



Attn: Rhonda Lenton and the York University Administration

On behalf of the York Federation of Students (YFS) representing over 50,000 undergraduate students across the various campuses at York University, we write this letter to demand that you, President Rhonda Lenton, and the York Administration, return to the bargaining table and negotiate a fair deal in good faith with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3903.

Your administration has continuously shown an outright disregard for the safety and academic integrity of your employees and students. We are now three weeks into this strike and your administration has failed to bargain fairly with CUPE 3903, a union that represents 60% of educators on this campus, and do the majority of the teaching at York University. Students have been forced to face academic pressure to cross the picket line, and have been fear mongered by the lack of clarity and honest communication around academic accommodations and the progression of the strike. We have seen your administration use students as pawns against their instructors in a variety of ways including via email blasts that fail to adequately represent the fact that on more than one occasion, the administration has refused to come to the table. Pitting students against their educators only harms their education, and does not look favourably upon the institution.

Not only has the York administration failed to get students back into the classroom, but on March 4th also failed to keep students safe from police violence. Students have a right to a safe and accessible education, but instead were bruised, shoved and battered for practicing their legal right to picket. Following the [statement issued February 28th](#) about the TPS interrupting a classroom, this is not the first time your administration has failed to prevent police from harassing and intimidating students and staff. On March 5th, a Senate member resigned from the Senate Executive Committee due to improper delegation and appropriation of the statutory role of the Committee. If the administration is not able to follow its own policies, procedures, and processes, how are students meant to trust the decision making ability of their administration?

The cost of this administration's inability to bargain in good faith is astronomical. Not only do York University students pay some of the highest tuition costs in the country, we are also subjected to one of the highest costs of living. The longer the strike continues, the higher the cost; leases will need to be extended, rent will need to be paid, and not to mention the high costs of flight alterations for international students. The same conditions that place students



under the poverty line, are just as true for CUPE 3903 members - many of whom are students themselves. It is disingenuous for the university to refuse to even move on pay increases that would put CUPE 3903 members just above the poverty line while stating “budget constraints”. Your salary, Rhonda Lenton, is nearly half a million dollars. A salary that comes from the very fees students pay, and from the very labour you are trying to short change.

The YFS upholds the collective bargaining process and regards CUPE 3903 members as integral to our educational community. We understand that their working conditions directly affect our learning environment. Therefore, we respect their right to strike for a workplace and contract that is fair and just. Until these conditions are met, normal operations cannot resume, despite the University's efforts to the contrary. We strongly urge the York University Administration to return the bargaining table with urgency.

We believe that if the University bargains in good faith, and offers a fair deal and affordable package, instead of forcing students to cross picket lines, we can all return to the classroom. We hope a solution to this dispute is reached as soon as possible so that students, and teachers, can return to classes to teach and learn

Regards,

York Federation of Students Executives

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