

## **Student Power report back from 'Ontario Student Strike Training Camp'**

July 28 & 29, 2012

Hosted by the UofT Graduate Students' Union

The event was held over two days of 16 workshops during four sessions (five concurrent workshops per session). The final session was dedicated to strategies and tactics.

Workshop and strategy topics included the following (the Student Power delegate attended the highlighted sessions): Introduction to student strikes; Communication and mobilization; **Mobilizing graduate students**; From mobilization committees to strike committees; Creating and/or radicalizing student associations; **Creating and facilitating general assemblies**; Enforcing strikes; Graduate student strikes; Using strikes to build a movement; Direct democracy; Strategies for mobilizing colleges; Strategies for mobilizing small universities; Strategies for mobilizing large universities; **Strategies for mobilizing graduate students**.

Facilitators of the workshops and strategy session spoke to the importance of identifying and mobilizing with a focus on local issues, maintaining a momentum on campus by way of having short (voluntary) task oriented meetings and plugging into other like-minded activities and groups on campus.

For the sessions that focused on graduate student organizing, about 20 participants from McGill, Windsor, Queens, Laurentian, Ryerson, York, UofT, Carleton, Guelph, Western and McMaster were present. The group discussed issues affecting their campuses and ways to mobilize around those issues. Although most issues are institution specific, it was instructive to get a sense of what is happening throughout the province.

The issues highlighted were:

- 1) The reconfiguration of degree requirements
- 2) Lack of accountability around funding
- 3) Changes to work-study policies
- 4) Fees to take courses for language requirement component of degree
- 5) Tuition hikes not pegged to t.a. wages
- 6) Workload not distributed evenly over ta'ships
- 7) expansion of unfunded grad programs
- 8) Joblessness after completing graduate school
- 9) Privatization of funding and research

A main theme throughout the sessions was the importance of better coordination and communication between graduate associations throughout the province. A suggested way to move towards such a goal was to examine coordinating bargaining (which Ontario CUPE locals in the university sector have been working towards).

An email list service for participants will be created to allow attendees to share their organizing and mobilizing experiences over the upcoming academic year.