

TSU Weekly Wrap Up – September 11, 2020

By Pete McKay-TSU President

WOW!! What a way to return to school. A September like no other is an understatement. There is no way the events of this week can all be summed up here, never mind the couple of months before, during which we met regularly with the Board.

Staffing/scheduling - Rescheduling all the schools and scheduling and staffing the Virtual School occurred this week...I hope. You should all have gone home this afternoon, knowing what you are doing on Monday, even if some of you don't yet have a timetable in your hands, as we are hearing is the case.

The primary area of uncertainty, though, is for those who requested an accommodation through the Covid team. If you are requiring an accommodation to work from home, and have not had a final confirmation of that, you should continue to call in a code 52, while working from home on your VS assignments.

Plenty of other areas of uncertainty also exist. Over the next week you should be hearing some clarity from the Board on a number of items: surplus and the return to your home school; department headships in the home schools and VS; the role of VS teachers in the home school building; and on-calls. I'll note here, again, that we appreciate the opportunity to provide input (rebuttal) to the Board plans but they are the ones who decide what is to happen. We don't sanction it, even if we did (silently) agree with any of it.

Health and Safety – Our H&S people continue to push for as safe a work environment as possible. The PPE issues have been raised and, hopefully, the Board has fully addressed them. Questions still remain as to the status of those who are unable to wear a mask. While no one should be forced to wear one if they have a medical reason not to, OECTA's position is that they should remain at home. This would apply to students as well as teachers and for the sake of everyone's health. How things will actually be handled, we will have to see.

LSSAC – Elections have been ongoing throughout the week for the committee and despite problems with the email, the process went very smoothly in general. A huge thanks to all who offered to serve their colleagues in this important role of protecting the Collective Agreement and the rights of our members. The new LSSAC will take office on September 15. It would be interesting to see how many of the old LSSAC did not stand for election after what they went through this week.

Racism – Hopefully you saw the email we sent out this week regarding the upcoming Racial Justice Summit presented by Urban Alliance on Race Relations. We have already had applications for the opportunity to attend the session on offer and look forward to more. If anyone has anything they'd like to contribute on the topic that would be of benefit to the members and our students, please feel free to contact the office. The more we hear from members on this, the better we will be able to assist in tackling the problem of racism.

TSU Office – A few changes in the office this week. The first one you might notice is the addition of plexiglass shields at the front desk for the safety of Hayley. She would be particularly vulnerable to transmission of droplets, sitting down below those who hang over the edge of the reception desk. Of course, you won't notice it because you wouldn't be coming into the office. The various committee meetings that need to happen this month will be conducted virtually. We decided to go this route for the safety of those who work here as well as of any members on

those committees. With the return of students next week, not increasing contacts unnecessarily seemed to us to make sense until we see where things go.

The other significant change is in roles. While the three release officers are all in new positions on the Executive, the portfolios are also changing. Angela Tersigni will now be overseeing Grievances and Paul Di Prospero will be assuming the Sick Leave file. If you have issues related to either of those, please contact the relevant person directly.

Association Reps – Our meeting this week went way over time as we attempted to deal with all the goings on in the schools. A few of the concerns raised were clarified and a number of others have resolved themselves through the processes undertaken this week. As I said above, answers will be coming this week to others, the Board has told us. Great to see some new faces in the crowd/on the screen this year, as well as so many experienced Reps returning. And thank you to all for the work you are doing in helping to keep the Unit running.

I know there are a million and one questions out there and we've probably heard all of them a few times. Some of them are getting answers, others will have answers revealed gradually and as things change. We appreciate the number of emails that begin with a recognition of the fact that we are swamped here and an apology for bothering us. We do appreciate this but we are here to answer your questions, so don't worry about asking. I do apologize, though, for us not having got back to you all in a timely fashion as a result of the deluge. If there is something you really need that we haven't dealt with for you, continue to poke at us until it gets done.

It looks like a nice weekend coming up. I hope you are able to stop and catch your breath and come back refreshed on Monday.

Have a good one.