March 3, 2015

Statement by York University President and Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri on CUPE 3903’s Strike Decision

As of Tuesday March 3rd, our University is now experiencing a labour disruption by CUPE local 3903, representing Teaching Assistants, contract faculty and Graduate Assistants.

The strike is unfortunate. It impacts the entire York community, particularly our students. I know that students and their parents are very concerned – I share their concerns.

Let me assure you that every reasonable effort was made by the University to reach a fair settlement and avoid this labour disruption. We believe a settlement is readily achievable, and we look forward to resuming negotiations.

While we face the same fiscal challenges as other institutions in the broader public and university sector, York University has not sought concessions, roll-backs or net zero compensation increases.

In fact, the compensation and other collective agreement improvements we are offering are highly competitive with, if not better than, recent settlements elsewhere. Moreover, CUPE 3903 continues to lead among similar employee groups in the postsecondary education sector in a variety of bargaining areas.

To provide clarity to our students for the duration of the strike, we have regretfully suspended classes, with limited exceptions.

However, all York facilities, including libraries, residences, computer labs, cafeterias, athletic facilities and offices will remain open during their usual operating hours. Please visit www.yorku.ca/labour2015 for more information.

The University remains committed to returning to normal operations as quickly as possible so that students can complete their courses and program requirements in as timely a way as possible.

We value our relationship with CUPE 3903. I am confident that, when we return to the bargaining table, we will reach a fair and competitive settlement, which will enable us all to get back to our priority of providing the best possible learning environment for our students.

Mamdouh Shoukri
President and Vice-Chancellor