I hope you will consider joining the efforts in the community and at Mohawk College to end racism and move our community culture from racist to antiracist. As Ibram X. Kendi explains there are not “not racist” views only “racist” and “antiracist”.



– optimistically a shift in the system. While the current activities at Mohawk and in the community inspire hope, I remain cautious. We have a long way to go in Hamilton as the “hate” capital of Canada. For instance, there was a slight decline in hate crimes in Canada in 2018. However, Hamilton was an exception with an increase of 30% in 2017 and 6.6% in 2018. According to CBC News, Hamilton has three times more hate crimes than Toronto (July 23, 2019). Mohawk College is not immune to the racist culture in Hamilton. It is no surprise then that students, staff and faculty at

If you consider yourself “not racist”, you are racist. There is no middle ground because the “not racist” stance is one that does not challenge and fight racism and therefore perpetrates racism through allowing the status quo to continue. Consider reading his books **Stamped from the Beginning** and **How to be Anti-racist**.

Here are a few suggestions for getting engaged, educated and involved:

- Participate in demonstrations organized by [Black Lives Matter](#) and other groups fighting racism and oppression in Hamilton – let us no longer be the hate capital of Canada. I participated in several demonstrations in June and July and ran into students and faculty from Mohawk supporting the cause.

- Become a member of [No Hate in the Hammer](#) and check out the new series they just launched called “Together: Building Solidarity In Hamilton”. The first session on October 21 featured activist Cameron Kroetsch, Amani Williams of March for Black Lives, Evan Balgord of Canada Anti-Hate Network and Michelle Penny of Right Relations. Upcoming sessions will focus on anti-oppression, anti-racism, solidarity, allyship and restorative justice. If you missed it, you can watch

Contact your Dean or AD to find out how you can get involved.

- Take advantage of P.D offerings at the College. I attended an excellent session in July titled Critical Conversations on Anti-Black Racism with three panelist Dr. George Dei, Professor of Social Justice Education, & Director of the Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies, OISE, Roberta K. Timothy, PhD, RP Assistant Professor & Director of Health Promotion - Dalla Lana School of Public Health, U of T, and Cebert Adamson Dean, School of Continuing Education, Library, Academic Quality and Centre for Teaching & Learning, Mohawk College.

- There are many, many, on-line resources. One I came



the first session on No Hate in the Hammer’s [YouTube channel](#).

- Take a look at the link on MyMohawk called Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). There are dozens of resources and an overview of the College’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

- Each academic school is organizing a committee to move the EDI Plan forward. The School of Health and Social Services had their first meeting this week.

across recently is a good start. The article offers 6-ways to be antiracist based on Ibram X. Kendi’s work. These include (1) Understand the definition of racist, (2) Stop saying I’m not racist, (3) Identify racial inequalities and disparities, (4) Confront the racist ideas you’ve held and continue to hold, (5) Understand how your anti-racism needs to be intersectional, and (6) Champion antiracist ideas and policies. For a more complete description see [this great article](#).

It is good to see change happening, but the worry is

that interest will fall over time. It is up to all of us to keep antiracism high on the agenda in all of the circles we travel.

Currently, COVID-19 is a threat to all of us, but it is possible to see an end or reduced danger through precautions, treatment and vaccines. Over the past seven months the College and the Hamilton community demonstrated its ability to act quickly to make drastic changes for the protection of the whole community from the virus. Anti-BIPOC racism is no different. In fact, it is an even greater threat to our community as there will never be a vaccine to protect people who are systematically oppressed and excluded. It requires strong commitment from all of us, including strong leadership. Can there be the same swift action at the College and in the Hamilton community to make real change toward a world free of systemic racism? Let's make it happen together.

Partial Load Seniority and Step Increases

by Gaspare Bonomo, Local240 Treasurer

Partial Load Faculty should track their Teaching Contact Hours to determine which months are credit months for attaining more seniority and for moving through salary steps.

Every month in which you teach 30 hrs is a Credit Month and counts towards both seniority and a salary step increase. 10 credit months will allow you to move to the next salary step. A salary step increase can also occur midway through a contract.

The [2017 Collective Agreement](#) allows Partial Load faculty to move through Salary Steps quicker than in previous years.

Local240 has prepared an Excel Spreadsheet to help you track your Credit Months.

Please access your [Local 240 website](#) and download a copy of the file.

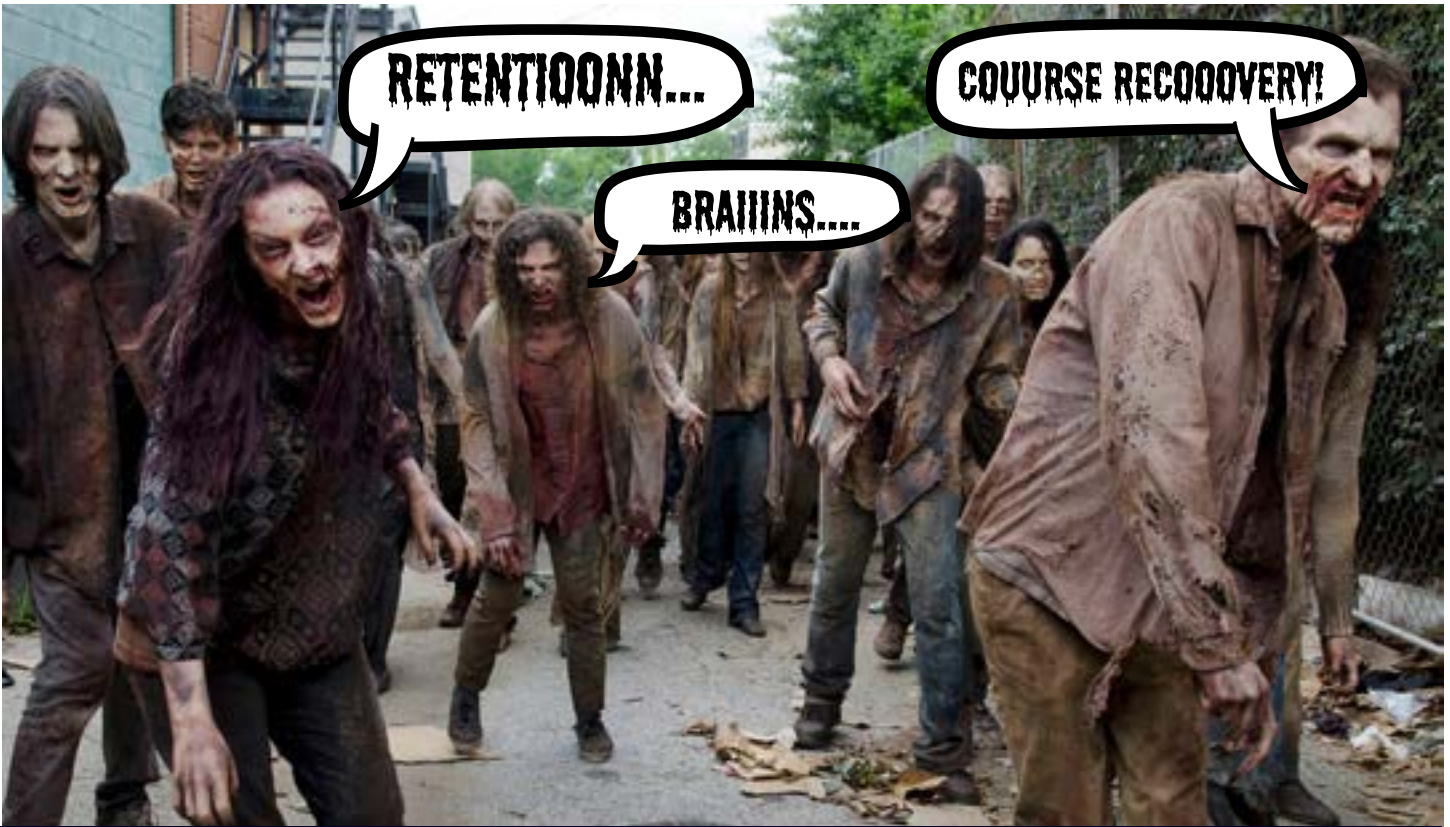


- ***Are your class sizes accurate?***
- ***Are your evaluation factors correct?***
- ***Do you have complementary hours for course development?***
- ***Do you have any hours for either course or program coordination?***
- ***Do you have any hours for COVID or Canvas?***

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR SWF!

ANY QUESTIONS? CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STEWARD FOR HELP





Can Academic Integrity Survive the Zombie Apocalypse?

by Kevin MacKay, Local 240 Vice President

The Good, the Bad and...

Something that becomes clear after a few years with the faculty union is that certain management schemes keep resurfacing, time and again, despite their clearly being harmful to the quality of college education. No matter how many times these bad ideas crop up and are put down by faculty opposition, the “pedagogical zombies” always seem to be lurking around the next semester bend, threatening to lurch into undead life.

A particularly persistent zombie is the obsession over “retention”. A management concept par excellence, “retention” is about keeping a post-secondary student enrolled in your institution (and paying tuition!) *at all costs*. Retention is a purely business proposition – about *bums in seats* and *funding units*. On the surface, this might seem like a good idea. Faculty would be kidding ourselves by thinking the number of students

in our programs doesn’t matter. Without them we would all, literally, be out of a job. However, faculty approach the issue of student enrolment from a different perspective – that of *academic success*. Through education, we are committed to giving our students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their academic, career, and life goals. Academic success arguably includes retention, and there is some overlap in outcome between the two concepts. However, in both theory and practice, they represent two very different goals.



Academic success puts education first. It emphasizes approaches to teaching and institutional policies that best facilitate student learning. This means ensuring

that student competence in core skills, like math and literacy, are effectively assessed at intake. This enables students who need preparatory work in these areas to be identified and streamed into specialized courses to meet their needs. Academic success also means ensuring that students receive the supports they need while learning – face to face access to their professor, the support of counselors and librarians, and, if needed, peer tutors. Finally, academic success means that faculty maintain academic standards and ensure that students are *actually prepared* for the challenges of life outside of the college. Of course, maintaining academic standards sometimes means, despite our best efforts, that a student might fail. Although faculty strive to prevent this outcome, we also realize that in education, as in life, failure can impart the most powerful of lessons.

In contrast, retention puts the onus on simply keeping a student paying tuition. When this becomes the goal, the incentives start to run in a dubious direction. Instead of maintaining standards and creating the best possible chance of success while a student is in the course, faculty are pressured to weaken standards and cut corners. Institutionally, the bar for success is lowered, enabling students to obtain a credit as easily and effortlessly as possible. Failure is declared the great enemy of retention. It is seen as an *inconvenience* for the student, but most importantly, as *bad business* for the institution.

The Mohawk Walking Dead: A Short History

With enrolment pressures created by COVID, the retention zombie is once more staggering forward, joined by its undead cousin *credit recovery*. These bad old ideas are being packaged in shiny new forms, but they have a long and sordid history.

The retention zombie first appeared at Mohawk back in the early 2000's when we reduced the 60% pass requirement to 50% for the great majority of courses and programs. This was ostensibly to bring us in line with the grading schemes in universities and was perceived as being more “fair” to students. While the argument of harmonizing grade schemes between post-secondary institutions has some merit, the ultimate effect was that the mark required for students to pass a course was reduced by 10%, across the board. The bar for success was lowered – score one for the zombies.

A few years later, when I first got involved as the Local 240 Communications Officer, I saw the next attack of the retention zombie in what became known as the “75 + 45 = a credit” scheme. This was a proposed change to the Mohawk grade appeal policy which would let a student who achieved a 45% in *any* course to pay an additional \$75 in order to write a single test that, depending on their mark, would enable them to pass the course. The problem, faculty were told, is that certain students weren't getting their credits in “high failure rate” (i.e. academically challenging) courses. These courses, like math, communications, or social sciences, were then perceived as “getting in the way” of a student being able to graduate with their peers.

A wave of faculty opposition luckily stopped the “75+45” scheme, but it wasn't long before this bad idea came back from the dead in what former Local 240 President Geoff Ondercin Bourne affectionately called the “Six Day Slam”. This scheme was a “pilot” developed in the spring of 2016 by the Dean of Continuing Education, who decided that certain courses could be offered in a hyper-condensed three-week format in order to accommodate students who had failed the regular course delivery. The same “student not graduating with their cohort” argument was given, and the really two-week course (the third was when a final exam was scheduled) was a way to “recover their credit”. This proposal was met by a wholesale rebellion of Liberal Studies faculty, along with a painful “review” of the six day course with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). In this meeting, the CTL manager, when hearing for the first time that the course *was actually delivered over 6 days*, memorably did a double-take and burst out laughing. Needless to say, the “pilot” crashed shortly after.

Despite this last victory, faculty are now dealing with another plague of retention and credit recovery zombies, as both the Math and Communications areas are again proposing hyper-condensed courses to students who have failed their basic courses. These recovery courses are also delivered over three weeks, with supposedly 18 hours of instruction. In a bold move, they are even doing the “75 plus 45” scheme one better, making the “credit recovery” course available to students who scored only 41% in the regular course. In the game of academic limbo, there is apparently no end to “how low you can go”, and a bad idea can clearly get even worse.

In Defense of Failure

With retention and credit recovery zombies rising from the grave with such alarming regularity, why should faculty even try to resist? In response, it helps to think again of that embattled alternative approach to maintaining student enrolment - academic success. This means reasserting the importance of quality and academic standards in college education, and yes, the importance of failure too.

In the “real world” (as we wistfully refer to life outside of the academic bubble), it is well-known that failure can be a crucial aspect of success. In a popular Nike Ad, Michael Jordan famously said: “I fail over and over again, day in and day out, and that is why, ultimately, I succeed.” Slick corporate marketing? Sure. But also very true, as Jordan is seen missing shot after shot in practice – learning through failure what his limits are, but simultaneously *learning how to exceed them*.

From the perspective of academic success, a student failing a course is regrettable, but it is also an important instance of feedback – indicating that their effort, skills or understanding were insufficient. Getting this feedback can be painful, but it is also incredibly important if we take the idea of competence, let alone mastery, seriously. *In the face of failure, students have to exceed their limits*. They have to learn hard lessons (I didn’t work hard enough... I should have gotten extra help... I shouldn’t have partied so hard... Maybe this course or program aren’t for me) and make important decisions. If they want to succeed in the course, they need to internalize the personal lessons on offer and work to learn the material, acquire the skills, and earn the credit. This process can generate deep insight and resilience. It can build the self-confidence and work ethic that only comes from meeting and overcoming adversity.

Or they can pay \$75 or take a six day recovery course and, you know, just kind of slip on by...

It’s not just that failure can be character-building, a source of personal insight, or invaluable feedback about one’s academic or career direction. These are all true; but in many cases, failure is also just an indication that a certain course or academic skill *needs more work*. In this sense, it is precisely the student who fails

a course who needs an opportunity to re-experience the full course and re-do all of the assignments and evaluations. This student needs the opportunity to interact with their professor and classmates over a full 14 week period – the optimal conditions for a weak student to become a strong one. Will slipping through a condensed “credit recovery” course help a 41% student master the skills needed to take an advanced business math or communications course? There’s not a faculty member alive who would take that bet.

Averting the Apocalypse

Ultimately, avoiding the clutches of pedagogical zombies requires faculty to choose academic success over retention. Rest assured, pressure from administrators will always be there to lower academic standards and minimize the inconvenient learning process that occurs between cheque cashing and diploma dispensing. If the line is to be held concerning the quality of education, it’s up to us.

Perhaps a day will come when students who fail a hyper condensed math recovery course can take a three-hour recovery course recovery course in which the final exam consists of but one question: “Count your nose”.

...but it is not this day!

Perhaps a day will come when paying students are whisked across the stage of the McIntyre Theatre during orientation, in full graduation robes, and pelted with diplomas from a diploma cannon.

...but it is not this day!

Instead, I suspect that faculty will keep doing their best to actually help students in this difficult time. By taking education seriously, by taking the growth and development of our students seriously, and by continuing to do what’s best for them... not just what’s easiest.



OPSEU Local 240 Mohawk College Faculty Area Stewards September 1, 2020 - August 31, 2022

OFFICERS

President: Heather Giardine-Tuck

Vice President: Kevin MacKay

Chief Steward: Shelley Rempel

Treasurer: Gaspare Bonomo

Communications Officer: Robert Soulliere

AREA	STEWARD	OFFICE / PHONE / EMAIL
Architectural, Civil, Urban, Planning, Math Aviation	Kevin Haluik Paul Sprentz	A209D x3994 kevin.haluik@mohawkcollege.ca Airport paul.sprentz@mohawkcollege.ca
Business Management Studies	Robert Soulliere	H101A Library x3936 robert.soulliere@mohawkcollege.ca
Business Office Administration and Business Graduate Studies Programs	Gaspare Bonomo	M-wing x3193 gaspare.bonomo@mohawkcollege.ca
Chemical & Mechanical Technology Programs	Monika Jungmann	E310C x3258 monika.jungmann@mohawkcollege.ca
Computer Science Technology Electro-technology Programs	Sam Scott Vijay Khatri	Q-wing x3029 sam.scott1@mohawkcollege.ca E-238 B x3572 vijay.khatri@mohawkcollege.ca
Social Service work and Community Studies	Heather Giardine-Tuck	A126 x4065 heather.giardine-tuck@mohawkcollege.ca
Social Service work and Community Studies	Shelley Rempel	A224 x3825 shelley.rempel@mohawkcollege.ca
Liberal Studies and Music	Kevin MacKay	F175 x3364 kevin.mackay@mohawkcollege.ca
Liberal Studies and Music	Dan Popowich	F175 x3690 dan.popowich@mohawkcollege.ca
Justice Studies	Steve Cook	C025 x3397 steve.cook@mohawkcollege.ca
Health, Wellness & Fitness; RMT	Dan MacLennan	C041 x3641 dan.maclennan@mohawkcollege.ca
Liberal Studies, ESL, Academic Upgrading, DEP	Betti Sheldrick	A126 x3949 betti.sheldrick@mohawkcollege.ca
Library, Counseling & Accessibility, CTRL, Int'l	Kasey Waddell	The Square, Office 35 x3778 kasey.waddell@mohawkcollege.ca
Media & Entertainment Studies, Graphics and Design	Patrick Hanson	F108T x3175 patrick.hanson@mohawkcollege.ca
CVT, OTA-PTA, Pharm Tech	Michael Chan	IAHS 315 x6180 michael.chan4@mohawkcollege.ca
Nursing: Bachelor of Science in Nursing BScN, Practical Nursing, PSW	Vacant	
Med/Rad/Science	Caryn Schaefer	IAHS caryn.schaefer@mohawkcollege.ca
Partial Load: IAHS	Vacant	
Partial Load: Fennell Campus	Rebecca Mills	A126 x4186 rebecca.mills@mohawkcollege.ca
Skilled Trades: Transportation & Industrial, Apprenticeship, Construction, Electrical, Fuels & Green Tech	Craig Cooper	Stoney Creek C114 x2520 craig.cooper@mohawkcollege.ca
Skilled Trades: Transportation & Industrial	Greg Neale	Fennell B106 x5278 greg.neale@mohawkcollege.ca
TRUSTEES/AUDITORS	Carol Tristani & Cornel Fulop	M-wing
Union Office		A006 x3468