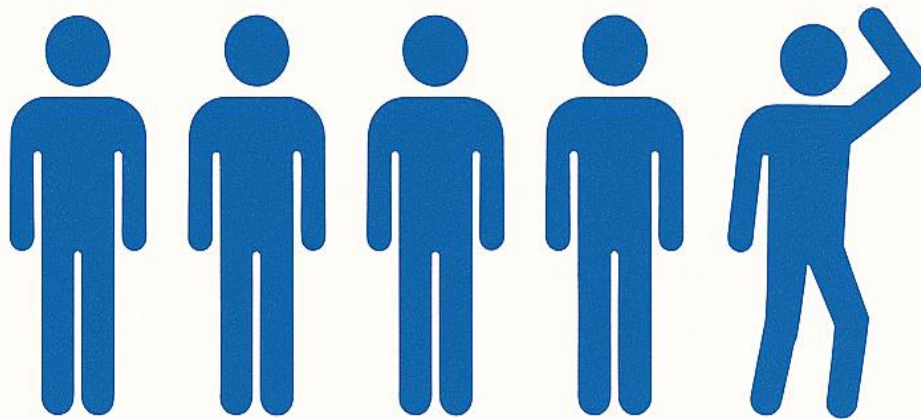


OUT OF LINE



Welcome Back!

Greetings from Local 125 as we embark on another academic year. We're attempting to resurrect our Local's newsletter with this publication. We hope to bring you a few more as the academic year progresses.

In this newsletter,

- meet the Executive members of our local,
- learn about the work of the Union College Committee (UCC),
- hear about what one of our members was up to on his summer vacation,
- get updates from our President, Michelle Arbour,
- appreciate a faculty member's perspective on the loss of the LC Foundation,
- and enjoy some tongue-in-cheek cartoons.

We encourage you to reach out to the Executive or Local Executive Committee (LEC) members when you have questions and concerns.

What is the Union-College Committee (UCC)?

The UCC meets monthly and consists of three members representing the faculty union and three members representing administration at the College. As per the Collective Agreement (CA), the UCC can discuss local college issues, including non-workload concerns from members,

policy changes, college procedures, staffing rationale, and workplace environmental factors.

You are represented by:

Candace Young - co-chair (Math)

Beth Ann Wiersma (Communications)

Alan Warren (Math)

The college representatives are:

Dave Machacek - co-chair (VPA)

Jennifer Ziegler (HR)

Lisa Janisse (Dean)

Some items we discussed this past year include:

- Changes to the records retention process
- Changes to the SPL process
- D2L course access
- Rationale for part-time over partial-load assignments
- Consistency with communications
- Rotating vacation periods

Current items for discussion include:

- Payment for overtime
- Switching offices
- Transition of JOHSC from Facilities to HR

If you have items that fall under the categories listed above and that you believe ought to be discussed at this committee, please bring those items to the union representatives listed.



Meet Your Local 125 Officers

Michelle Arbour, President



I've been the President of Local 125 since 2020. I started as a Local Steward in 2017 and decided to take on the role of president following the loss of my father in 2019 as a way to honour him as he was a union activist for most of his life.

I have worked in the Ontario college system since 2012 as a contract and full-time professor, as well as a coordinator of various programs in the School of Business and International Education. I am a lawyer and a member in good standing with the Law Society of Ontario. I was in private practice as well as in house counsel positions prior to 2012.

An OPSEU local president serves as the executive head of their local, responsible for ensuring OPSEU by-laws and local regulations are followed, chairing all local and executive meetings, acting as an ex-officio member on all committees, and generally overseeing the local's affairs. They also represent the local to the broader union, the labor movement, and the community, and serve as the primary point of contact for their members.

Outside of LC, I've been married to my husband, Trevor, for 18 years, I have two children, both of whom play travel hockey and soccer among other sports.

Candace Young, Vice-President



I started working at Lambton in 2008 as a part-time/partial-load faculty member and as a math tutor, then I became a full-time math professor in 2013. I've been a union steward since 2015, became Treasurer and then Vice President.

I try to create a positive experience for students learning math because the education system doesn't always have a positive impact on students. My grandma was a residential school survivor and learning about her experiences was a real turning point in my life. I became passionate about social justice and this put me on the path to becoming involved in our local and advocating for the rights of workers.

When I want to relax, I hang out with my partner and cat, play video games, watch movies, and I never turn down a chance to perform Beastie Boys at karaoke.

Alan Warren, Treasurer

Catch up with Alan in our next issue in November.

Alastair Mackay, Chief Steward



I am a certified Journeyman Chef, and I have been employed at the college since 2005. The first 3-4 years were teaching in a part-time or partial-load capacity with Cook Apprenticeship and Hospitality and Tourism. I came from the restaurant industry, where there was very little connection with unions, as most establishments I worked in feared the need for a union presence.

In 2009, I moved into a full-time teaching role and rebuilt the Culinary Management Program. I have been the program coordinator since 2010 and re-mapped the program at 2 different times, including the introduction of the international program Canadian Culinary Operations. Even in my early years of teaching, I never attended a union meeting or sought the guidance of our local.

In 2017, during our 5-week picket, I fully understood the role that a union can provide. Since that strike, I have played an active role in our local, attending GMM's and supporting whatever actions they required. In 2023, I took a more active role in becoming a steward of Local 125, and during bargaining of 2024, became the Local's Organizer. I loved the role, as it introduced me to other members, from varying schools and programs. It also provided a broader scope of the role that

the union provides for its' members, especially our LEC.

During this past September, I have taken on the role of Lead Steward (aka: Chief Steward). I am very excited about this position and assisting my colleagues from all academic roles.

My wife of 29 years, Cindy, is excited for me too, as she has also plays an active role in her ETFO Union. Together we have 3 grown children, Roan, Kier, and Tracer. Dinner conversations now include the pivotal role that unions provide to all workers, and the value they add in standing up for employee rights.

Beth Ann Wiersma, Secretary



I've been involved as the Local 125 secretary since 2023. I became involved after a fairly contentious meeting with a manager. The union stood by me and supported me through a time when I was left questioning my entire career as a faculty member.

My job is to take minutes at meetings, to sit on committees such as the UCC and WMG, and to meet with the Local Executive regularly to discuss union business. This year I've taken on some additional work with publishing the

calendar, the newsletter, and occasional press releases.

Outside of LC, I've been married to Paul for 31 years, I have two children, both of whom are attending LC this fall, and 2 black cats that rule my home.

Do I Have a Grievance?

By Beth Ann Wiersma

Alastair Mackay and I travelled to an OPSEU Region 1 event on September 20 and 21 to complete the Basic Grievance Handling course. It was quite enlightening for me as I have little (almost zero) experience with how this works.

Below is a basic guide I adapted from the materials we worked with in the course. If you think you have a grievance, I encourage you to consult this guide to first determine if your grievance is such, and then use the guide to construct your grievance. As always, your union officers, are here to assist.

You have a grievance if there is a violation of the Collective Agreement (CA) or labour legislation (such as the Employment Standards Act).

There's a difference between a grievance and a complaint: a complaint is not a violation of the contract or the law. Complaints are probably best directed to the Union College Committee (UCC).

A grievance is always directed at the employer.

Here are some steps to follow as you construct your grievance:

1. Check the CA to find the article that may have been violated. (The CA is available on the OPSEU website.) It's a good idea to name the articles that have been violated

in the grievance. Additionally, you need to describe how the issue is a violation of the article(s). From your description, management will review case law to determine if they are in violation of the CA or labour legislation.

2. Find as many articles as possible that have been violated. Use language that allows for the argument of more than one clause. Example,

"I grieve that these actions of the Employer were in violation specifically of, but not limited to, Articles _____ of the Collective Agreement."
3. The operating principle is to make you, the grievor, "whole." You want to be in the same position if the CA had not been violated.
4. Your grievance should ask for everything that has been lost through the actions of the employer. This could include pay, benefits, lost overtime, expenses incurred, seniority, competition, and/or lost interest.
5. If your dignity or self-worth has been compromised, you can ask for a written apology. Ask for one to be circulated to anyone who is aware of the violation. Will you get one? Not necessarily, but an Arbitrator cannot award anything that is not asked for in the grievance.
6. Add these words under the Settlement Desired, "and any other remedy that in the opinion of the arbitrator will make the grievor whole."

THE MANUFACTURED CRISIS IN ONTARIO COLLEGES

BY BEN MCCARTHY*

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

THE GRIND MAGAZINE

This summer saw one of the largest mass layoffs in Ontario's history. Some 10,000 college workers — including teachers, counsellors, librarians and support staff — lost their jobs, and the numbers continue to climb.

This decimation is happening to a system that seemed to be working. Ranked among the world's best, Ontario's post-secondary education system attracts international students for the high-quality education it provides. In 2020-21, 83.4 per cent of college grads were employed within six months of receiving their diploma.

A college diploma provides the best opportunity for employment, above a university degree and apprenticeship.

Enrollment in the college system has seen record highs in the last five years, and in 2023-24, Ontario's 24 public colleges racked up a \$2 billion surplus.

So, what's changed?

The College Employer Council (CEC), which represents the colleges collectively, is calling it an "existential crisis," while others have called it a "perfect storm."

Between 2012 and 2021 Ontario colleges experienced a 15 per cent downturn in

domestic student enrollment, and in 2020, Doug Ford's Ontario government imposed a 10 per cent cut to tuition fees and did nothing to offset that revenue. Ontario colleges are funded at a lower per-student rate than any other province, at 56 per cent of the national average.

Lost revenues were temporarily made up for through 342 per cent growth in international student numbers, who pay on average four times more than domestic students. Colleges aggressively pursued international student enrollment. The change initially led to unprecedented surpluses.

However, in response to largely unfounded perceptions that migrants were negatively impacting housing and infrastructure, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada imposed a cap on international student enrollment in January 2024.

This storm was well forecast, with multiple reports warning about dependence on international student fees.

But the management level continued to bloat. Some college presidents earn upwards of \$400,000 or \$600,000 a year, even now, with international student numbers capped.

Colleges also pursued multi-million-dollar real estate acquisitions, renovations and vanity projects, blowing huge surpluses in a few short years.

Yet, starting in the 1990s, faculty and support staff have been increasingly precariously-employed. Upwards of 80 per cent of faculty are vulnerable contract workers, paid a fraction of their full-time

counterparts. Many of these workers do not have a collective agreement, and have no union protection or benefits. This summer, they were walked out of institutions to which they've given years of their lives, with no hope of restitution.

Despite mismanagement and underfunding, based on 2024-25 financial statements, all but one college remained profitable. While international student enrollment is down — it remains at about the same level it was in 2022 — domestic enrollment continues to climb.

What's really going on?

The crisis is being manufactured, according to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), which represents college support staff and faculty.

In 2022-23, Ontario colleges boasted a collective surplus of \$660 million on revenues of \$8.7 billion, with all colleges posting a surplus. How could these financial circumstances have changed to a degree that justifies mass layoffs, program closures and the erosion of Ontario's world class educational system?

Faculty members at Loyalist College in Belleville learned in late August of a new round of layoffs which would result in there being more full-time administrators employed by the college than faculty. College facilities were renovated for programs that were then shuttered.

For faculty member and local union leader Tracy MacKenzie, this raised serious questions.

“Why are they spending so much money to make the school beautiful,” she asks, “but not offering the very core, the purpose of what a community college is for?”

MacKenzie argues that colleges across Ontario are readying themselves for privatization. A similar scheme has been a catastrophe in Australia.

Evidence of privatization is mounting. A former Shopify exec has been lobbying in Ontario to open a new corporate-run college at the recently-closed Perth campus of Algonquin College. An entire division at Northern College has now gone into private hands, with Agnico mining corporation duplicating a public program with private funding.

While axing funding to Ontario's colleges, Ford has been quietly directing billions of dollars to private corporations as “skills development.” Since 2021, Ford's Skills Development Fund (SDF) has received over \$1.4 billion in public funding, essentially funneling money earmarked for education to private corporations. Most of that funding is being given out in conservative ridings. The \$1.4 billion figure exceeds the funding shortfall for the college sector by over 100 per cent.

What's being lost?

Colleges open paths to post-secondary education for young people who might not otherwise have access. And they provide retraining in a time of dramatic economic realignment. Despite this, colleges are closing programs largely populated by domestic students.

International students have also been forsaken. Program cuts don't only close

routes to Canadian employment and permanent residence, they undercut community for migrant students. Absent friends, family and familiar social structures, alienated by language and inundated by new culture, students found common cause in their programs.

One student who'd left challenging political circumstances at home found herself hospitalized in Toronto as a result of a mental health crisis. It was a peer she met through George Brown College's now-cancelled English as a second language (ESL) school who visited her in the hospital and helped her to get back on course.

Part-time faculty and staff are struggling too. One professor, a devout Muslim and single mother, teaches social sciences through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. At the same time, she is marginalized financially by the college to whom she is contracted.

The loss of programs like George Brown College's Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor Advocate (AWCCA) are major blows to communities.

In rural areas, program closures are contributing to an already serious shortage of care workers, special education professionals, paramedics and skilled service industry staff. This can lead to social service deserts.

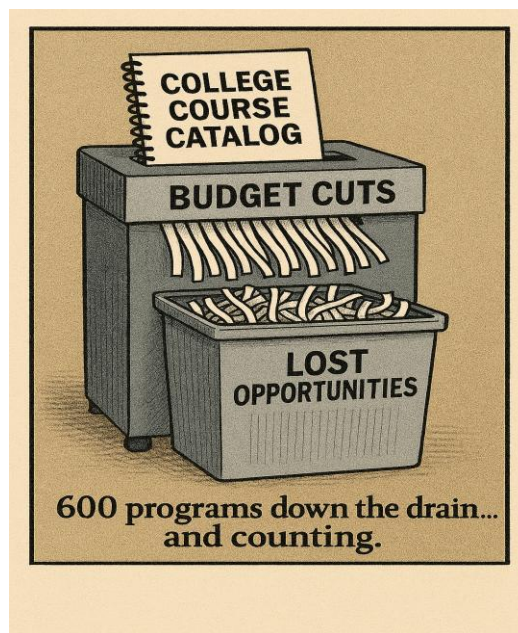
For already under-employed communities, this will further limit prospects for those who cannot afford to move for their education.

The manufactured crisis in Ontario's college system is part of a broader trend

toward Ontario privatizing social services under Ford.

This demands a fight on various fronts, and there is solace to be found in joining ongoing efforts to confront these schemes.

Ben gave us permission to reprint this article. Ben is a part-time faculty member at George Brown College who as recently become part of DivEx for our newly established part-time unit.



Local Executive Committee (LEC) Members

In addition to the officers, we have stewards: thank you for your service!

Kerri Finnigan	Kelly Wilson
Steve Knight	Amy Giddings
Marilyn Neville	Ed Schliehauf
Anthony lafrate	Shaun Das
Dale Gartshore	

Lambton College Sells Out Its Own Future

--LC Faculty Member

It was recently announced that Lambton College is closing its independent charitable arm, the Lambton College Foundation, and rolling its functions into a new "Advancement" office. This decision, seemingly made with little public consultation and a lack of transparency, is a massive step backward for our college, our students, and the community we serve. By dissolving the Foundation and its board, Lambton College is sacrificing the very things that make a charitable organization so effective: donor trust, community autonomy, and financial agility.

A Risky Financial Gamble

The primary job of an independent foundation is to raise money. The Foundation's sole focus was to secure funding for capital projects, scholarships, and other initiatives that directly benefit students and the college. Its independent board, made up of community leaders, business owners, and local philanthropists, provided a critical layer of accountability and credibility. This separation from the college's day-to-day operations is what makes donors feel confident that their money is going exactly where they intend.

By bringing fundraising operations in-house, Lambton College is taking a huge risk. Donors, especially those who make large gifts, often prefer to work with an organization that is not tied directly to the institution's management. They want to know their money is safe from internal budget cuts, administrative red tape, and shifting priorities. The college's new

"Advancement" office, now a part of the official corporate structure, will likely face an uphill battle in proving to donors that it's just as trustworthy and effective as the independent Foundation it replaced. This move feels like a desperate attempt by college administration to gain direct control over fundraising dollars, especially in the wake of recent financial struggles due to declining international enrollment. It raises the question: is this a calculated decision to streamline operations, or is it a last-ditch effort to get their hands on a new revenue stream? We're skeptical that it's the former.



The Loss of Community Expertise

The disbanding of the Foundation Board of Directors is perhaps the most concerning part of this whole situation. This board was a valuable asset, made up of local leaders who not only had the connections to secure major gifts but also the deep understanding of the Sarnia-Lambton community. They were

advocates for the college and its mission, independent of the administration. Who will now take their place? The college's own Board of Governors? They have a much broader mandate and already face numerous complex challenges. Their time and attention will be spread thin, and they simply can't provide the same dedicated focus on fundraising and community relations. This move suggests that the college's administration and Board of Governors don't see the value in independent, community-driven oversight. By centralizing power and control, they are silencing voices that are critical for the college's long-term success. It begs the question: What exactly does the Lambton College Board of Directors know that the community doesn't? Why did they approve a decision that will likely alienate the very people who have helped build this institution for years?

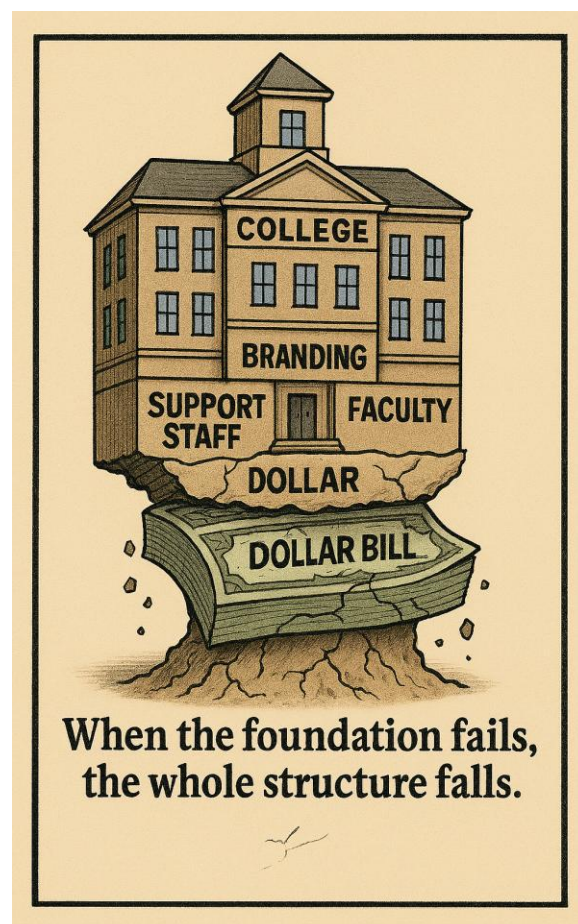
Negative Consequences for Students and the Community

The ripple effects of this shortsighted decision will be felt far beyond the college's boardroom. A less effective fundraising operation means less money for scholarships, less funding for new equipment and facilities, and fewer opportunities for our students. For a college that prides itself on being "this community's college," this move is a betrayal of that commitment. The Lambton College Foundation has been instrumental in the past, funding critical projects like the NOVA Chemicals Health & Research Centre and the Athletics & Fitness Complex. It also runs initiatives like the Funding Futures lottery, which directly funds student scholarships. The Foundation's success was a testament to the trust it had built

with the community. Now, that trust is being put to the test.

We as a union are skeptical that a new "Advancement" office, operating under the same management that is currently slashing jobs and programs, will be able to inspire the same level of confidence and generosity. It's time for the college administration and the Board of Directors to be transparent about this decision and explain to the students and community why they believe they can do a better job than the independent organization that has a proven track record of success. Until then, we'll remain concerned about what's next for Lambton College.

(*Please note: this article has been generated with the assistance of Gemini, an artificial intelligence application.)



The Last Word

A Summer of Travel and Perspective

--Richard Teskey*

This summer, my wife and I were fortunate once again to explore a number of fascinating destinations. Each place offered far more than stunning scenery — they provided a glimpse into the lives, cultures, and histories of remarkable communities around the world.

A return visit to Bermuda reconnected us with beautiful scenery, a peaceful pace of life, and seafood that is unmatched. Canada's East Coast was rich with warmth and kindness. Greenland and Iceland showcased dynamic landscapes — stark, rugged beauty shaped by nature's extremes. In both countries, we saw how geography fosters close-knit communities, where collaboration and mutual support are not just values but necessities.

Traveling through parts of Europe — Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, and Liechtenstein — brought us face-to-face with the depth of human history. From centuries-old architecture to world-renowned art, these countries offered an ongoing interaction between the past and the present. One memorable moment came during our visit to the Dachau concentration camp just outside Munich. Standing in a place of profound historical weight, I reflected on how time has a way of changing our awareness of things, requiring mindfulness to locate genuine empathy — to exist in freedom where someone once existed in severe oppression is disquieting.

I'm deeply grateful for a profession that allows for seasons of exploration and reflection. Travel has a way of broadening

not only our perspective, but also our understanding of what connects us all. To see how others live, what they value, and how communities flourish in diverse ways is an opportunity I do not take for granted.

*Richard is a faculty member in the Child and Youth Care program.



(*Please note: all cartoons in this newsletter have been generated with Microsoft Co-Pilot.)

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SAVE *our*
COLLEGES!

