

the VOCAL LOCAL

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GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE FACULTY,
COUNSELLORS AND LIBRARIANS

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Update on the Start of Talks FROM THE *Faculty Negotiating Team*

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The Union gave notice to bargain on June 3rd, which was the first date allowable under the new Colleges Collective Bargaining Act—90 days prior to expiry. The team met with the employers' committee for three days this week. We had some general discussions regarding our overall approaches to bargaining this round, exchanged opening positions, and tabled some specific proposals. The parties also had some discussion about the report of the Workload Task Force.

We advised the management committee that we were aiming for an on-time settlement, that we believed this would be possible with hard work, and that an on-time settlement had been reached in the past when Barbara Taylor of Canadore College and I chaired the respective teams. Both sides agreed that workload would be a key focus in this round. While it is far too early to judge outcomes with any certainty, there is already a marked, positive, and refreshing contrast with the last round of bargaining.

As you might expect, the employer talked about economic pressures. They have not as yet offered any salary increase or benefit improvements, but it is too early for that. Bargaining always addresses some of the

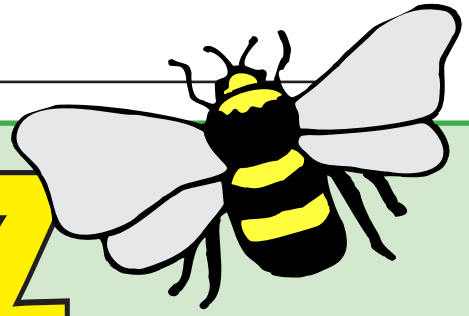
non-monetary issues first. Management's exchange document indicates they will be looking to negotiate a "responsible salary increase." As college faculty comparator groups have been established, and as their increases over the next two, three, or four years are matters of record, we agree that college faculty salary increases must be responsible to those established norms. [I will refrain from comment here about the "responsibility" of college president salary increases that have averaged just under 10% per annum.]

Overall, it was a positive beginning to negotiations. Still, any optimism should be cautious at best. There are and will be great gaps between the parties that will have to be closed. But we have made some progress already and there is a commitment, at least, to make the effort to reach a settlement.

Meetings will continue this month and through the summer. If you have any questions, please contact your team contact person*. ▼

For the Team,
Ted Montgomery
June 12, 2009

*Damian Wiechula at opsu556@gmail.com



THE GREEN CORNER

Summer is here and the world is a-buzz with things that fly. This issue, the Green Corner takes a look at our yellow & black striped friends.

BUZZ WORDS

No need to panic—nearly all species of bees are gentle and will not sting you. They are only searching for pollen and nectar to feed themselves and their young. The number of bees (like so many other insects) is quickly declining. So, why not provide a 'safe' zone for them and invite them into your garden?

First of all, if possible, avoid pesticides. Sure, they kill insects you don't want, however, they also kill those you might want. For some tips on organic, pesticide-free gardening check out VoLo Vol. 2, No. 4, as well as the many sites online.

Secondly, to ensure that bees are attracted to your garden, you can start planting flowers (both annual and perennial) to which bees are attracted. These include; bee balm (obviously), cosmos, black-eyed susan, lupine and mint. Try to use flower species that are native to your region.

By doing these two things, you will be providing pesticide-free safe havens for pollinators. If you have bee-attracting plants in your garden, you will also attract other flying wildlife such as butterflies, wasps, flies, hummingbirds and other pollinators that will give you a bountiful harvest of fruits, vegetables and seeds. Apart from bouquets of flowers, bees al-

so need sources of water—a dripping faucet, pond or bird bath. All bees also require places to hide from predators, to locate and court a mate or establish their nests.

If you really want to help out by building bee-houses and providing other living accommodations, you can go online and check out the many sites on related topics. In return for your thoughtfulness, bees will provide you many hours of outdoor entertainment.

Don't forget to stop and smell the roses. (Just check the flowers for bees collecting pollen before you do.)

Have a great summer.

Summer Message from Tom Tomassi



We are almost at the end of another academic year and if your year has been anything like mine, you have been extremely busy. However, we have managed to survive it.

Hopefully this summer will be a good one for all of us so that we can rest and enjoy the weather, our families and friends. This will help us to recharge so that we can take on the next academic year in September.

Thank you for forwarding your personal email addresses, so that we can properly communicate with you during the summer

months. For those of you who have not yet done so, please make an effort to send us that information before you leave on vacation. We will do our best to keep you up to date on anything that is happening at the bargaining table. Hopefully we will have a settlement by the time September comes along. Wouldn't that be nice! For those of you who do not have an alternate email, we will use the George Brown address, provided the college does not shut it down, should interruption of services occur.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, and all your loved ones, a wonderful and safe summer. ▼

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