

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – March 6, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU 1st VP

Job Action – Beautiful, sunny day on Thursday for our picket at Queen's Park. Don't know yet whether things were as bright in the Sheraton Centre where bargaining was taking place between OECTA and the government. Particularly after Lecce bashed the teachers at his latest photo op.

Speaking of that photo op, the minister announced how wonderful the government was in listening to parents. He was now allowing them to have their kids opt out of mandatory e-learning...making it optional? Like we already have? He also said that he was "effectively maintaining class sizes for September, somehow failing to recognize that the numbers 22.5 and 23 are not the same numbers. Those, of course, are what the government is staffing at this year, 22.5:1, and what he says will be next year's ratio, 23:1.

This week's Lecce's Lies: And then came the response from Liz Stuart and Harvey Bischoff to the claim by Lecce that this proposal had already been presented to the Unions. Both were adamant that this was not the case. Nor had anyone agreed to a 1% salary increase before Christmas. If they had, why was he repeatedly telling everyone that salary demands were holding things up?!

Executive – We kicked the week off with an Executive meeting. It was, perhaps, the shortest meeting of the year, as very little new business had been out forward for us to discuss. People tend to be tied up with working on strike stuff. We did recognize the election of Steve Vona as the Association Rep at Chaminade. Congratulations to Steve.

UAGM & Nominations/elections Committee – It was very late into the evening before this group wrapped up their, approximately, 5-hour meeting on Monday. The topic was the development of Election Guidelines for the Unit. These will bring clarity to the election and campaigning processes for candidates at TSU. It will also put the Unit slightly ahead of a number of resolutions that will be coming to the floor of the AGM, March 13-16, regarding election procedures. Looking forward to those coming out soon.

Health & Safety – A large meeting of management and worker co-chairs, from all the Joint Health & Safety Committees in the Board, was held on Wednesday to review the approach to the Coronavirus concerns. You were advised of this by Gillian in an email last Sunday. TSU presented its concerns on behalf of members, including the survey of Reps that the JHSC carried out and Gillian included in that email. The Board is relying on its pandemic protocols of 2006 to guide us, if the issue becomes that significant. In the meantime, as the virus continues its path, whatever that might be, TSU will continue to press the Board in an attempt to get it to do what needs to be done. We can also tap into the expertise in the Toronto Public Health information and updates. The TPH provides a sober and scientific look at, and guidance on, the topic. <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/diseases-medications-vaccines/coronavirus/>

Pre-AGM Meeting – Wednesday also saw the OECTA AGM delegation meet to review the Resolutions submitted to the AGM. Some good debate over what some of the resolutions might entail and an understanding that for some we need to hear the arguments on the floor of the house before making up our minds on how to vote. If you have some input on those resolutions, let any of the delegates know and they can share them with others. Sabina has sent out the resolutions to everyone, today.

Political Action – Starting today, Friday, Gillian is attending the Ontario Liberal Party Leadership Convention. She will be working the room vigorously to ensure that one of the candidates, who wants to eliminate Catholic Education, doesn't get anywhere near the position.

And, this weekend, we celebrate International Women's Day. A number of events are scheduled around the city, including the Rally at OISE, starting at 11am, and the March from there, at 1pm, to Ryerson University. You might also notice on Google that The Society of Beer Drinking Ladies is holding an event at the Granite Brewery. Regardless of your tippie of choice, I hope you'll all raise a glass this weekend (and come out) in recognition of women around the world and their immeasurable contributions as well as their struggles.

Have a great weekend!