OPSEU Ontario Public Service Employees Union
SEFPO Syndicat des employés de la fonction publique de l'Ontario

NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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College faculty to vote on employer offer; OPSEU delays strike deadline

TORONTO – The Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) has ruled that faculty in Ontario's 24 community colleges will vote on the employer's offer on February 10, 2010. Today, OPSEU has announced that it will delay the strike deadline until February 17, 2010.

Ted Montgomery, chair of the OPSEU bargaining team for the faculty, says that the team is recommending members reject the offer, and delaying the strike deadline will allow the team to continue bargaining following a rejection vote.

"We are asking our members to send a strong message to the employer that this offer is not acceptable," Montgomery said. "Once rejected, we will invite the employer to return to the table and start seriously bargaining to get to a negotiated collective agreement."

Montgomery says that in the event a negotiated settlement fails, the union still takes the position that all outstanding issues should go to binding arbitration. That would avert a potential strike and prevent any disruption to Ontario's 200,000 college students.

"We want to not only meet the needs of our members, but the needs of the students who depend on uninterrupted education," Montgomery said. "It is a high priority for us."

OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas is encouraging members to support the bargaining team and reject the employer offer.

"This is not a money issue," Thomas said. "It is about getting provisions in the contract that will improve the quality of education our members can deliver to Ontario students. These issues must be addressed now, and the way to do that is through meaningful collective bargaining. The Colleges must put their own self-interests aside and engage in real negotiations."

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