

WHY BE IN A UNION?



Like paid over-time? Statutory holidays? A mom who got maternity leave? See yourself as taking a paid caregiver leave ever? Don't see yourself as getting injured on the job, but know you don't want to lose your shirt if you do? That's unions.

In non-unionized workplaces, employees have limited recourse against mistreatment by employers playing favourites or changing the terms and conditions of employment. In a unionized environment, workers have recourse to written and legally-binding guarantees as outlined in a Collective Agreement that covers things like wages, benefits and conditions of work. If our employer breaches provisions of our contract, then we can take action through the established grievance procedure outlined in the CA. Unions protect us all.

What does that mean for us? Bread and butter stuff like a **decent hourly wage, benefits that cover us and our dependents, extended benefits** for unforeseen healthcare needs, and access to funds (to offset conference expenses, research expenses and more). Our CA **guarantees us certain rights as workers at York**. It secures our wages, limits class size, provides health benefits, protects job security, and generally makes our working conditions better. If you are pressured to work more than the number of hours set in the agreement, you have a right to say "No", you have a right to extra compensation for additional work, and we have a grievance process to force compliance.

What it also means is engagement in the labour movement and in other social justice struggles. "So what," you might say. Well, on one hand you've got the kind of representation described above. But you've also got access to people who are passionate about what it means that our cities are being dismantled, that homelessness cannot be divorced from mental illness and addiction issues, who are concerned about ongoing struggles in public education, climate change, and healthcare. Maybe you're a climatologist. Environment Canada is laying 700 of theirs off. Maybe your parents are pharmacologists in their home country and they work at Walmart here. Many of our members are passionate about the connections between all of these social issues and what we do, the value of what we do, the devaluation (by the employer, by the government, in the perception of the public) of what we do. We are a union that knows these things matter.



Representing, Organizing, & Activating the Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants & Research Assistants @ York University, Toronto, Canada

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