



Representing Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants,  
and Part-Time Librarians and Archivists @York University, Toronto

Canadian Union of Public Employees/Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique local/section locale 3903

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Dear President Lenton,

The Executive Committee of CUPE Local 3903 is joining our voices to the international academic community to call on York University to withdraw its support for construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea. Further we ask that York live up to its social justice mission and use its institutional power and membership in the Association of Canadian Universities for Research in Astronomy (ACURA) to demand the Hawaiian government remove military/police presence on Mauna Kea, and stop the criminalization of Mauna Kea protectors.

The CUPE 3903 Executive strongly condemns York University's involvement in this project.

The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) has no free, prior, and informed consent from the Kānaka Maoli Peoples, which is in direct violation of Indigenous Peoples' rights. We stand in solidarity with the Kānaka Maoli and the people of Hawaii who are protecting the sacred site of Mauna Kea from destruction and intrusion of the TMT.

In a gross display of settler colonialism the international astronomy community has recently attempted to start construction of the TMT despite the long-standing objections of the Kānaka Maoli. As a member of the Association of Canadian Universities for Research in Astronomy (ACURA), York is an active participant in this violation of indigenous sovereignty.

Protectors organized and led by Kānaka Maoli are, at great personal risk, blockading access to Mauna Kea. Many kūpuna (Kānaka Maoli elders) have already been arrested and all of those participating in the blockade face arrest and other state violence. York is directly supporting the oppression of indigenous people and the criminalization of Kānaka Maoli as they attempt to protect their land.

Scientific discovery at the expense of the rights of Indigenous Peoples is unethical and cannot be allowed to continue. York has dedicated itself to taking up the call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. How can York justify investing in a project that violates the sovereignty of the Kānaka Maoli?

York must work to address the harms it has participated in and should withdraw its support for TMT construction on Mauna Kea unless/until the consent of the Kānaka Maoli is obtained. York should also pressure the state of Hawaii to withdraw all police/military from Mauna Kea, cease arrests of protectors and withdraw any charges from those already arrested.

We look forward to hearing the actions York will take to ensure the rights of the Kānaka Maoli are not violated and that there is no further violence against them.

Our regards,

The Executive Committee of CUPE Local 3903  
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