

College Faculty Strike Vote

A strike vote will be held this week for college faculty members represented by OPSEU/SEFPO starting December 9.

OPSEU/SEFPO asked the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) last month to schedule the online strike vote after the College Employer Council requested a “no-board” report, which would allow the CEC to impose terms and conditions on faculty or proceed with a lockout as early as December 13.

The union has no choice but to seek a strike mandate should job action become necessary. The collective agreement for college faculty expired on September 30, 2021.

The strike vote will be held over the course of 3 days, December 9th at 9am until the 11th at 3pm. The secret ballot vote will be conducted virtually. You will receive a PIN code and voting instructions from the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) on Wednesday, December 8th. You will need only to log onto a website, enter your code and cast your ballot anytime between December 9th at 9am and December 11th before 3pm. The voting process is easy and confidential.

Frequently Asked Questions – Strike Vote

1. When will the strike vote take place? How will I cast my ballot?

The vote will take place December 9-11, 2021. It will be online or by phone through the Simply Voting electronic voting platform. Each eligible voter will be given a unique elector ID number and password on to cast their ballot.

2. Who is eligible to vote?

All full-time and partial-load professors and instructors and all full-time librarians and counsellors are eligible to vote and should receive a communication directly from the OLRB with their PIN and voting instructions.

This includes:

- members actively employed at the college
- members on recall or who have a grievance outstanding
- members on approved leave, as enshrined in the collective agreement or in law (disability leave, pregnancy/parental leave)

3. I am a College Faculty member, how do I verify that I will be able to cast a ballot in the strike vote?

OPSEU has been working with the College Faculty local presidents at each college to ensure that each member eligible to cast a ballot is on the voter list.

4. What should I do if I am eligible to vote and don't receive a communication from the OLRB?

You can contact the OLRB Voting Help Desk by telephone at 416-326-7432 (English), 416-434-6748 (French). When you contact them, you can indicate that you are calling about the strike vote in OLRB case number 1563-21-VO. They can assist you in being added to the voters list.

5. Does voting yes to a strike vote allow the bargaining team to organize labour action (ie work to rule)?

Yes. All labour action, including work to rule, requires a strike mandate vote, as is set out in the CCBA. Voting yes to a strike vote does not inevitably mean a picket line. In fact, voting yes provides the BT with the leverage needed to get the employer back to the table, or agree to voluntary binding interest arbitration, to resolve the outstanding issues and ensure our working conditions are addressed.

6. Is my ballot confidential?

Yes, your ballot is confidential, and the vote is supervised by the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

7. Does the bargaining team recommend that I vote to authorize a strike vote?

Yes, the team unanimously recommends that all members vote yes to authorize the team to call a strike, if necessary.

8. What will the strike ballot say? What choices will be given?

The strike vote ballot will give each eligible voter the option, in French and English, to choose either <"I authorize the bargaining team to call a strike, if necessary"> or <"I do not authorize the bargaining team to call a strike, if necessary">.

9. What involvement do OPSEU and the CEC have in the strike vote?

OPSEU requested that the vote be held. The CEC provided a list of voters obtained from the Colleges to OPSEU for validation. The list was then provided to the OLRB. The OLRB alone conducts the vote and OPSEU and the CEC have no involvement in that process.

10. How will the outcome of the strike vote be determined?

In order to engage in a strike, OPSEU must obtain 50 % plus 1 vote support from among the ballots cast in the strike vote. The majority of votes cast will determine the outcome.

11. If I have a problem casting my ballot, whom would I call for help?

You can contact the OLRB Voting Help Desk by telephone at 416-326-7432 (English), 416-434-6748 (French). When you contact them, you can indicate that you are calling about the strike vote in OLRB case number 1563-21-VO. They can assist you with any problems casting your ballot.

12. If I work at multiple colleges and I get multiple PINs, can I vote multiple times?

No, You are only allowed to vote once as a member of the bargaining unit. The OLRB will find your vote with the email address you used and will count that one vote as official. If you vote multiples times using multiple PINs, that will be considered a spoiled ballot and will not be counted.

13. Will anyone know how I voted?

No. The vote is entirely by secret ballot and you will not be personally associated with the vote that you cast.

14. Will I be subject to disciplined or dismissed for how I vote?

No. The vote is entirely by secret ballot and you will not be personally associated with the vote that you cast.

15. When will the results of the vote be released?

Ordinarily, the vote results are announced about an hour after voting closes.