

Better Workplace Initiative Consultation – Phase I

July/Aug 2010



redefine **THE POSSIBLE.**

What is the Better Workplace Initiative?

The President asked Jim Thomas to undertake a consultation with the unions at York as part of the University's effort to better understand the issues that contributed to the CUPE strike. The Better Workplace Initiative builds on that initial consultation and includes the following aims:

- building a better workplace
- working collectively with unions and other employee groups to identify issues of concern and potential avenues for addressing those issues
- fostering stronger and more effective union-management relations
- seeking ways of better valuing all faculty and staff
- enhancing public confidence in York

Start with *listening* as a Phase I approach with all employee groups to get agreement on terms of reference for the BWI.

Purpose of this Presentation

- Follow-up from the Jim Thomas consultation
- Describe Phase I which is taking place in the summer and early fall 2010
- Initial discussion on draft Terms of Reference for the Better Workplace Initiative
- Discuss participation of employee group, and begin the discussion on Better Workplace
- Get input on future phases

York's Strike Reputation is its #1 Challenge

- Over past 15 years, 4 of 5 York students have experienced a prolonged strike York as 1st choice has declined over past year by 14% - 8% market share
- York as 1st choice has increased over the past year by 6.6% or 8.5% market share but remains significantly lower than our historical level of 10% market share.
- The percentage of registrants with 70 to 74% averages has increased in last four years – the above increase in 1st choice applicants provides an opportunity to address this but more work needs to be done to achieve the long term goals of the University
- The recent strike was listed as a top reason by students for not attending York (Strategic Counsel survey – reason why 31% declined York and 28% did not apply)
- Impacts enrolment, funding, student quality, ability to achieve academic objectives
- Distorts government and public view of York
 - York = strikes = not a place to go to school, instead of....
 - York is a dynamic and exciting university with many terrific and unique courses and programs

Addressing the Causes of Strikes: The Exploratory Process

- Exploratory consultation launched last summer by the President and led by Jim Thomas
- Met with all union leaders, with cross-section of senior management team, and with government
- Findings: York is one of the most highly unionized workplaces in the country
 - 90% of 8,000 person workforce belong to a union
 - Challenging – political / ideological dimension
 - CUPE 3903 working on its own internal reforms
 - Strike history has damaged union / management relationships – uncertainty re: how to engage
 - But, academic unions want to engage
- Senior management: initially focused on CUPE 3903
 - Views itself as good employer – prepared to become a better one
- Government: York is important – prepared to work with York
 - Seeking evidence York can manage its workforce without strikes

The Plan to Address Causes of Strikes – Changing the Culture

There is no single approach – many facets

Management prepared to take responsibility for the initiative

–But unions must be involved for its success

Build on successes and good practices

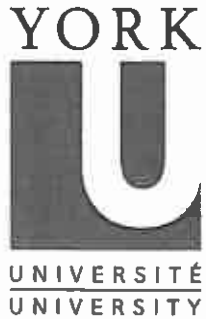
–Achieve some early goals

Action, not words

–Focus on results and outcomes

Culture change takes time and requires ongoing commitment

–York's senior management views this as a multi-year process



Elements of the Better Workplaces Plan

Better Employer – Better Workplaces

Labour Relations

- Grievance and dispute resolution processes, including mediation
- Re-invigorate/introduce new joint committees
- Research good labour relations practices
- Joint workshops on collective bargaining
- Symposium / conferences on university labour relations

Leadership Excellence

- Senior management commitment
- Leadership development in a unionized environment, including workshops by and for management
- Strategies to ensure consistency in workforce and workplace decisions
- Assessing employee and faculty engagement
- Workplace plans as part of planning process
- Sharing practices across Faculties and Divisions

Setting the Stage for.....New Conversations on Critical Topics For Example

Graduate Students

Graduate Student funding
Relationship with York

Valuing Faculty and staff Initiatives

Delivery of Teaching
White Paper
Directions

Budget
Workforce implications

Pensions

Implications of funding challenge

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What's the Vision? What would Success look like?

Employees feel more connected to York, better valued and supported

Resolution of long-standing labour relations issues

Joint processes would work better, including committees and collective bargaining

A climate of respect and trust between senior management and union leadership

–Unions would be involved / consulted on decisions that impact on the workplace

Shift from “strikes are the default outcome” to “future strikes are collectively avoidable” at York

Ultimately, a community of faculty, staff and students who believe York's strike-causing labour issues are behind us!

Where are we in the process?

- The BWI has the support of York's University Executive Committee and the Board of Governors' Executive Committee
- President has met with (will be meeting with) YUFA, CUPE, OPSEU, CPM executive members, YUSA, IUOE and OHFA to describe the initiative
- VPA/Provost Patrick Monahan and VPFA Gary Brewer are Executive Sponsors
- Management team has been formed
- Draft Terms of Reference prepared for consultation
- Phase 1 consultation with all employee groups scheduled by early September to confirm mandate and participation

Terms of Reference

Mandate

- Multi-year, pan-university initiative to develop a better workplace
- Participation of all employee groups
- Supported by senior management
- Develop Inventory of Best Practices
- Identify new initiatives
- Measuring progress against Targets and Objectives

Meetings

- Summer 2010 Phase 1 consultation
- Confirm mandate

Representation

- Management team co-sponsored by VPA/Provost and VPFA
- Confirm participation of employee groups

Annual Evaluation of Effectiveness

Communications

- Strategic in nature

Phase I Questions

Follow-up questions from the Thomas Phase:

Question 1:

What would you identify as the key or central issues in creating a better workplace in your area? What about at York overall?

Question 2:

Thinking of your idea of “better workplace” what important areas of opportunity would you have to seize in your area? What about at York overall?

Question 3:

How would you anticipate participating in this initiative?

Phase I Consultation Update

Completed and Planned:

July 14th - CUPE 3903 and 1356

July 22nd - YUFA

July 28th - YUELI/OPSEU

September 2nd – SAGE and CPM

July/Aug/Sept 2010– Other Union Groups

Aug/Sept 2010– Other Groups such as OHFA

Sept 2010– Other groups as determined in Phase I initial consultations