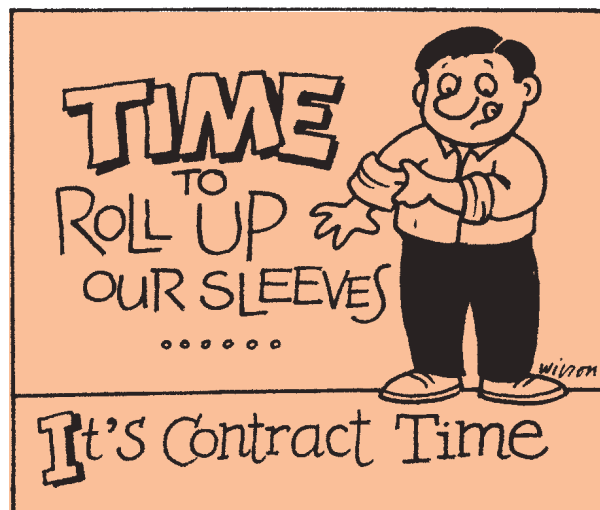


Bargaining 2012

by Tom Tomassi

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You should all know by now that this is our last year of the Colleges' imposed Agreement which will expire on August 31, 2012. The preliminaries have already begun with regard to strategizing for the next round of Bargaining. The Negotiating Team has been elected and is in place. We at George Brown College are again extremely lucky to have one of our faculty

members on the team. In case you missed the last correspondence, our faculty member on the team is JP Hornick. It goes without saying that our approach to this round of bargaining is different than the way we have approached it in the past and that is due to two major reasons. One, the changes that were made to the Colleges' Collective Bargaining Act (Bill 190) and two, the Colleges negotiation tactics during our last round of bargaining. As a local, we have a great deal of work ahead of us, and, as constituents of the local, you need to become active in the affairs preceding this round of bargaining. It is extremely important that we, as a local, forward appropriate and accurate information to the bargaining team, that clearly and fairly represents the wishes of academic staff here at George Brown College.

In the coming weeks, there will be communication to all from the Local, asking that you give some thought to what language in the Collective Agreement presently doesn't adequately address your needs as faculty and the language changes that you believe are required to meet those needs.

The Local will be asking everyone to participate in a survey where you can express your opinion with regard to the themes that surfaced at the Pre-Bargaining

Bargaining *cont'd from page 1*

Conference, or indeed create your own theme and topics that associate themselves with it. Please take the time to complete the survey, as your input is extremely valuable in moving forward your interests.

Negotiating, by definition, is the art of conferring with another party, with the view to create a compromise, or an agreement. When this process is exercised in good faith, this is exactly what happens at the table. The Union presents the demands that have originated from the membership and the College puts forward their demands, and the two teams engage in trying to find possible compromise on issues, where each team can claim that they have in fact achieved their goals. It sounds simple, but believe me, and you can ask anyone that has had an opportunity to be on the Negotiation Team, it could be—and in most cases is—one of the most frustrating experiences in these individuals' lives.

Aside from the actual work that happens at the negotiation table, one of the most important things for us as a local is to create a communication infrastructure that allows the officers of the Local to communicate with the membership at large in a timely fashion. This communication tool should also be user friendly, interactive and speedy. Because of the need for secure communication, we are asking all our academic staff covered by the Collective Agreement to either submit to the Local your personal email address, or create another email account to which the Local has access, to facilitate communication. The Local will not rely on the College's email, for various reasons, one being that it is owned by the College and they have access to its content. Secondly, the College may decide not to make their server available to our academic staff. It is simple to set up an email account just for this purpose. You can use gmail (www.gmail.com) or any other email account.

Should you require any assistance, please call the Union office at 416-415-5000 ext. 2200.

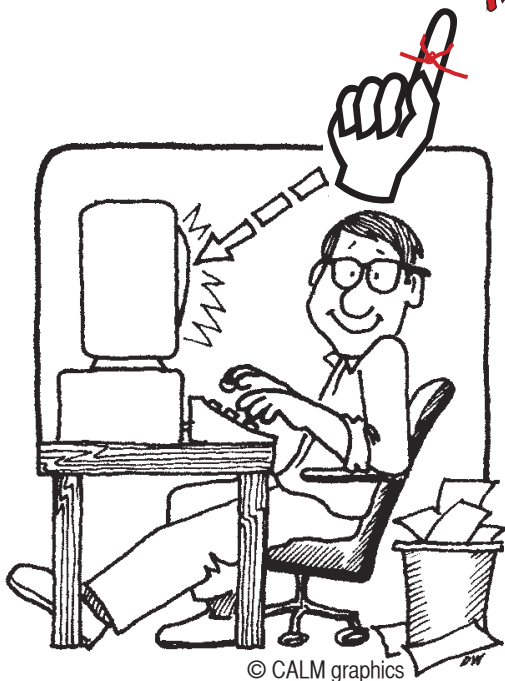
I hope that you join me in wishing both teams a successful round of bargaining.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy, healthy, safe and festive holiday season. All the best to you and your loved ones. ▼



© CALM graphics

In Preparation for Bargaining...



© CALM graphics

Please Remember:

Send Local 556 an email with your:

- Name
- Status (Full-time or Partial-load)
- Division/Department
- Campus
- Private, secure (non GBC) email
- Private (non GBC) phone number

Send the info to:

j.stellings556@gmail.com

Students with Disabilities and the Duty to Accommodate

by Paul Miskin

Is the College providing the best possible services to our students with disabilities? Are you seeing more students who are registered with Disability Services than in the past? If your experience is similar to mine, the answer to the first question might be “sometimes yes, sometimes no”. The second question, I imagine is likely a resounding, “yes”. We face two problems: first, how best to provide accommodation to those who disclose their disabilities, and second, what to do about students who do not disclose the details of their situation.

While students are not compelled to do so, I find that most who need learning accommodations are willing to share their issues with their professors. Others choose not to, as is their right. This can lead to frustrations and miscommunications for all concerned: the professor, the Disability Services staff, and most importantly, the students.

One thing is clear: under the law, accommodation must be provided to those who require it (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005)¹. We have not only an assigned responsibility to assist the college to comply with the Act, but also I would suggest, a moral obligation to provide whatever assistance we can. I have certainly experienced my fair share of frustrations when problems arise in this aspect of our professional work, and other Professors have expressed theirs to me also. Here are three to ponder.

Last semester, I had one Deaf student and two interpreters (assigned to assist that student) attend my class. I had two

essential videos I wanted to show the class in the first two weeks; however, the video closed-captioning was not working. I placed a call to the iTAC team. Their response was timely and courteous, but the technician unfortunately could not fix the problem. No videos—I immediately changed my lecture plan, and hoped that the problem could be resolved within a week’s time. Alas, no such luck! It took until week three to get new equipment up and running. A lot of juggling, a lot of frustration for students and myself, and a lot of time and energy spent on a problem that should not have occurred in the first place.

Recently, a colleague reported that she had received apologetic emails from a Deaf student who missed the first three weeks of class claiming that Disability Services told him that no interpreters were available at those times to attend his classes. Apparently, neither the college, nor the student, had any idea that there was another Deaf student in the class, and that two interpreters had been there from the beginning.

Communication break-downs are not uncommon, especially in institutions as large as George Brown. Yet, the lack of coordinated communications within our institution, particularly with those who already have serious communication barriers is, to my mind, inexcusable.

A third issue has to do with the assigning of note-takers. Students are not required to reveal that they have a note-taker in class. Note-takers on the other hand are supposed to reveal their presence to the professor. There is a fundamental problem here. Most of us would gladly provide additional assistance to students

when it’s needed. But how can we do so when we don’t know who they are?

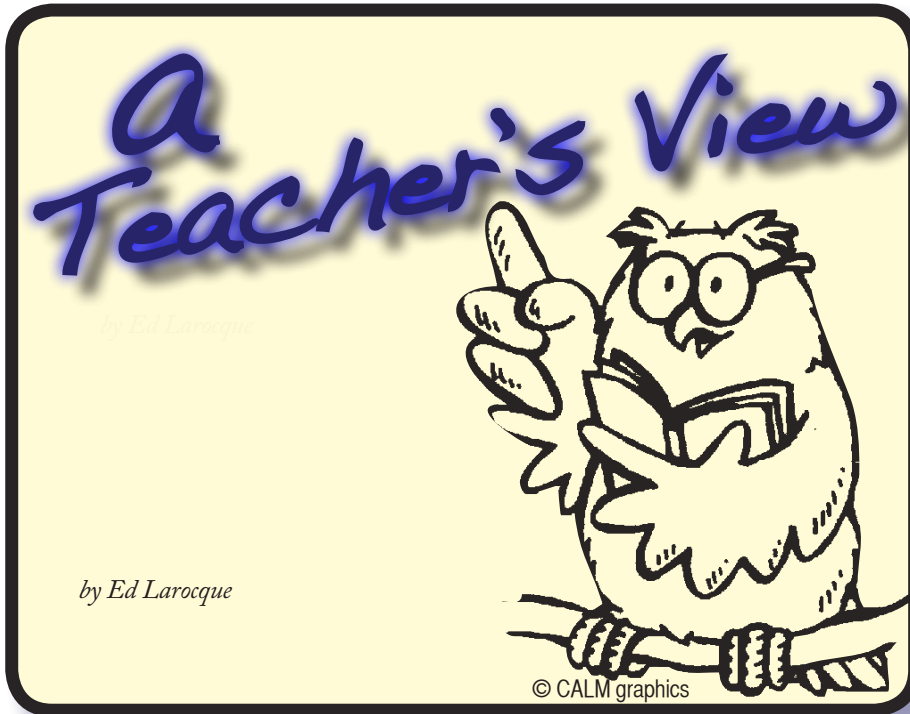
And how proficient are the note-takers? How much, if any, training do they receive? In one case, a highly motivated student who I thought was quite responsible and quite capable, was doing very poorly on assignments and tests. I asked her about her woes at which time she revealed to me that she had a note-taker for the course, but couldn’t always understand what was recorded. So, I asked the note-taker to please forward copies of her notes to me to have a look and see (which, incidentally, should happen automatically for the first few classes).

What I discovered was that many key elements of my lectures were missing; many points were incorrectly noted; and questions from me to the class were either incorrectly noted, or in some cases not noted at all. Questions from students were simply noted as “student asked question”—none of the responses were written down. Imagine my shock!

I decided to contact Disabilities Services for some advice. It was suggested to me that I might want to edit the notes for clarity and accuracy, and then send them back to the note-taker. Considering the extra time this would have taken me to essentially recreate the lectures in question, I respectfully declined. I also asked about specific note-takers and whether a change in personnel might be warranted. We agreed that a different person would be assigned to the class for the following week.

I hoped that this solution would help. (If you are wondering, the student did

Accommodate *cont’d* page 8



Non Full-time Contracts

While shopping at my local fruit market, it once again occurred to me that our society prefers to purchase at the displayed price. The price is proposed, if I agree, I buy it. If not, the retailer gets to keep their offerings for another purchaser.

Recently I was talking to some of our non full-time faculty who were offered a contract to teach a course load for a set length of time. To me, it is the same as buying fruit. The employer makes the offer, and it is accepted or refused. The expectation is that the contract will not change. After all, that's why we call it a contract.

I was very disturbed to hear that many non full-time teachers were offered a contract, some signed and some verbal, only to have the terms of the contract changed in early September and hours reduced. Our employer stated that the reason for changing these contracts was that enrollment was not as projected, or some such excuse. The change on these

contracts creates an incredible negative effect and stress factor on the income of those teachers. These are vulnerable people who made decisions based on the expected income. The fact that these teachers have lives to live and need to meet their financial obligations seems to be of no concern to administrators. More often than not, the contract faculty have turned down work outside of the College, based on the promised workload from GBC.

When my grocer rings in a different price than the displayed price, I speak up. But can contract faculty complain like I can at the market checkout? No, they cannot. My observation indicates that contract faculty are not offered future work if they are seen as complainers and therefore troublemakers. They are viewed as being easily replaced. My sense is that, system-wide, our administrators overstate their non full-time teacher complement so they do not have to scramble at the last minute

to find a teacher. This is convenient for the management of the system, but adversely affects the teacher when there is no work and therefore no income being earned. This is all contrary to my values of fairness and due process. I believe that there should be a sense of decorum, where we all behave in a professional and honorable fashion. All contracts whether verbal or signed, carry the same weight and must be honored as such.

Being the Top 100 Employers in this country should mean more than policies and an icon on your letterhead. ▼

Please check out your local website at: www.opseu556.org

Local 556 Wins Hat-Trick at OPSEU 2011 Newsletter Awards

At the recent OPSEU 2011 Newsletter Awards, Local 556 garnered three awards:

- Best Overall Newsletter
- Best Newsletter Design
- Best Local Website

Congratulations to everyone in the team who helped make this happen. ▼



On behalf of Local 556, Jennifer Stellings, Local 556 VP (Communications) accepts the Best Local Website Award from OPSEU Newsletter Award judge, Debbie Wilson.

THE GREEN CORNER



Giving this Holiday Season

♥ If you haven't any charity in your heart, then you have the worst kind of heart trouble. ~ Bob Hope

by Jill Edmondson

The season of giving is upon us, and as we open our hearts we'll also open our wallets. The holidays can rouse the at times dormant charitable side in many of us. As we hit the malls to buy gifts for family and friends, we may feel a twinge of guilt that reminds us to help others. When we hear of fundraisers, or toy drives, or see Santa Claus on a street corner collecting spare change, we reach into our pockets.

By all means, give to charity, but do so with your eyes open. Not all charities are created equal.

In Canada, there are more than 80,000 charities registered with the Canada Revenue Agency. According to Stats Canada, in 2006 charitable donations totalled \$8.5 billion dollars. So, who is getting all that money and what are they doing with it?

It costs money to raise money, and charities, like any other organization, have overhead. According to Stats Canada, charitable organiza-

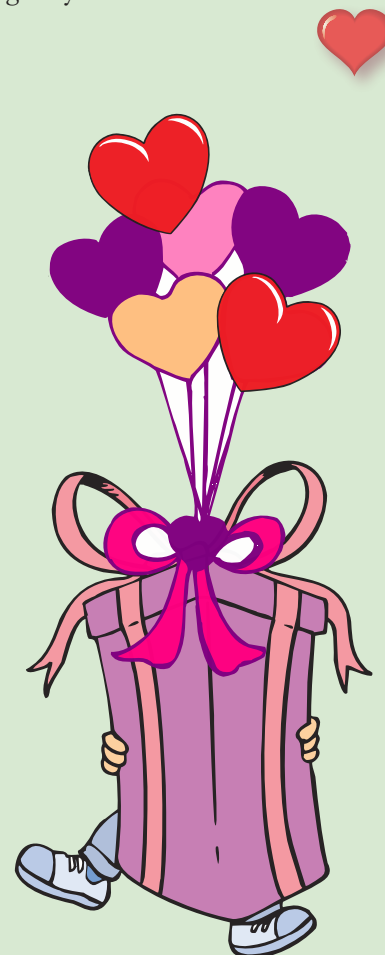
tions provide approximately 2 million paid jobs (both full and part time). It also costs money to raise awareness and to solicit donations, but what portion of the budget gets spent on fundraising?

There are organizations like Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) and Charity Intelligence (www.charityintelligence.org), plus a 2010 report in Money Sense (www.moneysense.ca), that rank charities based on a number of criteria, including transparency, costs of fundraising, efficiency, and the percentage of donations used directly on programs.

For individual donors just looking for some quick advice, Charity Navigator offers a list of *Top Ten Tips* for donors, which includes such advice as:

- Review Executive Compensation: Does the CEO's salary correspond with performance?
- Be Wary of Similar Names: Dishonourable organizations may choose names that are easily confused with, or assumed to be the same as reputable charities.
- Cut out the Middleman: Telemarketers or other hired fundraisers take a cut, sometimes a very high percentage, of the funds they collect. Give directly to the charity instead.

Regardless which charities you support, you owe it to yourself to make sure you are getting the most bang for your buck.



Open the @*%\$ Boxes Already!

Reprinted by permission from "Out of Line", newsletter of OPSEU Local 125 at Lambton College.

Editor's Note:

Although the references in this article are about Lambton College, the issue remains the same at George Brown College, and indeed, at every other college in Ontario.

Part time and sessional teachers provide quality education to College students; however, they don't necessarily get quality treatment from the Colleges—pay equity and benefits similar to those enjoyed by partial load (unionized) teachers.

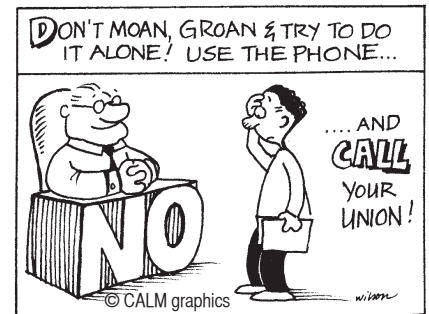
Thousands of part-time and sessional teachers voted over two years ago whether or not to join OPSEU. Those sealed ballot boxes have never been opened, and the Ministry of Labour continues to allow the College lawyers to thwart the democratic process. Why would the Colleges spend an estimated \$5,000 per

day to deny union association to some of their employees? Because the longer they delay, the longer they have to draw from a pool of cheap labour. Equity is the furthest thing from the Colleges' minds.

At Lambton that pool consists of approximately 73 non full-time teachers who have no union representation compared to 54 partial load teachers who are represented by OPSEU (information gathered from College survey taken in fall in 2010). On average, a sessional teacher is paid \$54.99 per contact hour compared to \$77.21 for the lowest paid partial load teacher (the actual average would be much higher). Because of this wage gap, we can fully expect that the pool of lower-paid teachers will increase as partial load positions decrease.

Full-time teaching positions are at risk as well as the Colleges fill full-time vacancies with lower paid sessionals. Non-unionized sessional and part-time teachers currently represent approximately 35% of our workforce at Lambton with substantially higher percentages at other Colleges.

The remedy for such blatant discrimination by the Colleges is to take away their ability to exploit one group of workers. When all faculty are treated equally, there will be no incentive for exploitation. We need to continue to demand that the Colleges remove their objections to the counting of the ballots and let democracy prevail. ▼



GBC's 20th Annual Labour Fair

Unions = good jobs, democracy, sharing the wealth, justice, equity, hope, the weekend

Monday, March 19 – Friday, March 23, 2012

Book your speaker now! (Deadline: Monday January 9, 2012)

To arrange a speaker from the labour movement for your class(es) please fill out the form (available at the link below), or call JP Hornick ext. 3531 for a hard copy)

Return it before Monday, January 9, 2012 (or sooner if possible) by email, fax or inter-campus mail to:

JP Hornick, School of Labour, St. James • Phone x 3531 • Fax 416-415-2646

Eemail jphornic@georgebrown.ca

For a web version of this form, go to: <http://www.georgebrown.ca/schooloflabour/lab-fair.aspx>

Your Students Could Win \$500!

Full-time or part-time students can enter the Labour Fair Poster Design Contest.

Deadline: Monday, January 23, 2012 (before 3:30 p.m.) For more info:

JP Hornick, School of Labour, St. James • Phone x 3531 • Email jphornic@georgebrown.ca

Check our website for past winning posters: <http://www.georgebrown.ca/schooloflabour/lab-fair.aspx>

Taking a Bite out of Crime

Book Release by GBC Professor
and Local 556 Steward Jill Edmondson

It is very exciting that this past November saw the release of another Sasha Jackson mystery novel by our colleague and Local 556 Executive member Jill Edmondson. *The Lies Have It* is the third book in the Toronto-set detective series. This time around, Sasha is trying to figure out how municipal politics and kinky sex collide.

Jill has been having a lot of fun writing these books, and the response has been great! At the book release party in November, about 150 guests enjoyed munchies (including some very naughty cookies!) and a reading in a room decorated with crime scene tape and evidence bags.

Jennifer Stellings, a Graphic Design professor in the School of Design at GBC and 3rd VP of Local 556, also had a hand in bringing the book to life. For the second time in a row, Jennifer designed the cover for Jill's book. Jill absolutely loves the cover for *The Lies Have It*, which she feels matches the spirit of the Sasha Jackson Mystery series.

There's more of Sasha to come, and hopefully, soon to the small screen. The Sasha series has recently been optioned for development as a TV series. No word yet on when the cameras will start rolling, but it would sure be fun to see the dark side of Sasha's Toronto brought to life. Stay tuned! ▼

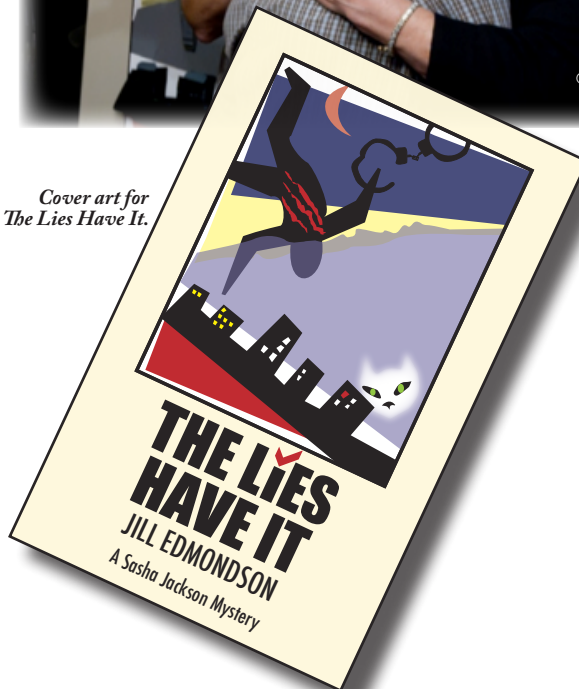


Jill taking a bite out of crime at the book launch.

Jill and GBC Professor Tom Supra (Faculty of Business) and his mom, both loyal fans of the Sasha series.



Cover art for The Lies Have It.



Accommodate *cont'd from page 3*

manage to pass the course with a half decent grade—not, presumably because of some of her notes, but in spite of them.)

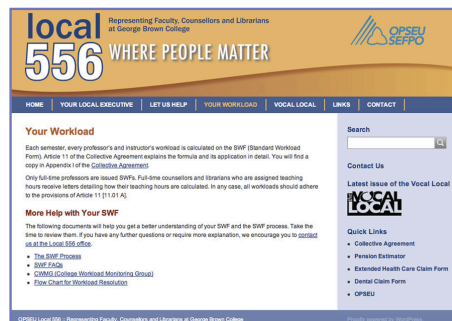
As the College continues to expand rapidly, so too it seems do the number of challenges we all encounter in order to do our work effectively. Students deserve the best educational experience we can offer them; faculty members deserve the best adjunct services, and the right equipment (i.e. fully functional) to do their work. So what should faculty members do to assist students as much as possible? There is no straightforward answer since every case is unique. What I do know is that we all could benefit from continuing to discuss what matters most: helping our students succeed while streamlining our work at the same time. Working together, we just might devise some solutions for these seemingly intractable challenges.

I understand that the Union Local 556 Officers have opened a dialogue with the College in an attempt to address this very important issue. If you have any concerns, or simply wish to share your thoughts about these or similar matters, please feel free to get in touch. Your input will lend support to the dialogue between the Local and the College. ▼

¹ For detailed information about the AODA, see the Ontario Ministry of Social Services webpage: <http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/publications/accessibility/accessibility.aspx>



Remember your #1 spot for
employment info...
opseu556.org



Have a Warm
& Wonderful
Holiday Season!

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The Vocal Local is a publication of the George Brown College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 556. It is intended to provide information and stimulate discussion among its members. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity.

Send your comments, articles, letters, praise, etc. to:
VoLo Editor at opseu556@gmail.com

