

NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

Strike vote set as colleges show no interest in bargaining: OPSEU

(TORONTO – December 15, 2009) – Despite making additional revisions to its bargaining position, the union representing 9,000 community college faculty says management's decision to break off negotiations leaves it no choice but to mobilize for a Jan. 13 strike vote.

“For the second time in two weeks our bargaining team came forward with significant modifications to our position only to be met with management's refusal to negotiate in good faith,” said Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, which represents faculty at 24 community colleges. “That's not bargaining.”

Faculty had previously tabled modifications to their bargaining position on Nov. 30. College negotiators responded by insisting the union withdraw 69 demands.

“I'm deeply disappointed that management negotiators have squandered the last two days by their refusal to bargain. Our team arrived at the table on Monday prepared to make progress, but any hopes we had of reaching a tentative settlement were derailed almost from the start,” said Ted Montgomery, chair of OPSEU's bargaining team.

“Their refusal to bargain is forcing a needless disruption of the students' studies,” added Montgomery.

Faculty have maintained all along that in this round of bargaining the key issue is improving the quality of education by implementing the recommendations of an independent task force established after the last round of bargaining in 2006.

“Management has seriously distorted the cost of a settlement,” said Montgomery. “We have tabled an offer that is affordable and which should have been acceptable.”

As a result of today's lack of progress at the bargaining table, the union has been left with no choice but to step up its plans for a strike vote on Jan. 13. No further talks are scheduled.

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