

## Q&As About the Upcoming Vote

On July 23, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) filed an "Application for Certification" with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB), stating they had met the legislative threshold by having obtained signed membership cards by 35% of the part-time support bargaining unit.

The Council, on behalf of the Colleges, filed a disagreement indicating there were more employees in the proposed bargaining unit than indicated by OPSEU.

Although the Colleges disagreed that OPSEU had met the 35% threshold for a vote to be conducted, the OLRB issued a decision on September 2, stating that the vote will take place and the ballot boxes sealed until the issue of the 35% threshold is resolved. This is the same process for the vote of all part-time academic staff in January of this year.

Q1 Am I affected? Can I vote?

If you employed at a College as a part-time Support Staff employee, or part-time student worker (including those hired under OWSP and Tuition Set-aside) or a project of a non-recurring kind employee, then you are affected and are entitled to vote.

Q2 What exactly will I be voting on?

The question on the ballot will ask "In your employment relations with you employer do you wish to be represented by the union?" If you don't want to be represented by OPSEU, then indicate "No".

Q3 What are the benefits of joining or not joining a union?

A Q&A document outlining some of the pros and cons of unionization is posted on the Council's website – [www.theCouncil.on.ca](http://www.theCouncil.on.ca). You can also familiarize yourself with information that is available on [www.labourwatch.com](http://www.labourwatch.com).

Q4 Why do I need to vote?

It is important that you express your opinion about whether you want a union to represent you or not. The best way to do this is to exercise your right and vote!

The outcome of the vote (for or against a union) is based on the number of votes actually cast. Your vote counts!

Q5 When will the vote be held?

Voting will take place at various locations throughout the province beginning October 5 to October 27. This will be a vote by secret ballot conducted by the OLRB. Details about voting dates and locations are posted on your College's notice boards and are also posted on the Council's website – [www.theCouncil.on.ca](http://www.theCouncil.on.ca).

Q6 There is a vote location closer to where I live than the one being held at the College. Can I vote there?

You can vote at any of the locations listed.

Q7 A vote location hasn't been set up at my workplace, how do I vote?

If the OLRB hasn't established a voting station at your workplace, then you can vote at alternative location that is convenient for you to travel.

Q8 Can I mail my ballot in to the OLRB?

The Council, in its response to OPSEU's application to certifying college part-time employees, asked the OLRB to allow voting by mail-in ballots. The OLRB, in its decision dated September 2, 2009, denied this request.

Q9 How will the vote be conducted?

The OLRB has decided that all ballots will be segregated. This means that once you have voted, the OLRB officer overseeing the vote, will place your ballot in an unmarked envelope and seal it. This envelope will then be placed into a second envelope and the OLRB officer will write your name, position title and campus/college before placing the envelope in the ballot box.

Q10 Does this mean that the union and/or my employer will know how I voted? I thought the vote was to be conducted by secret ballot?

Voting is done by secret ballot – neither OPSEU nor the College will know how you voted.

All ballot boxes will be sealed until it has been determined whether the union has met the 35% threshold of cards signed. If that threshold isn't met, then all ballots will be destroyed. If the 35% threshold has been met, then based on the information on the outside of the second envelope, the union and the colleges will determine whether the employee was eligible to vote. If the employee wasn't eligible then the unopened envelope will be destroyed. If the employee was eligible to vote, then the unopened envelope will be placed into pile for counting. Once all the envelopes are sorted, then the OLRB will open the outer envelope and remove the unmarked envelope. All the unmarked envelopes are then mixed together before being opened and the ballot counted.

Q11 When will the outcome of the vote be known?

The first step required is for OPSEU to prove that they have obtained membership cards for at least 35% of the employees working on the application date of July 23, 2009. If that threshold isn't met, then OPSEU's application to certify college part-

time employees is denied and the ballots will not be counted. If the 35% threshold is met, then the OLRB will decide when the ballots should be counted.

Q12 How many votes are needed to determine whether I will be represented by the union?

The outcome of the vote is based on the majority of the number of actual votes cast. There is potentially 10,000 part time employees in the college system, but if only 1,000 come out and vote, the decision of whether you are represented by a union or not, is in the hands of those 1,000. That is why it is very important that you do vote – your vote counts!