



## **CUPE 3903 Executive Committee Statement:**

### **Condemning Recent Suspensions of Enrolment at York University**

The Executive Committee of CUPE 3903 condemns the [recent wave of suspensions to Fall 2025 undergraduate program enrolments](#) at York University. The York University administration must reverse these decisions and engage in genuine consultation with students and workers about academic decision-making at York.

We call on all members of our academic and wider communities to resist the [systemic underfunding of our universities](#). This is an attack on decolonization, equity, and critical thinking. It pits workers against each other and violates democratic and collegial accountability principles.

Program suspensions that are delivered top-down by the administration and imposed on York students and educators without meaningful opportunities for feedback undermine the work of decolonizing and equity, contributing to precarity for all.

[York administration has said](#) these suspensions are intended to provide the time and space for faculty to redesign programs so that they are financially sustainable. However, determining program viability should not rely on limited metrics like York's [SHARP budget model](#), which values the declarations of majors over the wide spectrum of varied ways that students engage with the many programs and courses that the University offers. This flawed logic results in reshaping programs not for pedagogical reasons but instead to fit a University that is increasingly bureaucratic, impersonal, and corporatized.

These suspensions send a bleak message to students: education is not a path for your personal and intellectual development; it is about fitting-in to limited options, decided without regard for your experience or larger sociopolitical implications. Students should be actively consulted and engaged with about decisions that impact their education. Decolonization and fighting against social inequity require more resources and spaces, not less. Although [universities in Ontario are required](#) to focus on "the best interest of students" and "student experience" when making changes to academic programs, York is circumventing that obligation by suspending first year enrolment to programs indefinitely. Taking [the position](#) that the "suspension of admission does not require collegial governance", York's administration disregards the need to get [input from current students and recent graduates](#) who have committed their time and money to these fields of study.

These suspensions have disproportionately impacted departments that focus on social justice and transformative change. York University's purported efforts toward [Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) are undercut by freezing enrolment to programs like East Asian Studies;

Environmental Biology; Global History and Justice; Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies; Indigenous Studies; Jewish Studies; Religious Studies; Spanish Studies, and more. Given recent trends of suppressing equity in education across an array of issues [locally](#), [nationally](#), and [abroad](#), this pattern is distressing and disturbing. We know that programs like Indigenous Studies and Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies are some of the places where students find belonging and support at big impersonal universities as well as being where Indigenous knowledges and languages are taught and learned, ensuring Indigenous futurities.

The University argues smaller programs must be suspended because they are not financially viable, despite factual evidence that adds significant doubt to this claim. It is a distortion to pluck a program out of the York ecosystem and deem it a financial liability in isolation. All academic units [depend on the same infrastructure and administrative services to be operational](#), and student interests cross boundaries of departments, programs, faculties, and even campuses. We are here to assert that just as programs and fields of study are interdependent, York students and workers are united against austerity and attacks on equity.

Unilaterally suspending programs throws York into disarray and also endangers the employment of some of its most precarious workers. Program suspensions and closures implicitly involve reducing expenses through faculty being reassigned to courses that would otherwise often be taught by contract faculty, resulting in contract faculty layoffs. CUPE 3903 [contract faculty have recently argued](#) that austerity-driven admin-led restructuring at York not only causes unnecessary job losses, but also undermines the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff.

Although labour actions like strikes have been [framed by the York administration](#) as one of the reasons for financial issues, labour struggles are often actually ways of responding to and resisting the administration's pervasive top-down restructuring across the University. Unions see this in the university's repeated efforts to bury workplace issues in costly, counter-productive legal processes. The university spares no expense to impose austerity.

The increasing trend of suspensions to program enrolment will only add to these problems. It is only by being in solidarity with each other to fiercely defend our love of learning and teaching against an increasingly bureaucratic, impersonal, and corporatized university that we can build the community that we, our students, and the broader society need.

For CUPE 3903 members and allies, if you share our concerns about this alarming trend of suspensions to program enrolment at York University, we encourage you to express those concerns to the upper administration who have decreed these changes.

**Email your concerns to:**

- York University President, Rhonda Lenton, [president@yorku.ca](mailto:president@yorku.ca)
- Provost & Vice-President Academic, David Peters, [provost@yorku.ca](mailto:provost@yorku.ca)
- Dean of LA&PS, JJ McMurtry, [deanlaps@yorku.ca](mailto:deanlaps@yorku.ca)
- Senior Policy Advisor, Lisa Phillipps, [lphillipps@osgoode.yorku.ca](mailto:lphillipps@osgoode.yorku.ca)