

Scholarship Program

Expanded scholarship program offers more help for students pursuing post-secondary education.

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JOHNSON INC. HAS EXPANDED ITS ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM and has earmarked more funding to help take some of the stress out of students' post-secondary education decisions. "Johnson is proud to support students with their continuing education through our scholarship program," said Johnson's President Ken Bennett. "These awards help reduce some of the financial barriers that may keep students from pursuing their career plans. We have increased our annual scholarship program from \$100,000 to \$150,000 and we look forward to offering more valuable awards to deserving students."

This year, Johnson is pleased to offer \$150,000 in scholarship funding—that translates into 100 scholarships valued at \$1,500 each. Previous awards were valued at \$1,000 each. To be eligible to apply to the Johnson Scholarship Fund, students must be graduating high school this year and pursuing post-secondary education. In addition, their parents must hold a policy, either home or auto, with Johnson.

Since 1998, the Johnson scholarship program has awarded \$1,000,000 in scholarships and academic grants to students across Canada. For example, Katherine Amanda Beard, from Erb's Cove, NB received a 2007 Johnson scholarship and is currently pursuing a bachelor of arts in human kinetics at St. Francis Xavier University. Rebecca White of Sydney, NS, used her 2007 Johnson scholarship funding to help cover the cost of pursuing a bachelor of education degree at Acadia University. Ryan Vachon, of St. Paul, AB, is using his scholarship funding to attend Grant MacEwan College and plans to earn a master of mechanical engineering degree.

Completed application forms must be submitted by September 15, 2008 and must be accompanied by a transcript of final year credits, a reference letter, and a letter from the applicant describing their school and community activities and future plans. For more information or to apply, visit www.johnson.ca or e-mail scholarshipfund@johnson.ca

Johnson is one of Canada's leading insurance and benefit providers. Headquartered in St. John's, NL, the company is a national organization with a team of over 1000 employees in more than 60 locations across the country. Johnson offers award-winning customer service to individual policyholders and to more than 3,000,000 members and employees of client associations and organizations. ▼

Yes Chef!

A New Recipe for Exploiting Students

by Ed Ksenych

It was at the end of my class when two students in a Hospitality program anxiously approached me about purchasing a fundraising ticket to a Latin dance event they were involved in planning. The cost was \$60 a ticket per person. That's a lot, I said. They looked visibly distraught. So I asked what was going on.

They told me the fundraising event was part of a class project for their Events Planning course. The class was asked to plan an event and raise money for George Brown College's Yes Chef! Campaign. The targeted amount was \$40,000. And, to their understanding, their grades on this major project were tied to the success of the event.

Things weren't going well. Few were buying tickets because they were expensive. They were expensive because they had to raise so much money for it to be successful. They didn't want to invite guests from the hospitality industry because they were afraid their potential future employers would be witnesses at a failed event. So they were turning to their parents who reluctantly bought tickets while asking if the college could actually do something like this. Some of the students were international students paying fees of \$15,000 with few connections or resources here to make such an event successful, and were beside themselves. And on it went... Clearly they were distressed.

Is it ethical to require students to plan an event, not for some charitable organization of their choosing, but for the self-interested benefit of the college's Hos-

pitality program? Is it professional to tie their grades to whether or not they can successfully meet a target apparently set by the professor? Is it hospitable to place international students in the position of having to deal with such expectations and pressures with so few resources to realistically handle them and so much on the line to do so?

The students told me they felt exploited. And they said they were afraid of voicing their concerns because of the consequences that speaking out would have for them. Of course, they felt this way because they really were being exploited and oppressed. But all this exploitation and oppression was disguised and legitimized under the academic cloak of how much they'd learn from this real life experience. Only what they were deeply learning from this "real life experience" was to just say "Yes chef!" no matter how questionable or unethical the expectations with which they were being asked to comply.

This issue made its way to our college President and the Dean of the program, both of whom expressed concern about it. It seems the professor was a part-time employee skilled in event planning who made some inappropriate educational decisions. According to a recent memo from the Dean, the 'rubric' for the course is under review (although the memo didn't directly say the student evaluation for this project was no longer tied to the success of the event). And by the way, the event did turn out to be "successful" after all, at least from a financial point of view. So everything seems fine.

But it isn't. The instructor may have been "part-time" (whatever that's supposed to mean in these circumstances) and may have made an inappropriate decision, but the money from the event was to be funneled through the GBC Foundation. And that means someone full-time in authority knew about this inappropriate decision and endorsed it. Moreover, this particular skilled part-time faculty was making decisions based on the practices and ethics of the very industry students are being trained for. And it would seem that these are practices and ethics which the Hospitality Division, as an academic enterprise rather than a job-filling machine, needs to be questioning and developing alternatives to, not quietly endorsing or side-stepping. Furthermore, reviewing the rubric for the course misses the point that the overall issue of raising money for GBC as a course project, and tying grades to the success of it, needs to be taken to the College Council and a clear college policy needs to be developed on this matter.

Finally, the fact that the event was successful (and where did all the money for tickets suddenly come from?) lets the Hospitality program divert attention away from having to examine where and how in their programs they are teaching their students to speak out against and effectively resist inappropriate expectations, demands or requirements placed on them in their industry. Given my encounter with the students, our college, and in particular the Hospitality program, is not effectively teaching our students when, where and how to say "No Chef!" at those times when there's good reason to say "No!"

Written with my former colleague and Hospitality teacher Peter Chiasson in mind. ▼

Part-time Campaign 2008 Standing up for all of us!

by Kathryn Payne

There are about to be some very important changes in the college system in Ontario. Soon, the thousands of part-time workers in the 24 colleges will join us in OPSEU to fight for their rights at work. After 30 plus years of being underpaid, dealing with ridiculously insecure employment and the stress of being vulnerable to every management whim, part-timers are on the edge of gaining the union representation they need to improve their miserable working conditions.

As of June last year, the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act became illegal because it denies the right to unionize—an important Charter right according to the Supreme Court—to thousands of part-time workers in the colleges. In August 2007, McGuinty promised new legislation and commissioned recommendations from provincial arbitrator Kevin Whitaker. The Whitaker Report was released in February 08. It is a typical government document and seems designed to intimidate full-time faculty away from the picket line, but Whitaker also recognizes that this denial of union rights is a historical injustice and recommended that the Colleges voluntarily recognize OPSEU bargaining units for part-time faculty and support staff.

Since the Whitaker report, however, the Liberals have done nothing to make good on their promise to extend union rights to the colleges' part-time workforce. Nor, strangely, have the colleges rushed to recognize OPSEU as the part-timers' bargaining agent. So, OPSEU followed the Ministry of Labour guidelines for unionizing a workplace and launched a Card-Signing (or Certification) Drive for both part-time faculty and part-time support workers. In the January – April term that just ended, OPSEU's Organizing Department hired a number

of GBC's fabulous part time workers, and booked one steward (me) off, to talk to part-timers across George Brown about the organizing drive and signing union cards.

Part-time workers in the college desperately need the clout OPSEU can give them. I started as a sessional myself and still remember the 70-hour weeks (on 18 hours pay), the constant fear of being fired for the smallest mistakes, the anxiety of not knowing if I'd have an income in 4 months, and the

humiliation of having to repeatedly reapply for the job I was already doing. I saw these experiences echoed among today's part-timers. In addition, full-time jobs are held in front of part-timers like a carrot, so they feel unable to refuse any request management makes—and are often seriously afraid to be seen talking to me about the union.

The other concern I heard repeatedly from part-time faculty was that their vulnerability erodes the academic integrity of the entire college system. Part-timers want to be able to be available for their students, but are stuck teaching out of the trunks of their

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THE GREEN CORNER

THE GREEN

Diet & Global Warming

Eating a Vegetarian, or better yet Vegan, plant-based diet isn't just good for us—it's an important way to combat the build-up of greenhouse gasses.

Global warming and the role played by carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Methane (CH₄) are undisputable scientific facts. While our current Federal government can, at best and most charitably, be described as reluctant late-comers to the ranks of those taking global warming seriously, citizens in general have already begun to change their consumption patterns to the benefit of the environment.

We've been buying energy efficient lighting and appliances, turning down thermostats, re-using and recycling, and buying more fuel-efficient cars. What has not occurred yet is a widespread appreciation of the role that diet plays in global warming.

Welcome research from two professors at the University of Chicago is helping us to understand the relationship between diet and climate. Gidon Eschel and Pamela Martin (www.geosci.uchicago.edu)

crunched the numbers and determined that each individual who transitions from the standard American (26% animal bases) diet to a vegan diet, keeps at least 1.5 tons of CO₂ from being released into the atmosphere. That's like trading in your SUV for a Camry. If you base 26% of your diet on red meat and dairy products the impact of bovine methane makes an even bigger difference. The average American Suburban (SUV) produces 4.76 tons of CO₂, a Toyota Camry 2.24 tons and a Hybrid Prius 1.19 tons per year.

The "Conservation International Association" (www.conservation.org) has determined that a vegan produces less than 2 tons of CO₂, a vegetarian 2.7 tons and an omnivore 3.8 tons.

So the last and biggest impact a family can make on reducing greenhouse gasses is to change its diet to vegan or at least vegetarian, and, of course, buy each member a bicycle.



Summer Message from Tom Tomassi

It seems like yesterday that we began the academic year and it is just about over. I guess most of us (if not all of us) feel this way, because this has been an extremely busy year, with all sorts of events to remind us that we are now, as a system, 40 years old. I believe that we have matured. I can definitely go back to the early days and see a very distinct difference in our behaviour as a system. Unfortunately, I don't believe that our work in the classroom is easier. I find that every year, more and more work gets compounded and every year we seem to feel a little more tired at the end. The culmination of the academic year is convocation and for those of you that do go, you can definitely attest to the fact that all of the hard work, commitment and dedication that we all put into our working day becomes quite evident by simply looking at the faces of our graduates. Let's not lose sight of the fact that as professional educators, we do an incredible job—never let anyone tell you otherwise. In the course of this year, as some of you well know, we had some real difficulty with respect to space, mostly due to increased enrollment and partly due to our inability to expand within our own physical structures. The College is trying hard to create space, both on a temporary and permanent basis and hopefully within the next 3-4 years that aspect of college life should dramatically change for the better. The working conditions, as well as the learning conditions, will be much more conducive for all of us.

I will conclude by wishing you all a great and safe summer. Enjoy the company of your loved ones and I hope to see all of you back in September. ▼

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cars. Part-time faculty also talked about many of the other ways they are used by management to cut corners—they are instructed to teach subjects they aren't expert in, ordered to change evaluation systems to multiple-choice, given classes with unlimited numbers of students or overloaded with online courses. The idea of the protection afforded by the SWF (and collective agreement) is very attractive to part-time faculty, and many signed OPSEU cards hoping not just to be paid enough to only have to hold down one job, but also for a chance to improve the education offered in Ontario colleges.

Last month, during OPSEU convention, the union applied at the Ministry of Labour for a certification vote to be held, ASAP, in the colleges. We followed the Ministry's guidelines for unionizing and had collected in excess of 7000 signed union cards from part-timers across the province. Usually, in such circumstances, the Ministry would order an almost-immediate certification vote. This time, however, they ordered more hearings—which could take months or even years. What a reminder of just who our boss really is, eh?

Hope is not lost, however. OPSEU has launched (another) lobby campaign to make the provincial government act to give part-time college workers their constitutional rights. On April 22, Minister Milloy told OPSEU "We're looking at introducing legislation sometime this spring." You can help convince him that sooner is better than later by encouraging every one you know to sign the petition here <http://www.opseu.org/caat/parttime/petition%20on%20pt%20college.pdf>. You can also write to Minister Milloy and your own MPP. The in-

formation you need is here <http://www.opseu.org/caat/parttime/contactmpp.htm>

In the mean time, the college's part-time workers' association—OPSECAAT—will be holding their general meeting in Toronto in early June. Each college will send a part-timer from faculty and one from support to represent their fellow workers and make the decisions that will prepare part-timers to win a first contract once they are unionized. Stay tuned at www.collegeworkers.org for new developments and how to help.

Both OPSEU locals presently at George Brown have been actively involved in the Card Signing Drive. I'd like to particularly thank all those who signed up their part-time colleagues, the dedicated volunteers who came out to talk to Con Ed faculty about unionizing, and the many smart and energetic part-timers who signed-up, spread the word and worked on the campaign themselves. ▼



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