



September 24, 2020

Dear President Lenton,

We are writing in response to your [June 12th statement](#), “The next steps in York University’s plan to address anti-Black racism,” and your [August 31st statement](#), “Progress Update: Addressing anti-Black racism at York.” While we welcome some of the steps and initiatives you plan to undertake to hire Black faculty, we are dismayed by the absence of plans to address the issues that confront our members.

The university’s plans to address racism does not contain a single mention of contract faculty. Contract faculty do a significant portion of the teaching at York University, often under heightened conditions of harassment. Your failure to mention any proactive steps to address their experience is a glaring omission in your anti-racism initiatives.

As you know, the collective agreements for CUPE 3903 units 1, 2, and 3 expired on August 31, 2020. Bargaining is an opportunity to build concrete anti-racism provisions into our contracts. Historically, the employer’s bargaining team has resisted this opportunity. In the last round of bargaining, it took four months of stalling before a single equity hiring proposal received sign-off. Instead of a shared commitment to justice and equality for *all* workers, we encountered stall tactics and disingenuous arguments, including the suggestion that there are not enough qualified racialized contract faculty to warrant addressing under-representation. Little has been done to implement racial equity in hiring, through departmental Chairs and Deans, despite your stated commitment to anti-racist initiatives. Black, Indigenous, and otherwise racialized contract faculty members experience racism at every level in this institution. While grievances are filed, members are continually denied employment by your appointees in Faculty Relations. In fact, your appointees in Faculty Relations have consistently failed to provide fair and equitable resolution through the grievances process.

These grievances and experiences in bargaining reveal the insincerity and weakness of your commitment to anti-racism in general, and anti-black racism in particular. It also leads us to doubt the value, scope, and transparency of the ‘series of consultations’ which you claim to have undertaken with various stakeholders and community leaders at our institution. With these concerns in mind, the CUPE 3903 executive committee asks for your concrete plans and your commitment to the following:

- Will you commit to a transparent process of consultation and data collection regarding hiring, retention, workload, allotment of research leaves and grants, and the process of selection for job security programs?



- What is the employer's plan to ensure racial equity for contract faculty? More specifically, what concrete equity provisions will you build into LSTAs, the CSSP program, and any other job security provisions to correct racialized inequities?
- Given the disproportionately deleterious effects that COVID-19 has had on racialized graduate students' health and academic progress, as well as the various racialized communities with which many graduate students conduct research, will you commit to a universal extension of base funding, with priority pool entitlement, for at least one extra year, without subjecting students to the cumbersome and invasive burden to 'prove' their racialized marginalization?
- Will you commit to ensuring that all international students, who are predominantly racialized, have equal access to full funding packages, work, and union protections?

We look forward to working with you and seeing your demonstrated commitment to racial equity across *all levels* of the university's communities.

Sincerely,

The CUPE 3903 Executive Committee