



**Sault College Media Release
For Immediate Release**

Sault College Provides a World Class Post-secondary Education

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON November 1, 2017) – Since full-time and partial load faculty and counsellors began strike action on October 16, 2017, there has been commentary by OPSEU that the college system is staffed with mainly contract staff. The implication in their communications is that Colleges have a poorly paid, unqualified workforce full of “precarious” workers. The College has an entirely different view.

Sault College’s full-time faculty complement has remained relatively stable for the last 15 years despite program closures or changes. As an alternative to layoffs conscientious decisions were made to redeploy staff and keep people employed even in the face of financial challenges.

Sault College is achieving its goal of providing students with a high quality education complemented by unique experiential learning opportunities. Based on our key performance indicators our College and the system is working really well. Sault College:

- rated in the top two in Ontario in overall student satisfaction – six years running
- number one for overall quality of learning experience in the top two – nine years running
- 80.7 per cent of last year’s Sault College graduates say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the education they received
- 90 per cent of employers are satisfied or very satisfied with the skills, knowledge and abilities of our graduates

These indicators point to a highly performing institution. Sault College is a significant community partner and is an important contributor to increasing the qualified talent pool needed in the Sault.

The suggestion that hiring part-time and partial load faculty is detrimental to offering a quality education is simply false. Our students greatly benefit from these experienced faculty members many of whom are industry experts bringing a wealth of expertise, hands-on knowledge and industry-specific perspectives to the classroom.

Our College’s unionized partial load faculty are earning an average of \$101.56/hour. They also have access to pension and most benefits which have been negotiated in prior rounds of bargaining. Most of these folks are either retired or working full-time in well-paying industry jobs. These professors are highly qualified professionals who add unique opportunities for

students to interact with teachers who have recent industry experiences which helps prepare them for success in the working world. Valuable work from valuable people that is well-compensated.

OPSEU doesn't represent faculty members who teach less than seven hours per week, but have made a key message of their strike that this is about them. These folks are paid current industry rates commensurate with their experience. These faculty are most often a group of full-time industry experts teaching specialized courses. The suggestion that they are "precarious" or "exploited" is just plain false.

Finally, the last myth that needs to be dispelled is that our students spend the majority of their class time with part-time faculty. The fact is that the majority of our teaching contact hours are conducted by full-time faculty. Of course we employ part-time teachers. Many teach in Continuing Education and certainly they teach into postsecondary programs, but they are NOT teaching the majority of hours in our post-secondary programs at the College.

College employees are a group of highly functioning professional faculty, support staff and management staff members leading a world class post-secondary institution.

Colleges have asked the Union to return to the table and we are hopeful we will see a speedy resolution to this dispute.

The College highly values its faculty and counsellors and we want to see them back in the College so we can continue to reach our collective goal of offering our students a quality education and superior learning experience.

–30–

About Sault College

The vision of Sault College is to provide a transformative life experience through empowering those who study with us to think and learn in progressive, innovative ways, including those we have not yet imagined. Sault College grants Ontario College certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, graduate certificates, and degrees to its graduates. The College is the largest deliverer of apprenticeship training in all of Northern Ontario. Sault College has a significant economic impact on the community, with spin-offs in excess of \$158 million. Over \$1.8 million dollars in scholarships, bursaries and awards are distributed annually to students at the College. Located on the border to the United States and situated in the middle of three of the largest Great Lakes on the planet, Sault College is one of 24 publicly-funded colleges in the province of Ontario.