STUDENTS IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUPE 3903

The York Federation of Students affirms its solidarity with CUPE 3903. We have reached the end of the second week of the strike, and most recently, York University has refused to come back to the bargaining table. We are incredibly disappointed in this decision which continues to keep students out of the classroom. If the University bargains in good faith, and offers fair and affordable packages, this strike can end. Among other tactics, we've seen TA's being locked out of e-class, making it difficult to communicate with students, leaving many of our members in the dark; and more recently, the violent arrest of 3903 members by the Toronto Police Services for exercising their charter right to picket during a legal strike. Our paramount concern has been for our members, the undergraduate students, and the impact this strike is having on them. We strongly encourage the York University Administration to continue bargaining with the urgency it requires, as opposed to attempting to force students to cross picket lines.

The York Federation of Students continued stance is that education is a right, not a privilege. While York gives senior administrators significant pay raises of up to 30%, students and CUPE 3903 workers are living paycheck to paycheck. Many of our members work precarious jobs with little pay, and in the case of unpaid internships or placements: no pay, with zero job security. As undergraduate students and 3903 members, many of whom are students themselves, work long and hard hours balancing the rising costs of living, many are still below the poverty line. The YFS supports CUPE 3903 and their demands for equity and justice in the workplace. CUPE 3903 members make up more than half of the teaching community at York University, and 3903's working conditions are students' learning conditions.

In accordance with [York University's Senate Policy](), section 2.2 Fairness to Students, while CUPE 3903 remains on strike, undergraduate students have the right to refuse to cross picket lines without facing any penalties. The York Administration has shown a complete disregard to the plight of undergraduate students by forcing the decision to continue classes on individual professors at the approval of the faculty deans, despite over half of teaching staff being on strike. This directly pits department heads against teaching staff, and leaves students confused without a standardized decision by the university. While some departments have seized classes, others have not, leading to inequities in the education students are receiving. Additionally, these callous approaches have led to members of the Senate Executive Committee to resign. The YFS condemns the ongoing divisive tactics employed by the York University Administration amongst undergraduate students and their instructors: students should not be used as pawns, bullied and threatened to complete course work, nor should they be forced to cross picket lines.

The York Federation of Students (YFS) has been a leading advocate for affordable post-secondary education: fighting for lower tuition fees, more grants and greater fairness for international students. The YFS remains undivided in solidarity with Teachers Assistants, Contract Faculty, Graduate Assistants and Research Assistants as they continue to fight for a fair, accessible and affordable educational environment. Students deserve more from their administration, and from the institution they pay some of the highest tuition fees in the country to attend. The York Federation of Students represents over 50,000 undergraduate students at York University and will continue to mobilize for more affordable, accessible education not just for undergraduates, but for all students.

For more information please contact:
Ashley D'Souza, President, York Federation of Students, president@yfs.ca or strikeinfo@yfs.ca for additional questions regarding the strike.

Additional resources:
We Are York
YFS 2024 Strike FAQ
CUPE 3903 Students FAQ
Course Modifications update as of March 4th