

Bargaining set to start October 1

Mark your calendar! On Wednesday, October 1, your OPSEU bargaining team will meet face-to-face with OPTrust management to start negotiating our next collective agreement.

Bargaining YOUR issues

The team has one goal: to negotiate a strong contract that reflects your priorities and delivers real improvements for members at OPTrust. And your participation has already given the process a powerful start.

- More than two-thirds of OPSEU members at OPTrust voted in our bargaining team elections in May.
- Next, over 85% of you completed a detailed bargaining survey to identify the key issues and improvements you want addressed in our next contract
- Then in June, more than 50 members attended the demand setting meeting to review the survey results and vote on the priority demands our team will take to the bargaining table.

Since then, your bargaining team has been working with our OPSEU staff negotiator, Bernard King, to get ready to bargain at the earliest possible date.

An early start

The October 1 meeting is a good first step. This is the earliest that bargaining has ever started at OPTrust. At this initial meeting both teams will exchange their proposals on non-monetary issues.

Then in November, bargaining will get under way in earnest. First, the parties will deal with non-monetary issues. Then talks will move to monetary issues, including wage and benefit improvements.

A number of bargaining dates have already been scheduled in November. Unfortunately, due to scheduling problems, the OPTrust management team is not available in October.

Your support matters

Still, no matter what happens at the bargaining table, the key to getting a strong deal is the active support of members like you. **See over for more about how you can help make a difference.**

Update on your OPSEU bargaining team

There has been a change in your OPSEU bargaining team. Unfortunately, Cheri Hearty has had to step down from the team for personal reasons. This means that Joseph Rampersad, who was elected as first alternate, will join Brian Hawrysh and Myles Magner on the OPSEU team.

Together with Bernard King, our OPSEU staff negotiator, this is the group that will go to the bargaining table with OPTrust management team on October 1.

The two remaining OPSEU team alternates are Shirley Pazhaidam and Dino Teixeira. If other members of the team are unable to continue, first Shirley then Dino are prepared to take their place.

The good news is that our alternates have taken an active part in every bargaining team meeting to date. This means that Joe's move onto the team will be seamless, and the team will be at full strength and ready to go when negotiations start on October 1.

The OPSEU team thanks Cheri for her help preparing for a successful round of negotiations and a strong collective agreement.

In the meantime, OPTrust has notified OPSEU that the management bargaining team will include Jane Rennie, Bill Foster and Tracy Hatanaka-Lejnieks.

Make a difference: Plug yourself in!

As an OPSEU member at OPTrust, bargaining is for you and about you. It's for you because you set the agenda. From the bargaining team elections and the demand setting process, right up to the final vote on whether to accept or reject a proposed deal – it's you and your co-workers who call the shots.

It's is about you because it's your support for the OPSEU bargaining team over the coming weeks that will convince OPTrust management to bargain a fair deal that addresses your issues.

Three ways you can make a difference

That means YOU can have an impact at the bargaining table. Here's how:

1) Plug yourself in. Over the coming weeks, you'll be hearing a lot more about bargaining. So keep reading your OPSEU bargaining updates. Attend union meetings and events. And keep in touch with to your stewards and the members of your bargaining team. That way you'll be up to date on the issues – and how you can help make a difference.

2) Show your support. The best way to give your team the bargaining power they need is to send a message to the employer that you back your team's demand for a strong contract. As bargaining picks up this fall, you'll hear more about ways you can help

make sure that message gets through loud and clear. Stay tuned for more details.

3) Get involved. An effective bargaining campaign doesn't just happen. It takes the ideas, energy and involvement of members like you. That's why OPSEU will be launching a special **Mobilizing Committee** to help organize our campaign.

Want to help build a strong bargaining campaign? Have ideas about ways to “convince” the employer to bargain a fair deal? Why not volunteer for the committee? Just contact one of your OPSEU stewards or a member of the OPSEU bargaining team – or send an e-mail to opseulocal568@yahoo.com.

Got a question? Want to help?

Just contact any of the people listed below:

Your OPSEU Bargaining team: Brian Hawrysh, Myles Magner, Joseph Rampersad, Shirley Pazhaidam (alternate), Dino Teixeira (alternate).

Your OPSEU stewards: Sonia Baistrocchi, Leigh Brain, Cheri Hearty, Sean Homaie, Patricia Johnson, Myles Magner, Henry Nanes, Shirley Pazhaidam, Richard Nelson, Joseph Rampersad, Jerry Sullivan, Curtis Wright.

Information is power!

As a group, OPSEU members at OPTrust have a lot of experience with collective bargaining.

And if there is one thing we have learned from past contract talks, it's this: **informed members are powerful members!**

That's why it's important that you stay tuned for future bargaining updates – and for ways you can help your team deliver a clear message to OPTrust management, and a strong collective agreement.

