**Candidate Statement, Peter Brogan**

I have been a proud member of CUPE Local 3903 for five years. So it is with much thought, love and enthusiasm that I am seeking to be the Communications Officer. Communications is the life blood of organizing and mobilizing, which I believe should be at the core of what any union needs to do in order to fight for justice, fairness and equity at the workplace and in society more broadly.

 During my time at CUPE 3903 I have served as the Unit 3 Vice President (2006) and more recently as the Unit 1 Chief Steward (2011-12). When we were under the “administration” of CUPE National I worked with other rank and file members to bring the local back under membership control. Prior to pursuing my PhD at York, I worked in the United States as an organizer/representative at the United Electrical Workers Union (UE) where I managed the website and edited the monthly newsletter for a 7,000 member local of municipal workers. After leaving the UE I held a position as an organizer for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) where I helped non-unionized contract faculty in private sector universities form unions in New York City.

 As a union committed to a broader vision of social justice and democratic engagement, I think we need to do more to build stronger relationships with other workers, unions and students at York University and in the GTA more broadly. Communications is key to making this happen. As a union we need to move from a static to a dynamic system of communications both in terms of how the leadership of the union communicates with members and how members communicate with each other. We need to more effectively engage with other groups at the Keele and Glendon campuses as well as other labour organizations and community-based groups in the city and throughout the province. Our internal communications infrastructure has fallen into great disrepair and our external communications infrastructure is virtually nonexistent. I would also like to see our union coordinate our communications work with other locals in our sector.

 Our communications beyond the occasional CUPE News blast and infrequent updates to a clunky and unwelcoming website is unacceptable.  We have had at least three different newsletter coordinators in the past two years and not a single newsletter has been produced! We have had a website that has not been updated in over six months! This is unacceptable and it is not the fault of our current or past Executive committees but of the fact that we have no system in place to ensure that all of this vital work gets done. We have a staff that has not been properly trained to do many of these tasks and an Executive that is overstretched and overworked. The current structure of the communications committee is not up to the task and needs a complete overhaul.

 I would like us to build a communications committee that would work with me in the day-to-day work of gathering content for a weekly e-newsletter, a monthly paper newsletter, and our website. The union should also move towards the use of social media to communicate both with 3903 members and other workers, students and unions at York University and in the GTA. Lastly, but perhaps most important, because our website is central to how we communicate, I would like to do a complete overhaul of it so that it is easier to navigate and find important information (i.e. information on benefits and funds). A more functional website would allow members know how they can get involved. As members have been saying for years, we need to open up the website so that members can engage each other through discussion, forums and blogs.

 I believe that my experience in CUPE 3903 and in the labour movements of both Canada and the United States makes me uniquely qualified for the position of Communications Officer. I will also bring my passion, skills, commitment to grassroots social justice unionism and love of CUPE 3903 to the job.

Vote Brogan in 2012!