

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - OSSTF AGM 2014

While our formal grievances may be down from last year, the number of challenges our unit is facing certainly is not. In a year that started off with great uncertainty, one thing has become clear – Brock University is a business and the bottom line has become core to the university operations. We are no longer a tight knit community looking out for each other but rather a fractured community looking over our shoulder for what is coming next and how we are going to survive the next attack on our membership.

Our unit has taken a direct hit from the University's Administration in an effort to achieve cost savings but, their short term gain will lead to long term pain for the students, and others, that our members assist on a daily basis. Departments are struggling with choices forced on them that they do not agree with and some are pushing back and we will be there to support that, along with our own campaign. While the Union has not been front and centre in any public push back campaign, I can assure you our extreme displeasure has been expressed many times, and on many different levels. Our message will remain at the fore front of any discussions I have with University officials.

One of the things that must change for us to rebound is the way in which Universities are funded. Ontario still dedicates the lowest per capita per student out of the ten Canadian provinces and has for some time. We need the government to step up and ensure stable, transparent and dedicated funding for support staff to do the work we were hired for. One way to help achieve this goal is by ensuring our voice is heard in next month's provincial election. Unions are directly under attack from Tim Hudak in this province and he has pledged to eliminate a minimum of 10,000 jobs in the education sector alone. We need to elect a government that sees the value of post secondary education and how it can help revitalize and grow our economy. With proper investment we create a better learning environment for our students and better working conditions for ourselves.

We continue to work with our partners on campus and in the community to raise awareness on issues of importance to our membership. Now, more than ever, we must maintain our solidarity amongst ourselves, our union colleagues and within our community. We are facing our toughest challenge yet and the road ahead is extremely rocky but, we are prepared, we are professionals and we will persevere.

The next few months, in particular, will continue to create some tension, anxiety, stress and be a highly emotional time for our members. Please remember to be respectful, supportive and patient. I want to thank all members who have extended their patience to me while I do my best to lead us through these challenging times, I appreciate it.

We must stand up and defend our Collective Agreement, and ourselves, at every opportunity. Please continue to provide feedback to the Union office and/or your Executive. Also, please consider getting involved in your Union, there is no time like the present.

Let us not take thought for our separate interests but let us help one another.

