

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – March 27, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU 1st VP

Strange days! And this week we've been all about how to manage, or adjust to, or survive these strange days, depending on where you're at with things. We hope that everyone is healthy and is able to find the supports needed to navigate these strange days.

Working from home – the “new normal”, to use an overused phrase. What is normal, though, is changing almost daily, as we all attempt to come to grips with unclear and conflicting expectations (more on that in a moment). The release officers and office staff have all been “in the office” this week, as we have the ability to work remotely. If you need to contact us, you can do so by email or phone. As usual, voicemail left on the office phone comes to our email, so please do leave a message if you prefer to call rather than email. We will endeavor to get back to you with all the answers you need. And we've been kept quite busy, as expected in the current situation. We have been involved in various meeting with each other, committees, TECT, the Board, and OECTA. And by meetings I mean video- and teleconferences.

Teaching – It's been a busy week trying to figure out how to make this happen in a way that is feasible, equitable, and safe for teachers and students. Numerous meetings have occurred and TSU has raised numerous issues that exist around the mode of teaching and general “initial” contact with families. We are particularly concerned about teacher vulnerability in any steps that are implemented. You should have received a **technology survey** from the Board by now. An email from Gillian was sent to you this afternoon, which answers some of the questions around it. Please review that and complete the survey as best possible, and use the opportunity at the end to let the Board know of anything else that you are concerned about. The more information they have the more chance of a good decision being made.

Bargaining – We had the information Virtual Town Hall this week, which many of you listened in on. For those who weren't able to, and those who want a review, all the information presented is on the OECTA website. Careful reading of the new/changed articles side by side with the current CA should help answer any questions. Many of you, also, sent questions during the Town Hall and received a response from Provincial that should have provided clarification. If you are not able to find the answers to your questions in the material, email us and we'll get it for you. Please don't rely on (anti)social media for the information, it is incomplete and inaccurate in many cases and does not reflect the nuances involved in CA language and bargaining processes.

In the meantime, now that things have slowed down on the central bargaining and job action front, we are able to turn our minds more fully to local bargaining. Preliminary work has been done to prepare for the Local Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee, more commonly known as the research team, to do some...well, research. We will be meeting on Monday to embark on that and you will hear from us in the near future.

Strike cheques - For those still waiting for cheques from any of the full withdrawal days, as said before the break, please be patient. OECTA is working on it and will get it to you as soon as they can. Soon might not be as soon as it would have been without the health crisis but it will get to you.

OTs – We continue to advocate for Daily OTs who find themselves without work during the school closures. Some Boards in the province are engaging in various methods of calculating payments for OTs. This is not required and not widespread, which means that it is not happening here.

Conversations between ourselves and OECTA, and between them and OCSTA, and between the three of us and the Board might result in some form of compassion and compensation. Being that we work in a Catholic board we would hope it does and, of course, have to remain hopeful but shouldn't hold our collective breath.

UAGM-Nominations/Elections – the committee met this week to complete the TSU elections guidelines. These will come back to Executive on April 7 to wrap up the process and put them into action.

Executive - And speaking of the Executive, it met on March 17 and discussed the above mentioned guidelines, making recommendations to the committee. It also reviewed the tentative deal and provided input to the president, before she attended the Council of Presidents on March 23 to vote on whether to send it to the membership to consider ratification. And as you know the COP did recommend a ratification vote.

“Strange days indeed --- most peculiar, mama.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuuhsqA95iA>

Look after yourselves and each other.