

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Quality Education means more Teachers in the Classroom Say Ontario Students

Toronto—Today, over 9,000 college faculty withdrew their services in protest of deteriorating quality in Ontario college classrooms.

“For too long, colleges have been short-changed by our provincial government,” said Jesse Greener, Ontario Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students.

In the past 15 years, the number of college students increased by 53% while real, per-student government funding declined by 41%. At the same time, the number of full-time faculty has decreased by 21.84%.

“The evidence shows that for every two percent increase in the number of college students enrolled, there is a corresponding one percent *decrease* in full-time faculty,” said Greener. “This decline in quality is unacceptable, and unless the deterioration stops now, it will only get worse.”

“Administrators have said they want to increase services for students—not hire more faculty,” said Greener. “But having qualified, full-time teachers in the classroom is a service—it’s the very heart of our education system.”

Students say the lack of full-time faculty makes it difficult to get any additional time with their instructors. “We’ve heard reports of students meeting with their instructors on the subway as their teachers dash off to other jobs,” said Greener. “How can we claim to provide a quality education when faculty members often have neither an office nor a desk?”

According to the Federation, colleges have coped with systemic underfunding by not hiring adequate numbers of full-time faculty, and instead relying on increasing the number of students in the classrooms and part-time workers. But such a situation cannot continue indefinitely warn students.

“What we’re seeing is just the tip of the iceberg,” said Greener. “Last year, college presidents made it clear to the Ontario government that at least \$150 million in additional funding was required for the current year—just to stop the steady decline in quality. Yet colleges received \$50 million less than required just to maintain the status quo, never mind making improvements.”

“In this context, it is outrageous that the Ontario government is preparing to increase college tuition fees next September,” said Greener. “Why should Ontario families keep paying higher and higher fees for less and less quality?”

Ontario students are demanding that the Ontario government immediately:

- inject the funding necessary to resolve the faculty / management dispute by funding a 10 percent increase in the number of full-time faculty within the college system;
- place a moratorium on tuition fee increases until the full-time faculty-student ratio is restored to 1990 levels; and
- provide a full reimbursement of costs borne by students as a result of the disruption of classes.

“Premier Dalton McGuinty has the ability to resolve the situation immediately,” said Greener. “The question is: will he step up to the plate?”

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