



OPSEU Local 110
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Fanshawe College Faculty Union
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September 26, 2019

Mayor and Members of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC)
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6B 1Z2

OPSEU 110 Submission Re: Fanshawe College Innovation Capital Grants Application

Dear Mayor and Council Members of SPPC:

Please accept this as our formal submission to the SPPC for inclusion in the materials distributed for your September 30th meeting under *Agenda Item 3.1 Fanshawe College Innovation Capital Grants Application*.

OPSEU Local 110 is the official bargaining agent of over 900 unionized full-time and partial-load Professors, Librarians, and Counsellors at Fanshawe College. At any given time, Fanshawe can employ nearly 1,800 faculty total.

We feel compelled to comment on this application brought forward by the employer. Although we have been quite aware of the Innovation Village project and various faculty members have submitted suggestions, this application to the City of London is a new document to us.

To be clear, in no way are we suggesting that Fanshawe College is not worthy of support. It definitely is worthy.

Not only does Fanshawe College represent a significant contributor to the gross domestic product of the London and area economy, it is a major employer in its own right.

However, there are important considerations that any level of government should ponder carefully. I've divided these points into two main questions.

- 1) How should colleges be supported?
- 2) What are the priorities?

How should colleges be supported?

It is true that Ontario's public colleges have been significantly underfunded for many years. This has resulted in chronic precarious employment, staffing issues, increasing student debt, and heavy dependence on international student tuition fees. Much has been written about this topic and one definitive source is Kevin MacKay's 2014 report for OPSEU.

To make a long story short, systemic issues and the funding challenges came to a head during faculty collective bargaining and subsequent province-wide strike in the Fall of 2017. You may recall that the Ontario Government legislated an end to that strike. All outstanding issues were referred to Arbitrator William Kaplan for binding resolution.

In the submissions to Kaplan, it was recognized that there were significant systemic issues that the two parties could not possibly address on their own at the bargaining table. An **Ontario College Task Force** was proposed with representation from administration, faculty, support staff, students, and industry who would report back to the Minister.

By all reports, the Task Force had made significant headway before it was suddenly cancelled by an Order in Council on the first day office for the Ford Government. OPSEU considers the cancellation, contrary to Kaplan's binding decision, to be unlawful. **Perhaps more importantly, disbanding the Task Force was morally wrong** as it deprived students and other stakeholders an opportunity to address issues in the colleges and potentially prevent future labour disruptions.

We submit that **the loss of the Task Force was a major blow and lost opportunity for London's economy**. London depends on a strong publicly-funded Fanshawe College.

The **City of London can help by lobbying the Province to restore the Task Force**. Ultimately, it is in the City's interest to lobby the Province to ensure Fanshawe receives a stable and fair share of funding.

We also submit that **supporting Fanshawe College should not be undertaken on a piecemeal basis**. Rather, consideration of Fanshawe's role as an employer and economic engine needs to be part of a broader **City of London Public-Sector Jobs Strategy**

Please refer to my letter of September 18, 2019 to City Manager Hayward (attached) calling on the City of London to develop and adopt such a strategy. It includes excerpts from Mike Moffat's analysis that public sector hiring, and not the manufacturing sector, has been lagging.

What are the priorities?

Had we been asked to comment on this submission to the City, the Innovation Village is not the project we would have chosen as the priority.

There are numerous other needs that have a significant direct impact on the London community in terms of services to citizens, education for students, and employment.

At the top of that list is a **Dental Hygiene Clinic** to be built in A Building at Fanshawe's 1001 Fanshawe College Boulevard Campus.

This is a vital service for over 770 citizens who cannot obtain service elsewhere.

Fanshawe's program is effectively being squeezed out at Western, which has its own facilities issues. **Without the construction of a new clinic by September 2020, the program and the service could come to an end.**

The program contributes to the employment of approximately 7 full-time and maybe another 13 contract faculty and that will only grow with proper clinic space. We're talking real quantifiable jobs, now and into the future.

As a priority that has a direct impact on service and employment for Londoners, we thought it was the natural choice for a funding ask.

On the other hand, we struggle to see how Innovation Village will contribute much in the way of faculty employment.

Any research projects that are approved would be included in our existing full-time faculty members' workload. It is no doubt work, but it is not a given that any new faculty will be hired.

Innovation Village does not add much in terms of instructional space. We are hurting for specialized lab and classroom space at Fanshawe, causing "daytime" classes to be scheduled solidly from 8am to 8pm, and at Kingsmills from 8am to 10pm.

To be fair, there are upsides to the project. Innovation Village includes a long-overdue Library renovation which is sorely needed in the information age. We just might not have suggested that Innovation Village as it is packaged here be the highest priority ask.

Observations and Recommendations

We've seen this movie before. We've seen how flashy public-sector capital projects receive funding but then there are not the operating funds from the Province to keep things running. It's hard to have an innovation hub if there is no money (which equates to time) for faculty and students to innovate.

At the provincial level, things are a mess. Thanks to red tape initiated at the Ontario Labour Relations Board by the College Employer Council, part-time and sessional faculty in Ontario still don't have union representation despite having cast votes two years ago. Add to that the hurried implementation of Ontario's Bill 47, which has led to **some part-time and sessional faculty teaching continuing education credit courses at Fanshawe having their pay cut.** For those faculty in St. Thomas, Woodstock, Simcoe, Wingham/Clinton, and in London's Lawrence Kinlin School of Business who are trying their best to support their families, one can hardly blame them for feeling angry that Fanshawe can apparently afford to transfer scarce operating dollars into a \$58-million capital project.

Ultimately, it is up to your Committee and to your Council to deliberate and make a decision on this proposal. **We do not have a recommendation to you in that regard.**

Regardless of your decision on this project, **our recommendations to City Council are:**

- **Develop and implement a Public Sector Jobs Strategy;**
- **Lobby and bring the Government of Ontario to the table in a sustained way.**

Thank you for taking the time to consider our input and comments. We are willing to field any questions you may have. Personally, I hope to be present at the September 30th meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darryl Bedford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darryl Bedford, President
OPSEU Local 110, Fanshawe College Faculty Union

cc: Dani Bartlett, Power of Many Campaign
Patti Dalton, London and District Labour Council
JP Hornick, OPSEU CAAT Academic Divisional Executive
RM Kennedy, Chair, OPSEU CAAT Academic Divisional Executive
Gary Siroen, OPSEU 109 (Fanshawe College Support Staff)

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September 18, 2019

Martin Hayward
City Manager, City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6B 1Z2

Dear Martin:

We are writing to you as we wish to bring a delegation to London City Council. The purpose of our delegation would be to encourage London to develop and adopt a public-sector job strategy.

Our Local's interest in such a strategy is that Fanshawe College faculty alone comprise nearly 1,800 workers or approximately 0.7% of the London-area workforce.

Approximately 69% of Fanshawe faculty are "contract faculty" typically being hired on contracts 14 weeks long.¹ Moving the needle on that ratio by just one percentage point would result in up to 20 new full-time jobs for our community.

Historically, colleges such as Fanshawe are only thought of in terms of how they prepare citizens for employment, not in terms of how important they are as employers themselves. Instead, we should consider how the public and private sector interact with each other.

Economist Mike Moffat has analyzed London's employment situation and with his permission two of his blog posts are attached to this letter.^{2,3} Here are a few things that stand out in relation to the public sector:

- "London's hospital employment barely increased since 2001."

¹ October 2018 Staffing Survey for Fanshawe College <http://www.opseu110.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2018-october-staffing-survey-with-cover-27-03-27-2019-09-09-59.073.pdf>

² Employment growth in 7 CMAs <https://medium.com/@MikePMoffatt/employment-growth-in-7-cmas-london-windsor-k-c-w-st-catharines-oshawa-halifax-and-victoria-b2fd3eca3192>

³ "Diagnosing and Solving London's Job Woes" <https://medium.com/@MikePMoffatt/diagnosing-and-solving-londons-job-woes-1cc8a84172ce>

- “London’s employment in the [university] sector declined significantly, while [Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo]’s doubled.”
- Considering the Biggest Losing/Smallest Gaining industries: “Computer systems design/services (London down slightly while K-C-W up over 7,000), universities (down over 1,000 while K-C-W up nearly 5,000), depository credit intermediation (down over 1,000 while K-C-W up nearly 4,000) and provincial public administration. What do these all have in common? **WHITE COLLAR JOBS.**”

We agree with Professor Moffat’s conclusion that any employment strategy for London must have both a private-sector and public-sector component.

A public-sector jobs strategy may include the following components:

- Ensure that London receives its fair share of provincial and federal funding to maintain public services.
- Ensure that local public service providers use that funding for front-line services and that by doing so jobs will be created.
- Recognize that some workers have both public and private sector employment and that the two sectors are complementary.
- Address the issue of precarious employment. (The London Poverty Research Centre at King’s found that 48.9% of Londoners were in a state of precarious employment.⁴)
- Ensure that contract public-sector workers are treated fairly. (A common myth is that workers are satisfied with precarious work: An Algonquin College administration survey found that 65% of their contract faculty were seeking full-time work either at the college or elsewhere.)
- The City of London, as a public-sector employer itself, has a role to play. Should it become a model employer by paying living wages, it will set a standard that other public and private sector employers will move to match to remain competitive.
- Lobby the provincial government to resume the Ontario College Task Force. The cancellation of the task force was a lost opportunity for London. A common myth is that the GTA colleges are much larger than Fanshawe: our union local is now the fourth largest of the 24 public colleges ahead of Sheridan, Centennial, Conestoga, and Algonquin. Provincial postsecondary policy has a major impact on London; the success of Western and Fanshawe will set the tone for employment in our community.

⁴ <https://precariousinlondon.weebly.com/>

We are willing to present these ideas as a delegation, either on our own as OPSEU 110 or in cooperation with CUPE 101, to City Council. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Darryl Bedford, President
OPSEU Local 110, Fanshawe College Faculty Union

cc: Dani Bartlett, Power of Many Campaign
Patti Dalton, London and District Labour Council
Steve Holland, President, CUPE 101
Gary Siroen, OPSEU 109 (Fanshawe College Support Staff)
Barb Westlake-Power, Deputy City Clerk, City Clerk's Office

encl.