

Senate Executive Committee Commentary on the Continuation of Classes March 2, 2018

The Senate Executive Committee met on Thursday, March 1 2018 to review and begin implementation of the Disruptions Policy. Pursuant to the Policy, the Committee has circulated a general communication indicating that a disruption appears imminent, sharing the policy and highlighting key elements. Should a disruption occur, further communication will be circulated in a timely manner with additional information and direction.

The governing principles of the policy are academic integrity, fairness to students and timely information. Academic integrity contemplates no dilution of the standards normally expected of students and as little diminution as possible in the instructional or supervisory support given to students. Fairness to students ensures that students who do not participate in academic activities during a disruption – either because they are unable to do so or because they choose not to - will not be penalized and will be given reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence, along with other remedies as are deemed necessary and consistent with academic integrity. Timely information requires that students, staff and faculty have a right to be informed in a timely manner of changed requirements, rescheduled academic activities and procedures in effect at the conclusion of a disruption.

During the first week of a disruption, normal academic regulations apply. Should it continue for seven days or longer, various actions may be taken as the circumstances require in keeping with the governing principles.

In some previous instances of labour disputes (including 2008 and 2015), the administration indicated an intention to suspend most classes at the commencement of a strike and requested the agreement of the Chair of Senate through the Executive Committee. In this case, no request has been made. In the absence of such a request, the Committee questioned whether it could unilaterally suspend all classes and considered the Disruptions Policy, the Class Cancellation policy, its terms of reference and the bicameral division of authority under the *York University Act*. It also considered whether, assuming such authority existed, a blanket suspension of classes should be undertaken. The diverse perspectives of various Faculties, faculty members and students were shared. Attention was paid to comments that had been shared on Senate-D, formal Senate communications received, the interest and intentions expressed by individual faculty members to Committee members, and significant input from undergraduate students of a desire to continue. Ultimately, the majority of the Committee was not persuaded it had authority to unilaterally suspend all classes. However, in any event, the Committee endorsed the approach taken. The Committee will, however, remain focused on developing and implementing appropriate remediation as needed.