

# SEM in action: leading through crisis

AACRAO November 2010

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York University

YORK



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# Introduction

What would you do if your university or college was about to face a major labour disruption?

What are the many factors to consider?

Would you immediately cancel or suspend classes?

How would you support your newly admitted students?

Your current students?

What kind of data would you be mining for information?

For decision making?

How would you enhance the recruitment process?

What remediation activities would you consider?

What strategic tactics would you employ once classes start back up?

**Today we'll be sharing how York, a large, urban university, managed a 72-day strike and continued to meet its enrolment goals through and beyond.**

# Agenda

Background on York

Situational background: the Strike

Challenges

Sample considerations

- Principles and policies; Governance; Data; Staff readiness and resilience; Timeliness and response; Recruitment and retention (enrolment management); Brand

Tactics

- Infrastructure; Communications and media relations; Tuition; Petitions and Appeals; Enrolment management

Learnings

Outcomes

# Background on York

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# York University

Location - Toronto

Size – 55,000+

8000 staff and faculty

Campuses – Two plus additional satellites

Diversity – more than 150 countries, mature,  
university and college transfer, high school,  
aboriginal, male/female

Alumni – 200,000+

Undergraduate and graduate offerings – close to  
5000 courses offered per year

Domestic and international student body

Residential and commuter population – 2000+ in  
residence

# The real York

Top ranked business school → Schulich School of Business ranks

Top ranked law school → Osgoode Hall

Top ranked faculty → 91 per cent of our faculty have the highest educational qualification in their field



The largest concentration of professional humanists and social scientists in Canada.

The Canadian university on the NASA/Stanford theory of relativity experiment

Canada's lead university for the NASA 2007 Phoenix Mission to Mars.

Unique program offerings → Canada's only degree in atmospheric chemistry and space engineering program in Canada; the first and largest comprehensive faculty of Fine Arts in Canada

Lead for sustainability - and we make coffee!

# York is a source of strength



# Strike images

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# Strike images



# And a not so nice image...

LABOUR

## York University's get of jail free card

Rewards and consequences of bad-faith bargaining

TYLER SHIPLEY | April 23rd 2009



# Challenges

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# Challenge #1: timely and accurate information

?

?

?

## Challenge #2: media and rhetoric

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_4GIpE0cg0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_4GIpE0cg0)

## Challenge #3: enrolment management

Then...

Year one students just beginning

January entry looming

November 1 government reporting date passed

Refund dates passed

Now...

Regaining marketing share

Increasing entry averages

Increasing retention

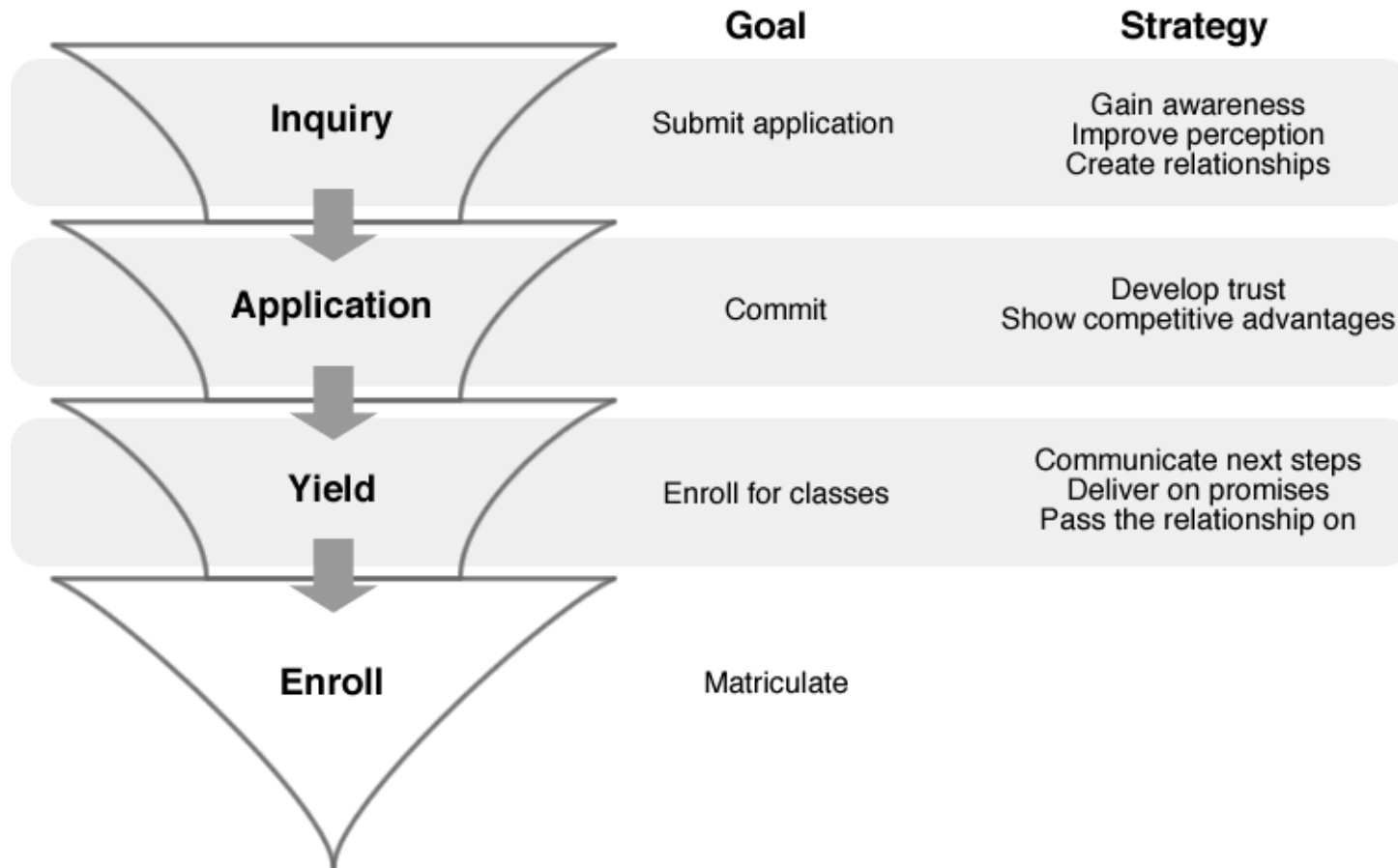
Rebuilding image

Rebuilding community

# Challenge #5: recruitment and retention

## The Admissions Funnel

grundyhomes.com, 2009



## Challenge #6: institutional complexities

Government expectations

Board of Governors

Senate

Professoriate needs

Student needs across multiple degrees/Faculties

Varying class and term shapes and sizes (1 hour lectures, 3 hour lectures, satellite locations on different schedules, different sessional date policies, etc.)

**Potential for confusion emerges...**

**Who plays what role when?**

# Challenge #7: length of strike and erosion of community engagement

The screenshot shows the National Post website interface. On the left is a vertical yellow banner with the word "ALLPOST" in large black letters and a small maple leaf icon. The top navigation bar is black with white text: "Home | Financial Post | News | Opinion | Arts | Life | Sports | Homes | Cars | Blogs | Multimedia | Classifieds". Below this is a large black banner with the word "POSTED" in yellow, with a stylized CN Tower graphic to its left, and the word "TORONTO" in yellow to its right. Underneath is a secondary navigation bar with "Main | About | Contact Editor | Subscribe RSS". The main article headline is "York University strike continues into winter semester". Below the headline is the byline: "Posted: January 04, 2009, 4:36 PM by Shereen Dindar" and tags: "toronto, Education, strike". The author is listed as "By Sarah Millar, National Post". The first paragraph of the article reads: "Thousands of York University students will remain out of classes today as the strike by teaching assistants, graduate assistants and contract faculty approaches its third month." Below the article text, a partial sentence is visible: "Today would have been the start of the winter term for students at Canada's". To the right of the article is a search bar with the text "Search..." and a dropdown menu showing "canada.com network" and "nationalpost.com". Below the search bar is a yellow banner with the word "NATION" in large black letters.

# Considerations

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# Considerations

- Media
- Governance, Policies
- Data
- Registrarial Principles
- Registrarial Tactics
- Staff readiness and resilience
- Timeliness of response
- Recruitment and retention (enrolment management)
- Brand management

## CP 24 Interview the saga begins

[http://www.cp24.com/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20081106/081106\\_york\\_strike?hub=CP24Home](http://www.cp24.com/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20081106/081106_york_strike?hub=CP24Home)

# Governance and policies

## What is your governance framework? What about academic and non-academic policies?

### Senate Executive

- Policy and guidelines framework
  - [University disruptions policy](#)
  - [University deferred standing policy](#)
  - [University exam and sessional date policies](#)
  - [Class cancellation policy](#)
  - [Grading scheme and feedback policy](#)
  - [Limits on the worth of exams](#)
  - [Repeated courses legislation](#)

### Board of Governors

- Policy and guidelines framework
  - [Registration policy](#)

### President and Vice Presidents

### Senior leadership

# Senate Web site

## York Secretariat

### LABOUR DISRUPTION: ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SENATE POLICIES

#### KEY INFORMATION ABOUT ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- [Academic Disruption Ended: Declaration of the Resumption of Academic Activities \(January 29/09\)](#)
- [Post-Strike Remediation: Additional Information \(January 29/09\)](#)
- [Date of Resumption Communication January 25, 2009 \(January 25, 2009\)](#)
- [A Special Message to the Community from the Executive Committee of Senate on Remediation and Accommodation \(January 21, 2009\)](#)
- [University-Wide and Faculty-Specific Information on Suspension of Academic Activities: Definition, Extent and Exceptions \(UPDATED: January 21, 2009\)](#)
- [Academic Remediation: Accommodations, Adjustments and Modifications Bulletin 6 \(UPDATED January 8, 2009\)](#)
- [December Academic Activities \(Dec 9\)](#)
- [Day 14: Senate Executive Update on Course Remediation \(Nov 19\)](#)
- [Declaration of Disruption \(Nov 6\)](#)
- [Extension of Drop Date \(Nov 5\)](#)
- [Class Cancellation Announcement \(Nov 4\)](#)
- [Suspension of Academic Activities \(Oct 23\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(Division of Students\)](#)

#### SENATE POLICIES

- [Disruptions Policy](#)

•Role of Senate Executive

•Participation of Registrar

•Role of senior leadership

•Academic communication and related remediation management

# Data

**What data do you have?**

**How do you ensure data becomes useful information?**

Office of Institutional Research and Analysis

- Enrolment management reporting
- Institutional reporting
- [York fact book](#)
- Your own data (e.g. Ask an Expert)

# Tactics during and after the strike

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# Registrarial principles

## Principle 1: Focus on students

- Monitor all channels of communication for insights and information (including social media)
- Provide information to the extent possible

## Principle 2: Focus on staff

- Keep meetings to a minimum
- Identify key roles early on
- Shorten approval processes
- Keep people informed / provide messaging
- Leverage important strategic partnerships

## Principle 3: Focus on the business paradigm

- How can we change our business processes in a manner that best suits student needs without additional resources, additional time or compromising quality?
- What long term changes might be considered and emerge as a result?
- Consider traditional approaches but don't be hampered

# Specific registrarial tactics

## **During the strike**

- Staffing
- Sessional modelling
- Strike communications and media relations

## **After the strike**

- Tuition
- Petitions and Appeals
- Enrolment management
- Rebranding York
- Communications

# Tactics during the strike

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# Staffing

**Is it clear who handles student communication? Which area actually has the capacity? Which committees, teams or working groups (systematic touchpoints) have you established that will serve you well in good times and bad?**

Division of students:

Registrar's Office, Student Financial Services, Client Services, Admissions/Recruitment

- Relevance of each area varied by timing and event

Essential teams:

- Academic Scheduling team
- Communications team
- Systems team

Registrarial meeting mechanisms?

-Regular bi-weekly meetings supplemented by area specific tactical meetings

-One point of contact (with a back up) for dealing with senior administration

# Sessional date modelling

**Which team is best poised to respond quickly in a crisis like this?**

**Academic scheduling and systems**

Close to 100 models created over a 72 day period

Considerations:

- Practical considerations (sampling)
  - 12 meets minimum plus exam period
  - Stop outs for particular holidays
  - Classes/exams on weekends and evenings
  - Study day – one day minimum
  - 42 exam periods minimum
  - 3 exams in one day (versus 4)
  - Need for remediation by Faculty or program – flexibility – e.g. law, education, nursing

*“A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting its shoes on.”*

*- Mark Twain*

# Communication During A Crisis



Best practices in risk and crisis communication (National Center for Food Protection and Defense, <http://www.fpd.umn.edu>).

# Scope of Student Communications

The Registrar's Office coordinated communications to all students on the following matters:

- Senate academic decisions
- Impacts to academic and financial dates
- Availability of registrarial and campus services
- Financial issues
- Academic remediation plans

Not included in this scope:

- Media relations: handled by central Communications & Marketing
- Employee/staff matters: handled by Human Resources
- Overall university communications handled centrally

## Who is your team? What are their roles?

Content  
Development;  
Review and  
Approval

- Vice President, Marketing & Communications
- Vice President, Students
- University Secretary (for academic issues)
- University Registrar

Execution

- Associate Registrar, Systems & Communications
- Manager, Registrarial Communications
- Director, Print & E Media Communications
- Various Faculty and Departmental contacts

# Planning Ahead

## **How do you make sure you are ready to launch communications quickly?**

- Plan for communications as soon as it appears that a disruption is very likely
- Registrarial Communications put the infrastructure in place:
  - established a Web site
  - developed content and coordinate reviews and approvals
  - process and procedures for updating communications
  - ensured we were poised to “go live” as soon as necessary
- Procedures were established
  - all communications approved by the designated group of senior executive members before publication
  - calling trees, communication lines were established; secured “on call” individuals to handle urgent requirements on a 24/7 basis

# Communication Channels

## What channels to use for official communications?

- Our primary tool for communications to current students was the York University Web-site
  - used existing tools to point students to important bulletins and information
  - developed a dedicated “micro-site” to gather all information needed
  - protocol was that any communications about impacts to current students would either be hosted on the micro-site or linked to from one of our FAQ pages
- E-mail was also used when we wanted to ensure all students received critical or important information

# Overview of the Site

- Laid out as an “FAQ” (Frequently Asked Questions) site
  - Initially focused on departments within the Division of Students
- High level categories at launch date:
  - General Questions
  - Admissions
  - Current Student Questions
  - Glendon Student Services (another campus in city)
  - Sport & Recreation
  - Student Community Development
  - Career Center
- Bulletins
  - Links to important information elsewhere on site

# Sample General Questions

**DIVISION OF STUDENTS**

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**General Questions**

- [Where can I find out information about the labour disruption?](#)
- [What Senate Policy governs academic activities in the event of a strike?](#)
- [What decisions have been made in the event of a strike?](#)
- [Is the University closed?](#)
- [Will the Office of the Vice-President be open during a strike?](#)
- [Will departments within the division be operating during a strike?](#)
- [Will classes and other academic activities be cancelled during a strike?](#)
- [Will Glendon be affected?](#)
- [Will other academic programs, for example, online courses, distance education, Nadal Management Centre, Osqoode PDP, YUELI, continue during a strike?](#)
- [How long is the labour disruption expected to last?](#)
- [What will happen to the academic year?](#)
- [What about other services such as parking, food services, housing etc.?](#)

**Added Nov. 4, 2008**

- [Are both tutorials and lectures cancelled?](#)
- [Can I continue to visit my on-campus doctor or use other services on campus?](#)
- [I am a student attending Seneca@York Campus; will I be able to access the Seneca buildings?](#)
- [Will the strike affect public transit entering Keele Campus?](#)
- [Is the Union permitted to have picket lines?](#)
- [Is the Union permitted to have picket lines on University property?](#)

**Where can I find out information about the labour disruption?**  
For updates on negotiations, [click here](#). [\(top\)](#)

**What Senate Policy governs academic activities in the event of a strike?**  
The Senate Policy on the Academic Implications of Disruptions or Cessations of University Business Due to Labour Disputes or Other Causes (Senate Policy 008). The policy can be found on the [University Secretariat](#) Web site. [\(top\)](#)

**What decisions have been made in the event of a strike?**  
Consistent with the guiding principles of academic integrity, fairness and timely

**ASK**  
a Student Services Expert

Type your complete question here

[Top 10 Questions](#) **GO!**

**Bulletins**

[Senate Decision Updates](#)

[Latest Updates](#)

[Negotiations Updates](#)

[Senate Policy 008](#)

**Fall/Winter 2008-2009 Session**

- [Course Timetables](#)
- [Enrolment Guide](#)
- [Fall Exam Schedule](#)

[Important Dates](#)

[Student Client Services](#)

[Student Financial Services](#)

[Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling](#)

Useful Links

Publications

• *What decisions have been made in the event of a strike?*

• *Is the University closed?*

• *How long is the labour disruption expected to last?*

• *What will happen to the academic year?*

• *Will the strike affect public transit entering Keele Campus?*

• *Is the Union permitted to have picket lines?*

# Sample Current Student Questions

**DIVISION OF STUDENTS**

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**Current Students - Office of the Registrar and Student Financial Services**

- [I've heard that all deadlines will be extended due to the strike including drop dates for full refunds. Is this true?](#)
- [I have a mid-term exam; should I attend?](#)
- [What is the impact of the official examination schedule during the month of December?](#)
- [How do I hand in assignments if I don't want to cross the picket line?](#)
- [Where should I pick up my OSAP documents during the strike?](#)
- [Can I still apply for scholarships and bursaries?](#)
- [Will I be able to request a transcript?](#)
- [When will transcripts be available?](#)
- [I have applied to study elsewhere next year and the deadline for submitting grades is coming up. Do other universities know what is happening at York?](#)
- [Will I be able to drop a course without receiving a grade?](#)
- [I want a refund on my dropped courses, how do I get one?](#)
- [Can I submit a financial petition?](#)
- [How do I arrange for deferred standing in order to complete my final course work?](#)
- [What is deferred standing?](#)
- [Will a strike affect my graduation status?](#)
- [Will the deadline for the final exam/deferred standing agreement be extended?](#)
- [Due to the extension of the term I find myself in financial need, what do I do?](#)
- [How will my OSAP entitlement be affected by a strike?](#)

**Added Nov. 4, 2008**

- [I have been scheduled to write a test/exam in the Alternate Exam Centre; should I attend?](#)
- [I am scheduled to write a test/exam \(excluding MAKE-UP tests/exams\) in the Alternate Exam Centre; what happens if academic activities are suspended during the class writing time?](#)
- [What happens if academic activities are suspended due to a labour disruption and I am scheduled to write a MAKE-UP test/exam in the Alternate Exam Centre?](#)
- [If my instructor is part-time, will I be able to communicate with them at all through e-mail during the strike?](#)

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**I've heard that all deadlines will be extended due to the strike including drop dates for full refunds. Is this true?**  
Any deadline date that passed prior to the commencement of the strike stands. Please check the [Current Students](#) Web site for updates. ([top](#))

- *What is the impact to the official examination period in December?*
- *Will a strike affect my graduation status?*
- *I want a refund on my dropped courses; how do I get one?*
- *When will transcripts be available?*
- *I have a mid-term exam; should I attend?*

## Other FAQ areas

### Sports & Recreation:

- *I am a student athlete, will my varsity events be impacted by a strike?*

### Student & Community Development

- *Will I still be able to access counselling and disability services during a strike?*

### Career Center

- *I have already booked an interview practice session. Will I still be able to attend it?*

# Managing Changing Information

## How will changing information be managed?

- As we received more questions and feedback from students or the community in general, more Q&A was added to the site
- Updates to information were indicated by putting a date next to the new or updated questions so students could easily see something new was added
- As the strike progressed and became more prolonged, new issues arose and we added more information to the site for students
- With time even though there was uncertainty at some levels, in other ways there was more clarity, more decisions being made and more concrete information could be provided to students

# Evolution of the Site

November 2008  
Strike began: Nov 7

- very early stages of the strike
- concerns about how long the strike might last
- requests for refunds
- concerns about service availability and immediate impacts

December 2008  
Month 2 of strike

- information for students on how to keep up with their studies
- remediation information answering “what if” type questions for students
- additional concerns for students who may be starting in Jan

January 2009  
Month 3 of strike;  
disruption ended Jan 29

- students wanted more concrete details about how this would impact the academic year
- wanted to know the revised sessional dates
- financial concerns were escalating

February 2009  
Classes resumed Feb 2

- site evolved into a “Back to Class” site with clear information on remediation, sessional dates, impacts to summer, etc.

# Keep Up With Your Studies!

## Frequently Asked Questions - Labour Disruption

Home

General Questions

Admissions

Current Students

Glendon Student Services

Alumni

Sport and Recreation

Student Community Development

Career Centre

### Keep Up With Your Studies!

> Academic Support - Faculties

> Academic Support - Colleges

> Other Services

## DIVISION OF STUDENTS

### Keep Up With Your Studies!

**During the strike, there are still many opportunities for students to advance their academic work. Put yourself in the best possible place for when classes resume.**

- If you had fallen behind in your work, use some of the time to catch up
- Make sure you're up to date in all required readings and assignments
- Go over your class notes and reading notes so that they're a good source of information for studying for upcoming tests and exams
- Use your text books and study guides by answering the end-of-chapter questions and problems
- Get ahead by beginning your research for papers and assignments that are coming up
- Keep a list of questions you have for your instructors regarding study materials
- Consider using common online services such as Facebook to engage in online collaboration and study

**Be physically active; exercise is a great way to reduce stress.**

Visit the [Sport and Recreation](#) facilities; they're open normal hours.

**Make use of existing academic support services.**

Many services continue to be available from the Faculties and the colleges, and the libraries are open. In general, the [advising centres](#) for both undergraduate and graduate students are open in the Faculties. Call ahead and book an appointment if you need to see an academic adviser. For all other departments, find contact information online by using the [York Directory](#).

In addition, click on a sub-category to find the information related to that area.

- [Academic Support - Faculties](#)
- [Academic Support - Colleges](#)
- [Other Services](#)

# Remediation

Faculties • Libraries • Glendon Campus • York U Lions • Campus Maps • York U Organization • Directory

## Frequently Asked Questions - Labour Disruption

Home  
General Questions  
Admissions  
Current Students  
**> Remediation - updated!**  
Glendon Student Services  
Alumni  
Sport and Recreation  
Student Community Development  
Career Centre  
Keep Up With Your Studies!

## DIVISION OF STUDENTS

### Academic Remediation (updated Dec. 18, 2008)

The remediation information issued by the Executive Committee of Senate on Dec. 2, 2008 has been updated and revised by the Executive Committee on Dec. 18, 2008. The full document in PDF format is available [here](#). These FAQs identify the accommodations available to students and adjustments and modifications that have been made or will be made once the disruption is over and reflect formal approval of changes to sessional dates and academic regulations. These FAQs will be updated regularly to reflect decisions about changes to schedules and academic regulations as they are finalized.

**Please note:** There are separate remediation plans for Osgoode Hall Law School and incoming or outgoing exchange students of Schulich School of Business. For detailed information on those remediation plans, visit [My Osgoode Web site](#) or contact Schulich's [Student Services and International Relations](#).

### Principles of remediation

- [What is the meaning of "remediation" and "remedial actions"?](#)
- [What is York's remediation policy?](#) (added Dec. 18, 2008)
- [Who is responsible for remediation?](#)

### Resumption of the fall term / notice of class resumption

- [When will fall term classes resume and how much notice will we get?](#) (added Dec. 18, 2008)

### Academic activities in January 2009

- [Will classes resume on Jan. 5, 2009?](#) (added Dec. 18, 2008)

# Meanwhile.....

## **The impact of unofficial communications needs to be acknowledged.**

- Students were using social networking as a tool to share their own information and frustrations
- Keeping an eye on what was being asked and/or shared on blogs, Facebook and web pages was critical in order to react quickly to any misinformation as well as formulate new FAQ's for students
- Community was bombarded with messaging, and quite often misinformation, from student associations, the union local, faculties, local news outlets etc.

# Facebook

facebook Search

York University Anti-Strike group. [Join](#)

Wall Info Discussions Photos

**Moshe 'Momo' Grunfeld** Did you go to York during the 2008-2009 strike? Have any free time next week from Wed the 21st-Fri. the 23rd? PLEASE come attend the certification motion hearing for the York Class Action at Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen St. W, Toronto, On. TELL YOUR FRIENDS!!  
14 July at 12:05 · [Flag](#)

**Moshe 'Momo' Grunfeld** [http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=10150211117940554](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150211117940554)  
14 July at 12:05 · [Flag](#)

**Moshe 'Momo' Grunfeld** [http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=10150211117940554](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150211117940554)  
12 July at 13:43 · [Flag](#)

**Moshe 'Momo' Grunfeld** IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE CLASS ACTION AGAINST YORK UNIVERSITY  
12 July at 13:45 · [Flag](#)

**Rikki Du Heaume** Who organised the anti-strike campaign my fe college is i a situation where the teachers are balloting to strike and as the sign in the pic says our time our money our education. Therefore can someone pm me with advice on organising an anti strike campaign  
29 April at 11:42 · [Flag](#)

**Kriss Bacon** York U Student Elections - 2010 the group. consider joining if your interested in current and on going information on student government elections. <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=266017272110&ref=ts>  
02 February at 18:29 · [Flag](#)

**Izeis Maher** from Egypt marry Christmas and happy new year 2010  
[http://www.facebook.com/photo\\_search.php?oid=43957077558&view=all](http://www.facebook.com/photo_search.php?oid=43957077558&view=all)  
26 December 2009 at 09:42 · [Flag](#)

**Franklin Richards** Hurrah! The evil, moronic members of CUPE 3903 have had their local taken over by CUPE National. The reasons are, apparently, shady bookkeeping, money that can't be accounted for, and the intimidation practices that we all got to know last year.  
CUPE douchebag mouthpieces such as Graham Potts, Chelsea Flook and Cat Ash...  
See more  
07 November 2009 at 10:42 · [Flag](#)

**Information**

Category:  
Student Groups · Political Groups










Description:  
On November 6, 2008, CUPE Local 3903, representing contract faculty, teaching assistants and graduate assistants, went on strike at York University, resulting in the cancellation of classes for York's 50,000 students.

YorkNothostage is a group of York University undergraduate students who joined to oppose the strike at York and fight for a fast and fair settlement of the labour dispute. We also opposed the decision of the York Federation of Students, the undergraduate student union, to...  
[\(read more\)](#)

Privacy type:  
Open: All content is public.

- Established by a first-year business school student, at its height the “anti-strike” Facebook group had over 5000 members; the group admin had an accompanying web site
- The site had over 1000 active Discussion topics
- Viewing the topics was one way of identifying the issues and concerns students had so that we could ensure FAQ’s were augmented
- *Important:* no one on our team was part of the group or actively engaged in discussions online

# Facebook...continued

Show: <input type="button" value="All group types"/>		
	Name: <b>Support CUPE 3903 in Bargaining</b> Type: Organisations Members: 1,715 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>3903</b> Type: Organisations Members: 183 members	<a href="#">Request to join</a>
	Name: <b>I support striking CUPE 3903</b> Type: Common Interest Members: 745 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>York University Students Against CUPE 3903 Strike</b> Type: Student Groups Members: 508 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>Baris Karaagac for CUPE 3903 Treasurer</b> Type: Organisations Members: 75 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>CUPE 3903 Democratic Membership Committee</b> Type: Organisations Members: 127 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>CUPE 3903 STRIKE VIDEO York University</b> Type: Common Interest Members: 34 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>Striking profile pictures supporting striking CUPE 3903</b> Type: Common Interest Members: 59 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>
	Name: <b>Anti-Union and Anti-CUPE 3903</b> Type: Student Groups Members: 60 members	<a href="#">Join Group</a>

- Over 50 Facebook groups were created in support of or in opposition to the striking unit
- The online community often had information well before we were aware of it
- Students posted e-mails from profs and deans, links to news stories etc.
- Lesson learned: it is impossible to control the message

# Blogs

**York -- Day** [entries|friends|calendar]

**York University**  
[ website|York University ]  
[ userinfo|livejournal userinfo ]  
[ calendar|livejournal calendar ]

**Went for a drive-about.** [02 Dec 2008|02:37am]  
So what's with the so called picket lines of steel? I drove out to York campus today around 4pm and to my dismay found no picket line. I was hoping to see what they'd have to say to me--actually I was hoping to be mean to them.  
Have they given up? It doesn't look very good on their part.  
[19 comments](#) | [post comment](#)

**POSSIBLY stupid GO Bus question** [02 Dec 2008|04:00am]  
I checked the GO transit website & I was just wondering for the Guelph transit route (from Bramalea) stops at near York.  
Stupid GO website doesn't have it posted... just has the Pickering & Milton stuff on it.  
Thanks & sorry if this is a repost or so monotonous from previous posts.  
[1 comment](#) | [post comment](#)

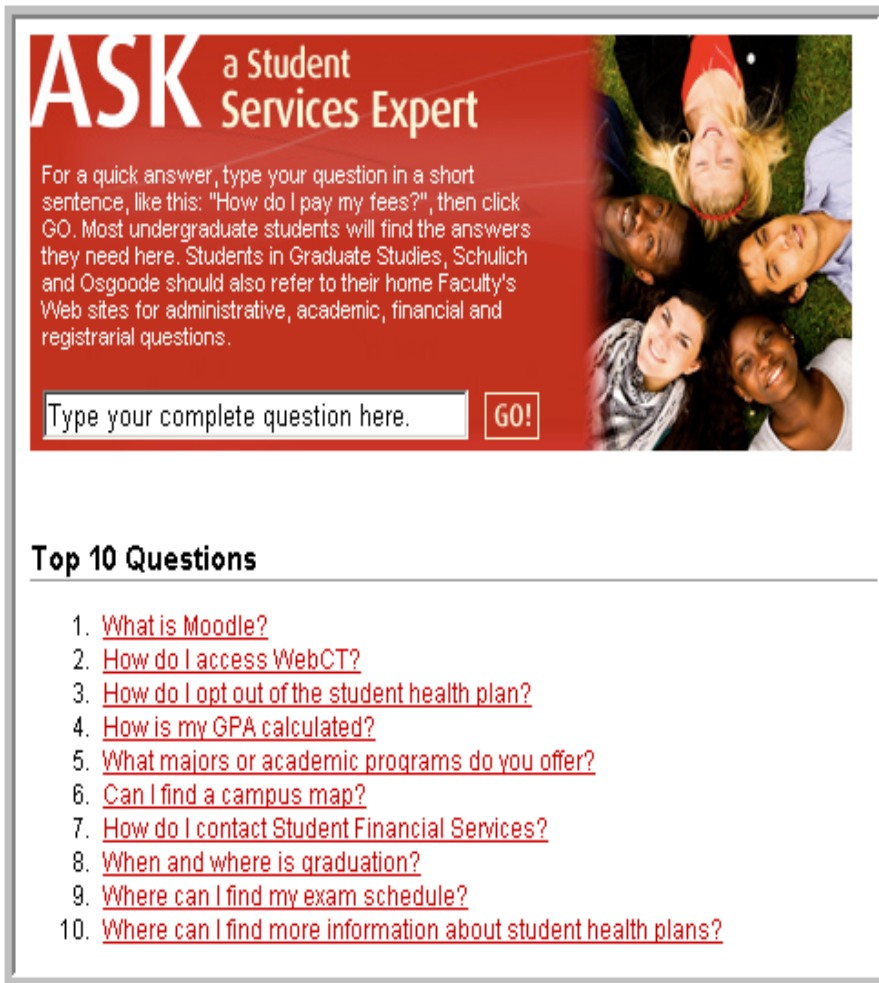
**The Strike Continues** [02 Dec 2008|08:49am]  
So much for thinking that both sides were talking. Look at the latest news!  
**Mediator confirms no talks scheduled between York, CUPE 3903**  
**TORONTO, December 1, 2008** -- Below is the text of a statement by the mediator in the labour negotiations between York University and CUPE 3903. The statement is reproduced here in its entirety:  
*"For Release By the Parties. 8:30 p.m. December 1, 2008*  
*The mediator has advised the parties that although there has been some movement in recent days, the parties remain far apart on the key issues in this dispute and that a settlement is not close at hand.*  
*Therefore, there are no further negotiations scheduled at this time.*  
*The mediator has asked the parties to review their respective positions and will remain in contact with the parties with a view to returning to the bargaining table if and when a reasonable prospect for settlement exists.*

- At least one blog still exists on livejournal that is run by a group of students
- The group is highly moderated and therefore comments were less political and more questions about “what does this mean to me”
- This site was also regularly checked to keep pace with student concerns
- Being familiar with one of the blog owners, we were able to correspond to post links to our updates from time to time and correct misinformation

# E-Mail

- E-mail was used to send messages to the entire student population when important updates were available
- Examples:
  - suspension of academic activities due to labour disruption
  - extensions to academic or financial deadlines
  - messages from the president
  - declaration of end to academic disruption
- minimizing the amount of e-mail sent ensured that when students received them, they were aware that it was an important update and that follow up action may be required

# “Ask A Student Services Expert”



**ASK** a Student Services Expert

For a quick answer, type your question in a short sentence, like this: "How do I pay my fees?", then click GO. Most undergraduate students will find the answers they need here. Students in Graduate Studies, Schulich and Osgoode should also refer to their home Faculty's Web sites for administrative, academic, financial and registrarial questions.

Type your complete question here. **GO!**

**Top 10 Questions**

1. [What is Moodle?](#)
2. [How do I access WebCT?](#)
3. [How do I opt out of the student health plan?](#)
4. [How is my GPA calculated?](#)
5. [What majors or academic programs do you offer?](#)
6. [Can I find a campus map?](#)
7. [How do I contact Student Financial Services?](#)
8. [When and where is graduation?](#)
9. [Where can I find my exam schedule?](#)
10. [Where can I find more information about student health plans?](#)

- York uses “Intelliresponse” which operates our “Ask a Student Services Expert” service
- Students ask questions in plain language and get a response
- We added a “strike” question to the knowledge database which, if used by students, would get them to a response linking them to updates and our mini-site
- The strike question was accessed by users over 11500 times
- The strike mini-site itself logged over 3000 visits per day during the strike

# Tactics after the strike

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## Ontario legislature ends York University strike

Last Updated: Thursday, January 29, 2009 | 11:04 AM ET Comments 125 Recommend 61  
CBC News



The Ontario legislature passed back-to-work legislation Thursday, ending the 12-week strike at York University.

All 50,000 York students should be back in class on Monday. About 5,000 students already returned to class earlier this week.

The bill passed by a vote of 61 to eight — with only the NDP members of the legislature voting against it.

About 100 strikers marched outside the legislature, while politicians inside were passing the bill.

Spokesperson Tyler Shipley said the union is angry the government of Premier Dalton McGuinty has taken over

# Resumption of Academic Activities

Post-Strike "Mobilization"					
+	Task	Who	Priority	Notes	Status
	<b>Pre-Work</b>			<i>Work to be done in preparation of announcement of end to strike</i>	
1.	Prepare post-strike website "shell"	Angel			Done
2.	Prepare important dates webpage "shell"	Angel			Done
3.	Prepare all probable date scenarios	Various		Sessional dates: Sherry Refund dates: Lee Drop dates: Sherry	Done
4.	Solicit answers for student FAQ's	Lucy			Done
5.	Provide content for alternate exam site update to Angel	KJ			Done
6.	Prepare lists of alternate exam students	KJ		For <del>notebox</del> purposes	Done
7.	Update all cohort lists for use by Donna in target x	Lucy			Done
8.	Prepare text/content for notes/bulletins	Lucy			In progress
	<b>IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATIONS</b>			<i>Must be done upon announcement of end of strike.</i>	
9.	Post link to central bulletin: - <del>current students page (and all other CS pages)</del> - registrar's bulletins - <del>important dates page</del> - <del>exams page(s)</del> - <del>what's new at sfs</del> - <del>osap announcements</del>	Angel	1	Must link into main announcement by Senate	All done ex Registrar's home page bulletins....
10.	Remove bulletins on above pages labeled: - 3903 Strike - Keep Up with Your Studies	Angel	1		Done
11.	Immediate update to disruption site: - remove sidebar/links to all pages except: Home Page and Academic Remediation	Angel	1	To develop a note to post on those pages re date for commencement of classes and when all information on site will be updated with non-strike	Done

## Planning and coordination continues even beyond the crisis event

- As planning began for resumption of academic activities, communications were being planned along side

- A "Back to Class" version of the mini-site was in development for several weeks with important FAQ's for returning students

- The academic dates underwent several revisions based on various scenarios and the Web site was under constant review

- Also being planned were communications for financial assistance, exams and more

# Post-Strike Communications

## **Understand what students will need to know once the disruption is over.**

Once the labour disruption ended, the challenge of communicating the impacts and changes and services for students began including:

- revised academic calendar for fall/winter as well as upcoming summer session
- remediation activities
- financial assistance programs such as:
  - financial hardship bursary
  - extended government financial aid assistance
  - the “tuition credit opportunity”

# Tuition Credit Opportunity

## **How do you help mitigate the costs and impacts to students of the disruption?**

The Tuition Credit Opportunity gave students who were enrolled in fall or full year courses the opportunity to drop their course without academic penalty and use the financial value towards a future enrolment

Designed by students

Refunded tuition value only

Had to be done by specified deadlines

Could not get a financial refund; amount had to be used towards an enrolment in the following academic year

# The Tuition Credit Opportunity

The **Tuition Credit Opportunity (for F and Y 2008-2009 dropped courses)** for York students, is intended to alleviate the financial stress associated with the extension of the Fall/Winter 2008-2009 Session. It applies to undergraduate students who withdrew from F and Y Term course(s) with the intention to re-enrol in the Winter 2009 Term, the Summer 2009 Session and/or the Fall/Winter 2009-2010 Session.

The deadline to take advantage of the Tuition Credit Opportunity has now passed. The answers below will provide useful information to the students who applied for the credit.

## Eligibility

- [Who was eligible to receive a Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)
- [What are some of the implications of de-enrolling and/or dropping courses?](#)
- [How will I know that you received my application?](#)
- [Was there a limit to the number of courses I could drop?](#)
- [I dropped an F Term course after I received a grade. What is the impact of that drop?](#)

## Your Student Account

- [When was the tuition credit posted on my Student Account Online Statement?](#)
- [Will I still be responsible for associated course fees, health plan fees, ancillary fees and student referenda fees? Are they a part of the Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)
- [Why was the tuition credit amount posted to my account not equal to the amount I paid for the course when I enrolled?](#)
- [Did amounts I had outstanding for residence and winter tuition fees affect my eligibility for the Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)
- [What if I paid my tuition due net of the amount I applied to receive as a tuition credit?](#)
- [My tuition was paid via a staff, seniors or dependant waiver. Would I still eligible for this credit?](#)
- [Do I have to pay my \\$450 enrolment deposit for the summer or fall/winter sessions if I have applied for the Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)
- [I have applied for government financial aid \(e.g. OSAP\). What is the impact of receiving the Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)

## Using Your Tuition Credit Opportunity

- [Will the tuition credit apply to any course\(s\) or must I re-enrol in the course I dropped?](#)
- [What happens to any remaining credit that is unused at the end of April 2010?](#)
- [I do not plan on attending any courses at York in Summer 2009 or Fall/Winter 2009-2010. Can I get a refund for the amount of the Tuition Credit Opportunity?](#)

## Questions Regarding Your TCO Application

- [I have a question regarding the tuition credit amount posted to my account. Who do I contact?](#)
- [I dropped F and Y Term courses but missed the deadline\(s\) to apply for the Tuition Credit](#)

## Communicating to students

- We decided to continue using the “FAQ” format to deal with issues arising from the labour disruption even after classes resumed

- Information about the Tuition Credit for example was embedded in our “Back to Class” site and pointed students to information on how they could take advantage of the credit

- Well over 10,000 applications were received from students

# Petitions and Appeals

## Undergraduate Academic Petitions

The information contained on this page applies **only** to students in the following Faculties:

- Education
- Fine Arts
- Health
- Science & Engineering

Students in other Faculties should refer to the following locations:

- Environmental Studies - [Faculty of Environmental Studies Web site](#)
- Glendon - Office of Student Programs, C105 York Hall, Glendon campus
- Liberal Arts & Professional Studies - [Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Web site](#)
- Osgoode - Student Services, Osgoode Hall Law School
- Schulich - [Schulich School of Business Web site](#)

**What is a Petition?**

Submitting a Petition

What is Petitioned?

Deadlines

Notification / Forms

A petition is a written request for the waiver of a Faculty's academic regulation or deadline. Before initiating a petition, you are advised to review University and Faculty rules and regulations as stated in the [Undergraduate Calendar](#), as well as petition deadlines.

If you experience extremely difficult circumstances (e.g. death of an immediate family member or serious documented medical problems), which lead you to drop your courses after a refund deadline, you may request a credit/refund of your course fees by appending a [Financial Petition Form](#) as part of your academic petition package submission. Financial Petitions are adjudicated by Student Financial Services, not by Faculty petitions committees.

- Established a senior level committee
- Developed refined messaging and follow up
- Considered the importance of pre-existing disclaimers

# Enrolment management

Market share declines → 14% to 8%

1<sup>st</sup> choice application declines by 6.5% → now 8.5%  
but still lower than our 10% market share

Declines in offers - 31% declined our offer and 28%  
didn't apply → the strike was the top reason for not  
attending York

# Rebranding York

Distortion of brand image

**York = strikes**

**versus**

**York = dynamic, innovative, unique**

# Lessons learned

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# Lessons Learned

## **Communications frameworks help facilitate decision making**

- If you can't answer the basic “how, what, where, and when” questions for communications, something may be missing in the process
- However it is okay to say “we don't know that yet” – accept uncertainty in the process

# Lessons Learned...continued

## Social networking is very powerful

- You can't control all the messaging
- Tracking social networking can be a powerful tool – assign someone to keep track of what's being shared
- Social networking is a key tool for students; learn how to use it to your advantage
  - *York U now has a significant official presence on Facebook with over 20 pages covering new students, prospective students, student affairs, faculties and registrarial services*

# Lessons Learned...continued

## **Make it easy for students to find the “official source” of information**

- With so many people officially and unofficially involved in communications, students need to know where the credible source of information can be found
- Centralize student communications; create the “hub” and in a crisis, collaborate to give students the one-stop-shop for their answers

# Lessons Learned...continued

## **In a crisis situation process is important**

- It is tempting to rush and not take the time to keep a list, hold daily meetings or make a plan
- The plans mitigate risk and confusion overall and maintain clarity and some level of control in a crisis
- Designate leads, keep notes, delegate tasks, check-in frequently and after all is over, keep your archive for the next crisis

# Lessons learned....systems

## **Know your systems capacity to serve you.**

- York University uses a “home-grown” student information system
- Home-grown enrolment system is run by a flexible set of dates that users can control and set
- A number of online tools with ability to easily control messaging
- Excellent working relationship with our partners in I.T.

# Lessons learned....tuition

**Tuition is more than just the cost of a program –  
What mechanisms do you have that help with  
managing the tuition experience for students?**

Refund dates

Tuition Credit Opportunity

Petitions Committees

Discretionary authority to waive fees

Messaging regarding fees

## Lessons learned...petitions and appeals

### **What kind of oversight committees do you have? Who sits on them? Why is this important?**

Establish a senior level committee

Ensure transparent and consistent appeals messaging that is laddered

Leverage existing processes and protocols; make refinements where appropriate

Consider implications of possible class action type suits

Indemnity clauses – Do you have one? Where to put it on your enrolment system? Implications for each progressive usage?

Be prepared to be over-ruled!

# Lessons learned...enrolment management

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**How do you meet strategic enrolment  
management objectives in recruitment and  
retention when dealing through or the aftermath  
of a crisis?**

# Lessons learned....legal issues

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window with the address bar displaying <http://yorkstrike2008.wordpress.com/class-action-law-suit-info/>. The page content includes:

## Class Action Law Suit Info

The law offices of Juroviesky and Ricci LLP have filed a class action lawsuit in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice against York University alleging widespread violations of the Consumer Protection Act and certain common law causes of action.

In general, the suit claims damages for losses suffered by students enrolled in full and part time programs at York University for the Fall/Winter 2008/2009 semester. For further details, please read the Press Release and the Statement of Claim (links found below).

You may join in on the class action suit by filling in a form at:  
<http://www.yorktookmymoney.com/>





The firm's website is: <http://www.jruslaw.com/>

Please read the Retention Agreement before submitting your form.

## Class Action Law Suit Against York University

The Law Offices of Juroviesky and Ricci LLP representing Jonathan Turner have launched a class action law suit against York University for the sum of \$250,000,000 (two hundred and fifty million dollars CDN) in general damages. You may join the Class Action Suit free of charge and it will not cost you any money whatsoever. Go here to join:  
<http://www.yorktookmymoney.com/>

## Recent Comments

-  [Luidasana](#) on [OSAP Discussions](#)
-  [kondit-izdelijaru](#) on [OSAP Discussions](#)
-  [TeoHa](#) on [OSAP Discussions](#)
-  [handsnpaws](#) on [Predictions on the direction a...](#)

# Today

## **Where are we today and how is York faring?**

Task Force on Student Life and Learning

White Paper Process

New University Academic Plan

Sustainability Task Force

Better Workplace Initiative

Disruption Task Force

Increasing market share

Increasing entering average

Increasing retention

.....

# Questions?

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