



The OWL HOOTS

Issue 516 October 15, 2013

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REJECTS CHARTER OF VALUES BUT DEFENDS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

As the General Assembly lost quorum before a vote on the proposed Charter of Quebec Values, the Executive Council discussed the issue and adopted the following motion. The executive council was of the opinion that this motion defends teachers' rights in terms of freedom of expression and denounces the method by which the Charter aims to ensure a secular state.

That the Dawson Teachers' Union:

1. Recognizes and defends the right of any teacher to take a position on the Charter of Quebec Values.
2. Recognizes the value of a secular state. However, the proposed charter of Quebec Values interferes with the distinctly successful diversity of Quebec society. Therefore, the DTU rejects the proposed Charter of Quebec Values.
3. Recognizes that FNEEQ will discuss the issues related to the Charter of Quebec Values at its Conseil Federal in November. The DTU will take part in these discussions.

SHOULD TEACHERS FILL-OUT THE SELF ASSESSMENT PORTION OF THE TEACHER EVALUATION PACKAGE?

Some teachers have approached the DTU to inquire about the *self-assessment* portion of the Teacher Evaluation package. Teachers who have had a full time workload, or who have had a workload of 0.5 over two consecutive years, or who have more than 1.5 years of seniority have the right to grieve a withdrawal of priority. We recommend to teachers in these categories that they do not fill-out the self-assessment because it is not part of their contractual duties, and it can be used against them. Teachers who do not fall into these categories cannot grieve a withdrawal of priority. Therefore, we advise them to fill-out the self-assessment, and rate themselves no lower than five and certainly as high as six on the student questionnaire form. We also encourage them to focus on their best attributes in the written comments section.

THE ADVANCED STANDING APPEAL COMMITTEE

The Advanced Standing Appeal Committee considers appeals from students who have been expelled from Dawson. A favourable decision would allow a student to continue at Dawson on probation. Teachers who wish can decide to take part in this committee. However, it is a voluntary decision. The college administration, including your Dean, cannot require that you take part in this committee during a transfer of availability or at any other time. It has no connection to the RAC contrary to what we informed you in mid-June. The collective agreement states that it is the DTU which appoints teacher members of all committees including this committee.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS TO INCREASE JANUARY 1ST 2014

The Executive Council voted to accept the increases in insurance premiums recommended by the RSA (Meeting of the Unions insured with FNEEQ) as the increases were below what was suggested by La Capitale and a smaller increase this year would have almost certainly led to a much greater increase next year. FNEEQ's aim is to prevent a saw type pattern where premiums change drastically from year to year. As FNEEQ is self-insured, if premiums are too high they will be reduced, if they are too low they will be increased- all with the principle of breaking even.

Health Insurance premiums will increase by 8.75% on January 1st 2014. Health care costs last year, expected inflation in health care costs and changes in the teacher age composition suggested to La Capitale that the premiums should increase by 11.1%. However, the FNEEQ insurance team, in consultation with the FNEEQ actuary, decided that a 8.75% increase was sufficient. As we are self-insured, it is FNEEQ which has the last word.

Dental Insurance will increase by 25% on January 1, 2014. La Capitale had recommended an increase of 50%. The FNEEQ insurance committee and their actuary considered the large use of dental insurance would be a short term phenomena as those without insurance went to the dentist. In the long run they believe that costs would level out.

Basic life insurance will increase by 6.1% again on January 1st 2014

No change for life insurance for dependents and for additional life insurance over basic life insurance and for long term disability.

WHO CAN ATTEND DTU MEETINGS (INCLUDING GENERAL ASSEMBLIES)?

DTU meetings are open to all DTU members and any teacher can join the DTU by signing the application for membership and paying one dollar. However, are DTU meetings open to anyone? In particular are they open to the press including the Plant? The DTU executive council debated this and decided that only guests invited by either the Executive or the Executive Council can attend. The debate particularly focused on journalists.

The Executive Council wished to ensure that there was always the widest possibility for debate in our meetings. An open invitation was considered to offer several dangers. Ideas that changed during the debate could be transmitted without taking into account the end result of the interaction between members. Ideas could also be taken out of context or in the whirl of debate be incorrectly noted. The impact of these possibilities could reduce members willingness to take part in debates.

As a result journalists from the Plant or the commercial press, who want to understand DTU positions, will still be able to discuss issues with the DTU executive or read our published documents. We will also still be able to invite student representatives from the DSU or representatives of other unions to our meetings.

REFERENCE LETTERS BY CONTED TEACHERS

Conted teachers are being provided with forms so that they can send reference letters for their students. It is true that Conted teachers do send such letters for their students. However, the DTU reminds teachers in Conted that you are not paid to write reference letters. There should be no pressure on you to do this voluntary activity.

THE HEALTH INSURANCE CHOICE FOR THOSE 65 YEARS AND OVER WHO CONTINUE TEACHING?

Which health insurance should you take when you reach 65: keep with la Capitale or switch to the government RAMQ? RAMQ is much cheaper but some fear that it will not provide all the medication which they need.

The answer is to take the RAMQ prescription drug insurance. Any drugs not covered by RAMQ, but covered by la Capitale, will be paid by the supplementary la Capitale insurance which the collective agreement requires that all active teachers maintain. Therefore no Dawson teacher over 65 should be insured for prescription drugs through la Capitale. Every active teacher over 65 should be on RAMQ.

All teachers should inform their pharmacist that they are covered by supplementary insurance from La Capitale. Show the pharmacist your La Capitale identification card. The pharmacy should be able to input your link to la Capitale so that if RAMQ refuses a drug, the cost of that drug will be automatically submitted to La Capitale. You will still have to pay the full amount. However, if La Capitale covers the drug, you will be reimbursed to the extent of the coverage.

Further, if there is a very expensive drug that is not covered by either RAMQ or la Capitale but is vital to your health, FNEEQ may cover the cost of this drug. Contact the DTU and let us know. In some circumstances exceptions can be made as our insurance is self-managed by FNEEQ.

CHANGES IN THE OAS (FEDERAL RETIREMENT PENSION)

The current maximum for the OAS as of October 2013 is 550.99 per month fully indexed to the CPI. All who have lived in Canada for at least 10 years after the age of 18 are eligible for a partial OAS pension when they reach 65 years of age. Those who live in Canada for at least 40 years after 18 are eligible for the full OAS pension. Other criteria for a full pension and for a partial pension can be found at (<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/pension/index.shtml>).

As of July 1, 2013 you will receive a higher OAS pension if you delay your OAS after 65 years old. The increase is 0.6% per month or 7.2% per year. The DTU has calculated that if you begin receiving your OAS at 66, at 79 years old you will be even, in the sense that the total amount you received between 66 and 79 is the same as the total amount you would have received between 65 and 79 if you had begun receiving your OAS at 65. After that you will be ahead. At 67 you will have to wait until 81, at 68 to 83, at 69 to 85 and at 70 you will have to wait until you are 87 to begin gaining. Which year you will choose to begin collecting will depend on your life expectancy and your expected need for income over your life.

The OAS recommends that you apply 6 months before you wish to begin receiving your OAS pension.

If your income is greater than \$69,562 the government will begin reducing your OAS. At or above the income of \$114,793 there is no OAS payment. You can find the formula to calculate the reduction in your OAS at (http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/oas/pension/recovery-tax.shtml#calculate_repayment_amount).

THE SICK DAY & THE SICK BANK

You have just received an email from the college regarding your sick days. Here is an explanation of the sick day system.

How it works:

Only teachers in regular education receive sick days. Teachers in Continuing Education do not have any sick days.

Sick bank status is calculated in hours and not days. By dividing the amount of hours by 6.5, you get the equivalency in sick days.

When a teacher is first hired in regular education, and only then, 6 sick days are put automatically in his/her sick bank. All teachers regardless of their load receive the 6 days. Then, at the beginning of each academic year, 7 sick days are added to the sick bank for full time regular teachers (pro-rated for part-time teachers). These 7 days constitute the *current sick bank*. At the end of the academic year, if the total of sick days in your total sick bank (*current and cumulative*) is equivalent to or less than 13 days, the unused current sick days are added to your cumulative sick bank. If you take a leave (excluding parental leaves), the 7 current sick days added are adjusted on a pro-rata basis to the impact of the leave on your availability.

As an example:

Sarah has just been hired in August and got a full-time contract and is sick only 2 days during the academic year; by the end of the year she will have 11 sick days remaining in her bank (6 days given at first hiring and 5 remaining days in the current bank). Since her bank is lower than 13, the 5 remaining days will be added to the original six (6+5) and Sarah will end the year with a bank of 11 days. At the beginning of the following year, Sarah will be credited with another 7 days for a total of 18 days. During the next year, Sarah is sick for 3 days. As her bank of current and accumulated sick days is greater than 13, the 4 remaining sick days unused will disappear. Therefore, Sarah will end the year with the same 11 days in her bank. If you do the math, you will see that teachers cannot accumulate more than 20 days in their accumulated sick bank (except for very few teachers who still have sick days remaining from the old system).

What happens when you fall sick?

For the first 5 days of an illness, you use the days in your sick bank and receive a full pay. The 6th day you go on salary insurance for the remaining sick leave and for the first year receive 85% of gross salary then 66 2/3% of gross salary for the second year. After two years, if the illness/disability continues you would go on long term disability insurance. If you did not have long term disability insurance after the salary insurance was finished you would receive no income and have to resign. A teacher who has no sick days in his/her sick bank would not receive any pay for the first 5 days and then would go on salary insurance the 6th day.

You can use sick days for family responsibilities

You have the right to be absent from your work for up to 10 days for reasons connected to the health or education of your child or your spouse's child or for health reasons for your father or mother or brother or sister or grandparents. You can use up to 6 sick days for these absences. The other 4 would be without pay. However, remember that if you use up your sick days, they will not be there when you fall ill.