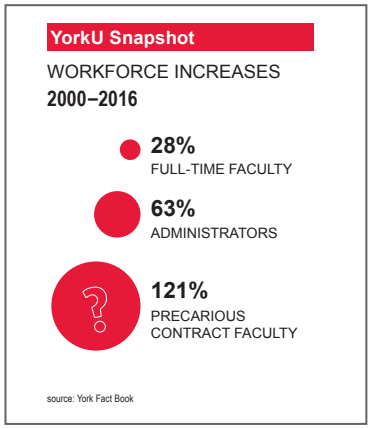
REALITY CHECK York's increasing reliance on contract casual workers and a ballooning administration.



3903 Social Media

Website: www.3903.cupe.ca
Twitter: @cupe3903comms
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/CUPE3903
Instagram: cupe3903
YouTube: tinyurl.com/3903YouTube
Blog: tinyurl.com/3903OnlineHQ
Strike Info:
tinyurl.com/YorkStrikeInfo

Twitter Hashtags

#CUPE3903 #3903bargaining
#StrikeToWin #YorkStrike
#YorkUStrike #YorkUStrike2018
#CanLab

3903 Contact Info

Strike Hotline: 416-466-8421
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UNSPIN THE ADMIN

Straightening out the spin from York U admin

This strike is also about fighting against clawbacks imposed by the employer, and defending gains and benefits that we have already won.

> Conversions of contract faculty to permanent status: down from 8 to 2.
> GAs losing health benefits with fellowship model and facing clawbacks of other scholarships.
> PhDs summer minimum guarantee could be clawed back if they owe tuition, or fellowships clawed back if they secure other scholarships.

CONFUSION from **Pg.1**

- Many students are feeling pressured to attend class and write exams despite knowing their rights under Senate policy 2.2, fearing those rights won't be respected.
- This results in undue stress on students, negatively impacting the mental health of us all.
- The climate of stress and confusion translates to unsafe behaviour on the picket lines, endangering the lives of TAs, GAs, and Contract Faculty - invaluable members of the York community.

* Numbers compiled from York University reports combined with limited reporting from YUFA members.

CUPE 3903 **ON THE PICKET LINES**
Strike Bulletin Issue #1 Wednesday, March 21, 2018

FUNDING FOR TAs UNDER ATTACK

The York U administration has proposed to completely restructure how funding for Teaching Assistants is paid out. They want to do this once again.

Back in September of 2016, unilateral restructuring of the funding model resulted in massive chaos, the loss of more than 700 Unit 3 jobs (now more than 800!), the loss of summer funding, and increased potential for York to move funding around and apply it to tuition or claw back total funding.

Here are four reasons why the proposed changes in Unit 1 funding should deeply concern every Teaching Assistant.

1. There is no protection from unilateral changes. Last summer, many Unit 1s went without any funding when York implemented their fellowship funding model without going through the bargaining process.

If the fellowship funding model is how York wants to deliver our funding, this model must be included in our collective agreement so that it cannot be unilaterally changed again.

York's refusal to do this is concerning because it means they can continue to make unilateral changes to our funding without us having any say. If they have no more plans to mess with our funding, why not include it in our collective agreement?

> cont' on **Pg.2**

ARBITRATION

York refused arbitration in 1997

"The best deals are achieved through collective bargaining," Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne told a Town Hall audience in Toronto on March 7, 2018.

We agree with the Premier that a satisfactory end to the current strike must come through a negotiated settlement, rather than through arbitration or back-to-work legislation. So we are pleased that the York administration has agreed to return to the bargaining

> cont' on **Pg.2**

CONFUSION AND FEAR FOR STUDENTS

Why suspending all classes at York U is the right thing to do

- Only about 41%* of classes are running.
- Of those, only 27%* are arguably "unaffected" (i.e. none of the teaching/grading is done by striking workers).
- This leads to massive confusion for students, with some classes running and others not.

> cont' on **Pg.4**

FUNDING cont' from Pg.1

2. They are punishing students for securing scholarships or other work. For PhD students who are Unit 1s, York can "claw back" the entirety of their minimum guarantee (around $5400) from money earned through scholarships, research assistantships, or other forms of funding. Master's students who are Unit 1 members get their fellowship funding cut by almost half.

Our union CUPE 3903 wants to enshrine protections into our collective agreement so that what you earn as TAs, you get to keep.

3. York wants to eliminate protections that guarantee autonomy for members to manage summer funding as they see fit. The good news is that we have successfully negotiated the return of summer funding for those who need it!

The bad news is that, in its penultimate pass on February 28, York sneakily introduced language that excluded summer funding from the forms of funding that are protected from being applied to tuition without the member's consent.

With this language in place, if a TA owes York tuition for any reason, they could take a large chunk out of an already minimal summer funding without consent.

Members need the flexibility to budget, prioritize their own spending, and make their own financial decisions.

4. These changes are an assault on our capacities to both excel in our own research as well as the teaching of our undergraduate students. It should deeply worry us that this administration is discouraging an engaged and successful research climate at York by taking away our financial security and disincentivizing securing external awards or research/teaching work.

Our union CUPE 3903 has historically fought on behalf of future students, making sure that we support accessible education for all.

When our members walked the picket lines in 2000-01, 2008-09, and 2015 it was so that we could pursue graduate education with stable/adequate year-round funding.

We owe it to incoming students, who deserve the same benefits of union membership that we've had.

ARBITRATION cont' from Pg.1

table on March 20, 2018.

What is interest arbitration. Interest arbitration is a legally binding ruling made by a third party. Yet, this should come as a last resort. So far, York U has spent more time engaged in stalling and public relations than in bargaining, which led us into a dead end: the strike.

If York chooses to bargain seriously now, we could negotiate an end to this labour dispute. Talk of interest arbitration is just a distraction tactic and a public relations smoke screen.

Loss of collective bargaining. Resorting to interest arbitration undermines our collective power and shifts the power to the arbitrator. An arbitrator would decide what they think we

> cont' on Pg.3

CUPE 3903 Strike Bulletin Issue #1 Wednesday, March, 21 2018

Arbitration from Pg. 2

"would have" bargained and imposes it without a membership vote.

Only our members should decide if the bargaining team has reached a deal we can live with. We shouldn't give up our democratic union process and put our fate in the hands of an outside party.

Status Quo not a go. Interest arbitration rulings tend to be based on sectoral standards, and ultimately favour the status quo. In the past, if workers had been willing to accept the status quo, graduate assistants would not be considered workers, the administration could unilaterally erode teaching assistants' salaries by increasing tuition, and the select few contract faculty for whom we have won minimal job security would be without, despite teaching for decades - a situation that continues for the vast majority. In the end, workers at York and throughout the sector are better off because of these gains, which were hard won through mobilisation and bargaining, not granted by an arbitrator.

Not adapted to complex issues. Interest arbitration may be viable when the differences are primarily financial. Yet, it doesn't make sense to resort to arbitration to deal with the complex interaction of various job security issues, including qualifications language, Conversions, Long Service Teaching Appointments, the Continuing Sessional Standing Program and Special Renewable Contracts.

It's not nearly as simple as an arbitrator splitting the difference between a 5% and a 1% wage increase. An arbitrator isn't going to seriously address the disappearance of more than 700 Unit 3 positions, or the threat of the similar decimation of Unit 1 by the fellowship model.

York refused arbitration in 1997. We think the York Administration said it best themselves when they rejected YUFA's proposal for interest arbitration in their 1997 strike. To quote their bargaining update of April 10, 1997:

"Arbitration is not a solution to the difficult issues that divide [the union] and the administration. It effectively acknowledges the incapacity of the parties to reach what is needed - a mutually agreed upon settlement - and substitutes a decision that neither party owns…Arbitration risks handing over the future of the institution, and the definition of a new contract for faculty, to a third party who cannot possibly appreciate the subtleties and complexities of a university such as York… Engaging in arbitration on these issues is tantamount to allowing an outsider who has no continuing interest in, or commitment to, the University to have the authority to decide academic priorities for the institution. The arbitrator, unlike faculty and administration, is not accountable for making his or her decision work."

So let's give real bargaining a chance.

CUPE 3903