

your
table officers
continued...

Local 148
APUSB (Professors)
President - Jean Valenti
Chief Steward - Luc Cote

Local 149
APETP
President - Dominique Arbez
Chief Steward - Louis Dornez
Vice-President - Lisa Roch

Local 202
Western Manitoba Regional Library
Chief Steward - Laurie Geseron

Take the Safety and Health Survey

The MGEU's Safety, Health and Environment committee is trying to get a better understanding of where the state of safety and health is at within our MGEU workplaces across the province.

The committee is trying to see where safety and health initiatives could be improved and gauge the average member's knowledge of health and safety procedures. Once all of the surveys have been tabulated, the committee will take the results to labour/management meetings and, where necessary, bargaining tables in an effort to make our workplaces safer.



Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey at www.mgeu.ca/news/article/1763



MGEU Holds First French-Language Bargaining School

This past October, the MGEU hosted its first-ever introduction to bargaining course, en français. These "Bargaining Collectively" courses help committee members who are new to the process or could use a refresher on how negotiations work.

Last winter, three Locals from Université de Saint-Boniface requested to receive the course in French. The union had the necessary resource materials from the English course translated and researched other French reference materials. Since Centre de santé Saint-Boniface and Actionmarguerite (Saint-Vital) were also heading into bargaining around the same time, they were invited to attend the session as well.



On October 28, the first French MGEU educational course was facilitated by staff reps Miranda Lawrence and Marc Payette as well as Red River College Local President Jean Sourisseau. Those in attendance said that it was a successful pilot project and the Union is looking at ways to continue to develop the course.

MGEU Shows its Support During Brandon U Strike

This past October, MGEU President Lois Wales expressed her support for striking Brandon University faculty members at a rally in Stanley Park sponsored by the BU Students' Association.

"There's a fundamental right at stake here that goes beyond whether you might feel ripped off, or whether your prof may leave Brandon for greener pastures," said Wales. "Employees coming together to bargain collectively with their employer remains one of the few ways ordinary people can truly speak to power, and be heard."

While in Brandon, Wales also visited with BUFA members and walked the picket line with them and several other MGEU members from the Westman region.

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Have a question?
contact us

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The
Learning

The MGEU newsletter for education Locals

EDGE

your
table officers

PSE Component Director:
Penny Copeland

Local 69 (Area 1)
University College of the North
President - Kathy Ducharme
Chief Steward - Delwin Shand
Vice-President - Michelle Minish

Local 70 (Area 8)
University College of the North
President - Jackie Fitzpatrick
Chief Steward - Perry Hobbs
Vice-President - Julyda Lagimodiere

Local 71
Assiniboine Community College
President - Kimberley Lynn
Chief Steward - Karen Banuga
Vice-President - Rita Machado

Local 73
Red River College
President - Jean Sourisseau
Chief Steward - Penny Copeland
Vice-President - Mark Loan

Local 135
Brandon University
President - Jan Chaboyer
Chief Steward - Kimberly Fallis
Vice-President - Brandy Robertson

Local 147
Université de Saint Boniface Support
Chief Steward - Nicole Legal
Vice-President - Renee-Lynn Gendron

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EDUCATION PLAYS A ROLE IN IMPROVING ECONOMY



Post-Secondary Ed
Component Director
Penny Copeland

Welcome back to our third newsletter. Since our last edition, Red River College and Assiniboine College ratified new agreements in July 2010, and University College of the North ratified its agreement in May 2011.

The MGEU held its 61st Convention in October 2010, opened an office at the Red River College campus in January 2011 and an office at Assiniboine Community College in May 2011, and hosted its first French-language bargaining school just last month.

A few of our post-secondary education locals will also be heading into bargaining in the next few months, so the basics of bargaining have been included in this newsletter to explain the process and what members can expect.

The state of the economy has been one of the biggest news items for the past 18 months. Education, and those who deliver it, has an important role in improving the economy here in Manitoba. Studies have shown that the more education a person receives, the more they contribute to society and the economy. They earn more than those with less education and therefore pay more taxes. They live healthier lifestyles and subsequently use fewer social and medical services.

We are part of the solution and deserve to be supported and recognized for the work we perform and its contribution to our province. The Post-Secondary Education Component will be meeting at the end of the month to discuss ways we can get this message out to our funders and the general public.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Learning Edge*. If you have a question, please feel free to contact me through the MGEU Resource Centre. Happy Holidays!

The Not-So-Personal Computer: Using Technology at Work



Computers, smart phones and other electronic devices have become essential tools in almost every workplace. But a work computer or phone should be used for just that: WORK.

In many MGEU workplaces, computer networks contain highly sensitive and secured information. Using this information for personal reasons, such as searching names, addresses and other personal information violates computer usage policies. By using the employer's equipment for personal reasons you risk facing disciplinary action.

And if you use the employer's equipment to access your own personal e-mail, banking or social networking pages, you are also allowing your employer to gain access to your own personal information. **Don't mix business with pleasure. Only use a work computer or smart phone for work.** - The MGEU Tech Change Committee



A Brief Guide to Contract Negotiations

The current collective agreements for BU, USB and WRML members are set to expire soon, which means it's time to begin preparing for negotiations. Here's a reminder of how the process will work.

Collective Bargaining Begins at Local Meetings

The bargaining process begins at Local meetings, where members elect who will speak on their behalf (usually the Local Table Officers). At this stage of the process, their first order of business is to organize a series of meetings to collect bargaining proposals from members like you.

Have Your Say in Negotiations - Submit a Bargaining Proposal

Bargaining proposal meetings are your chance to share what you'd like to see in your contract, or to suggest improvements to what currently exists. All you have to do is complete a proposal form (attached, or available at www.mgeu.ca/88), and bring it to one of the scheduled meetings. At these meetings, members will discuss each proposal and help the committee determine key priorities for improvement of the contract.

Based on this feedback, the bargaining committee will work closely with the staff negotiator to create a package of proposals (including things like wage or benefits improvements, or remedies to workload and health and safety concerns) that they will bring to the negotiating table on your behalf.

The Give and Take of Bargaining

At the outset of negotiations, your bargaining committee will sit down with the employer and present the package of proposals. The employer will also come to the table with changes they'd like to make to the contract. From there, the negotiating process, which can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, usually involves a kind of give and take as each side accepts, amends, rejects or withdraws the proposals put forward. At all times, the bargaining committee is working to maintain and/or gain as much as possible for you and your fellow members.

Protecting Your Interests at the Table

Until negotiations are finished and the agreement is ratified, nothing is set in stone. That's why it's not always possible for your bargaining committee to share all of the details being discussed at the table.

Throughout negotiations, the committee will do its best to keep you informed. But to avoid damaging their negotiating position, there are times when they won't be able to share all of the details. Like a game of cards, they don't want the employer to know what their strategy is – and they know that any information sent to you will be read by management – so sometimes the committee must keep their cards close to their chest.

3 Scenarios for Getting a Deal

Scenario #1

Most often a settlement is eventually reached between the bargaining committee and management. At that point, the proposed contract is taken to members of the bargaining unit for a vote. The settlement must be accepted by the majority of voting members before it's considered "ratified." Once signed by both the union and management, you'll get a written copy of the contract.

Scenario #2

Occasionally, the majority of voting members do not accept the tentative settlement. In this case, the employer may agree to return to the table, but most often the membership will then take a strike vote. More than fifty percent of all voting members must vote in favour before any strike action is taken. After a successful strike vote, the employer will sometimes agree to return to the bargaining table and try to resume negotiations.

Scenario #3

There are times when a tentative settlement can't be reached between the union bargaining committee and management. Depending on the situation, both sides might agree to request third-party assistance from the Manitoba Labour Board, or the union might go directly to a strike vote.

RRC AND ACC NOW HOME TO IN-HOUSE UNION OFFICES

During the last round of bargaining for Red River College (RRC) and Assiniboine Community College (ACC) members, a full-time Union Officer position for RRC and a half-time Union Officer position for ACC were negotiated.

In January, Red River College staff and members from the MGEU and RRC gathered to celebrate the opening of a full-time union office at the Notre Dame campus.

Proposals for an employer-paid union representative at each college have been on the table during the last three rounds of negotiations.

The role of the Union Officer is to facilitate conflict resolution at the workplace including handling complaints, grievances and participating in joint labour/management committees.

RRC Union Officer, Penny Copeland, is pleased to see such a progressive form of Labour Relations being practiced at the College.



Red River College Office Ribbon Cutting

(left - right) Bill Anderson, Director of Negotiations, MGEU; Dale Oughton, Alumni Coordinator, RRC; Nancy Alexander, Director of Human Resources, RRC; Lois Wales, President, MGEU; Penny Copeland, Union Officer, RRC; Jean Sourisseau, Local 73 President, MGEU; Stephanie Forsyth, President and CEO, RRC; Dale Neal, Staff Representative, MGEU; Michelle Gawronsky, 1st Vice-President, MGEU; Catherine Rushton, Vice President, Finance and Administration, RRC

"I think it is significant that the College is amenable to this, and willing to provide the space," says Copeland.

Copeland, who's been on the local executive for more than a decade, strongly believes that resolving conflicts at the lowest possible level is always the best solution, but can use more formal means when necessary.

"I find the role of advocate for this membership as rewarding as it is challenging," she says.

RED RIVER COLLEGE CELEBRATES DIVERSITY IN OPENING NEW PORTAGE CAMPUS

Red River College unveiled its newest campus with a grand opening celebration in Portage la Prairie this November.

Located in the former Victoria School building, RRC says the new campus marks the College's continued commitment to providing increased educational access for rural and Aboriginal learners.

More than 50% of the Portage Campus' student population is Aboriginal. Which is why it was only fitting that the College's commitment to First Nations communities was echoed in its grand opening celebrations.

"Today is a bit of a historic event for Red River College — we have never opened a campus in the traditional way of

the First Nations people," said RRC President Stephanie Forsyth, herself a member of the Tsimshian First Nation in B.C., before kicking off a ceremony that featured greetings from provincial, civic and First Nations leaders, as well as a traditional pipe ceremony, dancing and drumming.

The newly-renovated building replaces the Southport campus (just outside Portage la Prairie) and offers more space for study areas, student and staff lounges, instructor office space and a new Aboriginal Centre.

A number of special guests were in attendance, including MGEU President Lois Wales, MGEU Aboriginal Liaison Cathy Woods, and Manitoba Minister for Advanced Education Erin Selby.