



April 11, 2024

Office of the President

1050 KANEFF TOWER
4700 KEELE ST
TORONTO ON
CANADA M3J 1P3
T 416 736 5200
www.yorku.ca/president

Alireza Gorgani
President, York University Graduate Students' Association (YUGSA)
Sent via email: president@yugsa.ca

Dear Alireza,

Thank you for reaching out to me. I appreciate hearing YUGSA's concerns about the serious incident that took place at one of the CUPE 3903 picket lines and I want to acknowledge your concern for any community members who were involved in that incident.

The University respects that CUPE 3903 members are in a legal strike and have the right to engage in peaceful informational picketing on public property. It is worth noting that hard road pickets on York property, or on City of Toronto streets are not permissible, and all York community members also have a right to access university campuses to learn, teach, and/or work.

As you know, the University was not directly involved in the events of March 4 on the Sentinel Road picket line, and it would be inappropriate to intervene or make comments about an ongoing legal matter. However, I can confirm that York has not banned anyone from any campuses because of the incident.

The University has shared a proposed picket protocol with CUPE 3903 that would help ensure those on strike can picket safely.

With respect to the guest lecture delivered by Dr. Ayyash that was interrupted by Toronto Police Service (TPS) officers. The Provost and VP Academic Lisa Philipps, VP Equity, People & Culture Laina Bay-Cheng, and I jointly wrote to [the community](#) about this incident and worked with the University's Community Safety team to ensure such an incident does not happen again.

TPS have since acknowledged that they did not notify York before interrupting the guest lecture and are actively collaborating with Orville Wallace, Executive Director of Community Safety at York, to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU will clarify and strengthen the parameters for TPS presence on York's Toronto campuses and their involvement in university activities.



The University is actively implementing the recommendations of the [Security Services Review](#) which includes detailed recommendations on addressing bias in security service delivery, accountability, and shifting to a community-centric and care-based approach with a focus on equity. It also includes the need to ensure better coordination with and reduction of police on campus. We encourage you to reach out to Orville Wallace for more information on the progress of this implementation.

Thank you for reaching out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda Lenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Rhonda Lenton, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor

CC: Lisa Philipps, Provost & Vice-President Academic
Nona Robinson, Vice Provost Students