

***Making Sense of the Numbers: A Profile of Support Staff Workers at Conestoga College***

Since the commencement of the province-wide strike by support staff workers at Ontario colleges, there's been a great deal of information released about bargaining positions, offers, proposals and working conditions.

What's missing from all this is a frame of reference – what are the current conditions for support staff in the Ontario college system, and how do these positions compare to those for workers in similar positions either elsewhere in the public service or in the private sector?

Here are some facts about support staff workers at Conestoga College:

- The number of full-time support staff workers has grown dramatically over the last 5 years. In that period, Conestoga has added 95 full-time support staff positions, an almost 34 per cent increase, bringing the number of full-time support staff positions to 377. That number is expected to grow as the College continues to expand to meet the needs of the community.
- Although more than one-third of Conestoga's full-time support staff group has started in the last 5 years, the average length of service for employees is 10 years. Most support staff workers who come to Conestoga choose to remain here for the long term.
- Our attrition rate – the number of employees who choose to leave Conestoga – is very low, averaging just over 3 per cent per year, indicating that most of our employees enjoy their work here and find the conditions of work meet their needs.
- Base salaries for Conestoga's 377 full-time support staff workers range from \$36,300 to \$87,500 per year: more than half of employees receive base salaries in excess of \$50,000. Many employees have the opportunity to work overtime as well, and total salaries can exceed \$90,000.
- Full-time support staff also receive a comprehensive benefit package superior to that available to most workers in the private sector. The benefit package includes a defined benefit pension plan, extended health, disability, dental, life insurance, etc. as well as a top-up to EI for employees on parental leave to provide them with 93 per cent of their normal salary for up to one year. This benefit package represents an additional 29 per cent value on top of base salary.
- A generous vacation allowance for full-time support staff begins at 3 weeks of paid vacation each year for new employees and, depending on length of service, increases to a maximum of 6 weeks each year. All full-time support staff are also paid for additional leave while the College is closed between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- Conestoga is widely regarded as a great place to work and consistently attracts a large number of highly qualified candidates for open positions.

Here at Conestoga, we value the contributions of all of our employees, who have a long history of working together to deliver the very best in education, training and service. We look forward to a negotiated settlement that is fair to the workers and affordable for the colleges so that we can get back to providing our students with the educational experience they expect and deserve.