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TORONTO, January 4, 2009 -- York University wishes to emphasize that it will not be commenting on the progress of negotiations between the University and CUPE 3903 until it is ready to shove its settlement offer down the union's throat. We are not commenting in order to ensure that none of those pesky nerds in CUPE 3903, the public, or our 50,000 students, twig to our plans too soon. Of course, we say the reason we're not commenting is to protect the integrity of the negotiation process, a process which is complex, delicate and highly iterative. But we have other plans.

Our deception is crucial for three reasons: First, it is not helpful to our precarity campaign to tell those TBA/TTP profs (To Be Announced and Tenuous Track Professors) that it is just not profitable for our corporation to let them have their Special Renewable Contracts and conversion appointments. If we allow those, where are we going to find people who can take on the workload of two full time professors for a third of the money? These TBA/TTP profs are better than a rollback Walmart bargain. We will of course show some good will and offer them TS (Teaching Scream) appointments (the acronyms are so close, they won't even realize the difference), throw in a bit more money, up the teaching load if they don't also agree to do service, and honor no research "expectation." They were so busy teaching before they barely had time for research anyway, so they won't suffer from the transition. In fact, they'll thank us for it. (And if they don't, who cares?)

Second, we don't want to run into trouble with some particularly belligerent YUFA members annoyed by our appearance of being too accommodating and anti-elitist. These guys have enough time on their hands and big enough balls to do real damage: they are capable of stuffing our inboxes with such a flurry of repetitive emails that we would have to call CNS (Computing and Network Services) to filter them out, or else the entire admin would have to open gmail accounts.

Third, and most importantly, we don't want CUPE members to get organized. With some clever window dressing we've disguised the fact that our offer hasn't effectively changed after several days of "bargaining," and that we have dropped the demands of Graduate Assistants too. (We don't pay lawyers \$400+ per hour for nothing!) We have changed the language and tweaked the figures here and there to make everybody else think that CUPE3903 is getting a deal. But we will stay quiet until the last minute before their general members meeting. We will then publish our "final offer," call the press, and tell CUPE to vote on the deal, and if they don't we'll force a ratification vote. They won't dare say no to our realistic, reasonable and sustainable offer. Not as long as we can have our way.

The Astonishing True Story of the 9th Floor

After near 50 years of working in the maintenance department at York University, J. Pilates has donated his memorabilia to the Yorkisus York at 50 archive. These are 2 fragments that tell the astonishing true story of the 9th floor.

I. I first saw the 9th floor from an enormous distance. It was a glinting line across the top of the Ross Building. In those days we called it "the great computer card in the sky." It looked just as flat and punctured through with little rectangular holes. It stood perpendicular to the sea of mud

that stretched to Keele St. This was long before any of the youngsters now decked out with sleeping bags between the 9th floor elevators, the president's office, and cement block walls were even born. In those muddy days my attention went to raking leaves, sweeping snow, and shoveling mud. I met Murray G. Ross, first president of York University. He was sitting at his desk in the middle of the field, the mud all frozen irregular and powdered with flurries. "Sir!" I said, surprised. He handed over a camera and asked if I would take his picture. Back far enough, the viewfinder framed him and the desk and frozen mud to the horizon. He shouted out: "What does university mean to you?"

Instinct said computer cards and mud were not what he was fishing for.



He continued, "A university is an institution organized and incorporated for the purpose of imparting instruction, examining students, and otherwise promoting education in the higher branches of literature, science, art, etc." He smiled kindly-like, as if he

could think of no better or hopeful thing. In front of my face, the camera shutter opened and "chush-clicked" closed.

2. The recent flair up of a long-standing listaphilia disorder forces me to make lists of everything I encounter. This makes cleaning the 9th floor arduous, but Yorkisus archivists tell me my lists are an invaluable resource. This is my account of the December sit-in on the 9th floor.

1) Monday December 15, 2008 1pm
110 people congest corridor outside the president's office.

2) At night 5 to 10 undergrads and 10 to 15 graduate students remain. Vacuuming a challenge.

3) Between Tuesday and Friday, daily number of students in corridor: 40 undergrads and 50 grads.

4) Non-student supporters who arrive and depart over the 4 days: 21.

5) Sleeping bags: 22

6) Pizzas consumed: 46

7) Coffees consumed: 207

8) Requests made to President Shoukri that the current York admin be accountable to the York community: 1 request, four days long (initiated again on January 4th, 2009 and ongoing)

9) Replies from President Shoukri: 1 single paragraph email received on Wednesday Dec. 17.

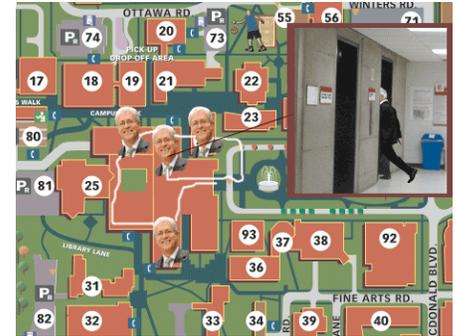
10) Due to his absence, cleaning the president's office dead easy. Cleaning the corridor remains challenging.

11) Media people thrown out: 1

12) York security officers: 13

13) Friday December 19, 2008 corridor emptied. 1 scrap of paper left by students on floor reads: "We at York, must give special emphasis to the

humanizing of man, freeing him from those pressures which mechanize the mind, which make for routine thinking, which divorce thinking and feeling, which permit custom to dominate intelligence, which freeze awareness of the human spirit and its possibilities...(Murray G. Ross)."



"Why Is This Bullshit Polluting My Inbox?"¹

Abridged responses to the York Tenure-Track Appreciation Committee's holiday gift certificate

Dear YU Special Recognition Committee:

You do not understand what "dignified neutrality" means.² It means I do not support a method of bargaining based on unrealistic demands.³ Until you grow big enough balls to face your opposition in civilized debate and accept its outcome, the likes of you will remain unwelcome on my campus.⁴ Up until now I have been impressed with CUPE's civilized behavior.⁵ What's next? Will you blow something up? Kidnap one of our children?⁶ We (the full time faculty are prepared to scab your courses. Each of us will take on one off-load half course which will completely nullify the need for the CUPE strikers. You will then be faced with only two choices, abandon the strike, or cast yourselves into uselessness. In May, most of you will be facing renewal of your contracts, and those who do not cross the picket

line will wind up on the bread line. I don't think grad students ever wanted to be part of this idiocy, but were forced into it by sharing a union. Thus, I believe close to 100% of the TAs would cross. In the very worst case scenario, no one crosses (I doubt that), you all lose your jobs (who cares), and we all teach one extra half course for one semester (big deal).⁷ Contract faculty...demand permanent slots, which you have de facto already, and will then demand lower teaching loads and time for research which [they] have not earned in open competition.⁸

You and the CUPE Executive would be deluding yourselves if you think that there is widespread sympathy for CUPE. If you wish to build solidarity with YUFA, then get your negotiating team to reduce their demands so that they are reasonable and in line with past agreements.⁹ All great universities produce fringe ideas. But the sign of academic greatness is when a novel idea is mixed with pragmatism, and not just "cooky" [sic]. This strike will end in one of three ways. Either (1) admin will resume

classes and force the strikers to either cross their own picket lines or have their courses scabbed. (2) The union will be forced back to work by Provincial legislation. (3) Fatigue will set in, and the CUPE will modify their demands to an acceptable level. But what will NOT happen is any reconsideration of the concept of tenure.¹⁰

I think [that the CUPE Executive] had better investigate the activities of your committee and to stop [you] from publishing anything further. I demand that any reference to [you] be deleted from [CUPE3903's] website and that the Executive issue a formal, public apology to the members of YUFA for this outrage. I demand that [they] eliminate all references to the York Is Us site immediately.¹¹

Collegially yours, you say?¹²

This mash-up courtesy of: 1, 7, 10) William J. Pietro; 2) Scott A. Adler; 3) Original YUFA Anti-strike Petition, penned by Bernard Lightman; 4, 6, 12) Pierre Potvin; 5, 9, 11) Bernard Lightman, response to gift certificate; 8) Michael A. Gilbert

York Is Us endeavours to redefine York University's identity for the university community and the outside world. We are calling for your modest submissions for "York's 50th: A Rumpus." Send us your small creative reflections that ransack the last 50 years at York. Submissions should not be larger than a hairless Chihuahua and be digitally transportable. Submissions will be selectively showcased in upcoming XFiles.

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