

# BARGAINING UPDATE

CUPE 3903  
March 8, 2012

On Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the union filed for conciliation. Since then, we have asked the Employer to continue to bargain with us while we wait for conciliation to begin. So far they have refused.

Conciliation will take place on March 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, but as you will see below, we are already getting a taste of how York intends to approach this next stage of bargaining.

**The Executive and Bargaining Team were told by the Ministry of Labour that a conciliator would be appointed to our case within five days. To our dismay, we were not appointed a conciliator until February 29<sup>th</sup>, a full 14 days after filing for conciliation.** Worse yet, our conciliator - Jim Breckenridge - informed us that he is unavailable to meet until March 14<sup>th</sup>, *28 days after our last bargaining session*, and that *his availability was limited to only six days: March 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23.* The Executive requested that Mr. Breckenridge attempt to find earlier dates for us to resume bargaining. Mr. Breckenridge responded by suggesting that he was also able to meet on March 9<sup>th</sup>, which the Union gladly accepted.

**Unfortunately, the Employer has responded that they are “unavailable to meet” March 9<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> despite the fact that the proposed March 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> meetings were to take place during our regularly scheduled Friday bargaining sessions.** The Executive and Bargaining Team believe this to be the latest example of the Employer using stalling tactics in order to drag bargaining out in the hope that this will weaken our bargaining position.

In response, **the Executive sent an official complaint to both the conciliator and the Ministry of Labour** enjoining the conciliator to put pressure on the Employer to come back to the bargaining table. The conciliator’s reply was to merely reiterate his availability and to ask that we confirm those dates acceptable to the Employer. We have now confirmed that we will meet with the conciliator and the Employer on March 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. However, **we are unwilling to confirm the later dates until we see some movement from the Employer at the bargaining table.** In fact, we are **still awaiting a response from the Employer to our February 15<sup>th</sup> reduced proposal package and we hope that counter proposals are forthcoming from the Employer on March 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**There’s nothing about our present proposal package that is at all “unreasonable”.** Many of our core proposals will cost the employer little but will make a huge difference in members lives. For instance, our continuing appointments proposals for Unit 2 (i.e. a two course minimum guarantee for those teaching that this level for two years; renewable three year contracts at the level of three full courses for high seniority members) simply “lock in” existing course compliments and cost the employer nothing. What is more,



**CUPE 3903** Representing over 3,400 graduate student workers and contract faculty at York University [3903.cupe.ca](http://3903.cupe.ca)

many of the costs associated with our key proposals are costs that we have unfairly been absorbing. For instance, while our proposed “claw-backs” language will undoubtedly cost the employer a marginal amount of money, this is money they have been subtracting from Member's funding packages every time we win a wage gain.

While we sincerely hope to reach an agreement through conciliation, every indication suggests the Employer will continue to forestall negotiations, prolonging the process well into the summer and compromising our ability to negotiate financial relief for those members making as little as \$850 a month in May, June, July, and August.

*We urge members to come out next week and vote 'Yes' in the strike mandate vote. A strong mandate will help ensure that conciliation does not become yet another empty gesture!*

#### **Meetings to discuss the strike mandate vote**

- **Friday March 9** from **2.30 to 5.30 pm** in the **Lassonde Building (LAS) in room C** (note this building used to be the Chemistry Science & Engineering Building [CSE])
- **Monday March 12** from **10am to 1pm** in the **Renaissance Room in Vanier's Office of the Master**

#### **Voting information**

- starting after the March 12th meeting and until 9pm (Keele campus only in the Vari Link)
- Voting will continue on Keele Campus in the Vari Hall link March 13-16th from 9am-5pm
- Voting at Glendon from 11-3 in front of the York Hall Cafeteria.
- In order to vote, members must provide photo ID.

For more information on the strike mandate vote, please check your mailboxes for our most recent mailout or click [here for Units 1 and 3](#), here [for Unit 2](#).

