

January 22, 2009

York education faculty practicum placements permitted to resume

OECTA members serving as Associate Teachers for York University have been advised that the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) has lifted its suspension to permit the practicum placements of York's teacher candidates to resume.

Responding to an appeal from CUPE 3093, representing striking Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants and Research Assistants at York University, the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) has agreed to allow York teacher candidates to do their practica in Ontario elementary and secondary schools supervised by Associate Teachers.

In a letter to OTF, Christina Rosseau, Chair of the CUPE 9093 Executive Committee, wrote: "Our union has instituted a policy whereby students doing time-sensitive research on campus are permitted through the picket lines, and are understood to be crossing in solidarity. The purpose of this exemption is to ensure that our students, who are in no way responsible for the conditions we are striking against, are able to do the time-sensitive work that they need in order to graduate on time. On January 10, the CUPE 3093 Executive Committee voted that

Faculty of Education practica should fall under the same exception. We very much appreciate your support, but as one of our long-term goals as a union is the protection of quality education, we have decided that allowing these students to complete their practica and graduate on time is in line with our own aims."

OTF policy does not normally allow such practica during a labour dispute, but since the request came from the strike-bound union, OTF felt a higher moral and political obligation to honour the request.

In a memo to Unit Presidents OECTA advises that, "as CUPE has been on strike for approximately 10 weeks, teacher candidates may not have had the requisite training to assume classroom duties that faculty students have been able to undertake in the past."

OECTA's Associate Teachers are advised that OECTA holds the position that participation in practicum supervision is voluntary unless there is written direction from a school board.

Associate Teachers may contact Ed Chudak or Susan Perry for advice: 1-800-268-7230