

**September 1, 2011**

Welcome to a new Conestoga year. Although the full-time support staff of all Ontario colleges are currently on strike, please be assured that the college is operating, all academic programs are running, and your classes will start on September 6 as scheduled. We will do our very best to provide you with all the services that you need as you start your school year.

You will be required to cross a picket line when you arrive on-campus. We would advise that you arrive early for the first few days to make sure that you can arrive at your classes on time.

Many students have asked what this strike is about.

At this time, the colleges have provided a good offer that increases the average salary for support staff to more than \$59,000 after three years. If OPSEU, the union representing the support staff, were to accept the offer, each full-time support staff member would receive a salary increase of 4.8% over the next three years:

- Year 1 – a salary increase of 1.5%
- Year 2 – an additional salary increase of 1.5%
- Year 3 – a further salary increase of 1.75%

The offer from the colleges does NOT reduce job security or increase the use of part-time employees instead of full-time employees.

The Union has rejected the offer and is asking for:

- 6.1% salary increase over two years
- Additional costs for retiree benefits
- Additional paid leave time for union activities

Although we want to reach a negotiated settlement that is reasonable to our employees, it must also be affordable to the colleges. We hope that OPSEU will call off the strike and return to the bargaining table so that we can reach a resolution.

The quality of your educational experience here at Conestoga is very important to us. We apologize for any delays or inconvenience that you may experience as a result of the strike, and ask for your understanding and patience as we work to maintain services and ensure your learning is supported through this very challenging situation.

For information on college services and other updates during the work stoppage, please visit the Conestoga website at [www.conestogac.on.ca](http://www.conestogac.on.ca)



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