

Annual General Meeting

York Federation of Students (YFS) – Local 68 Canadian Federation of Students
Thursday, November 28, 2019 @ 6:00PM – York University, Toronto, Ontario

1. CALL TO ORDER @ 18:30

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3. WELCOMING REMARKS

4. ANTI-HARASSMENT ADVISOR REMARKS

5. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. MOTION 2019-11-28: A01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be accepted as presented.

Moved: Babiker **Seconded:** Khan **Result:** Carries

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: A01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Motion No 4, 5, 6 to be discussed right after the Financial Statement Motion 2019-11-28: N01.

Moved: Godwin **Seconded:** Gideon **Result:** Carries

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. MOTION 2019-11-28: M01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the November 29, 2018 Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented in **APPENDIX A**

Moved: Saningong **Seconded:** Ali **Result:** Carries

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MOTION 2019-11-28: N01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE 2017-2018 Audit by Grant Thornton be

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received as presented in **APPENDIX B**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Grant Thornton be accepted as the auditors for the 2019-2020 audit.

Moved: Suresh **Seconded:** Wagam **Result:** Carries

B. MOTION TO DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

MOTION 2019-11-28: N02

WHEREAS there has been a climate emergency declared by a coalition of over 10,000 scientists across the globe; and

WHEREAS carbon pollution from fossil fuels is warming our planet and throwing natural systems out of balance; and

WHEREAS the solution begins by defending land and waterways from damage wrought by fossil fuels and other industries that cause environmental harm; and

WHEREAS bold policies include the decarbonization that limits the devastating impacts of global climate change while putting the voices of Indigenous people at the centre of the transition to a green economy; and

WHEREAS the most effective environmental justice campaigns take lead from the Indigenous people of this land; and

WHEREAS York University is complicit in contributing to the climate crisis through their investments in fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS we have seen mass mobilization around environmental justice;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the YFS launches an environmental justice campaign for the 2020-2021 year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS produces the

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materials and resources required including but not limited to:

Posters, pamphlets, social media graphics, etc.

Moved: Hawamdeh **Seconded:** Garcia **Result:** Carries (As Amended)

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: N02

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the YFS to call the university to divest from fossil fuels.

Moved: Stacey **Seconded:** Garcia **Result:** Carries

C. MOTION TO FURTHER SUPPORT THE WUSC REFUGEE INITIATIVE

MOTION 2019-11-28: N03

WHEREAS there is a profound global refugee crisis, not just limited to Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan; and

WHEREAS since 2012, refugee movements have significantly increased as there are over 70 million people that have been forcibly displaced worldwide; and

WHEREAS 3.7 million refugee youth are out of school, it is incredibly disheartening that a reluctance exists to better support the education of this population; and

WHEREAS the cost incurred through transportation loans for an individual to immigrate to Canada is on average, upwards of \$2000; and

WHEREAS it is for these very reasons that several initiatives have come to existence to allow individuals to help in ways in which the government is neglecting; and

WHEREAS there are campus based organizations including the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) that are committed to raising awareness and funds around the global refugee crisis as well as the successful resettlement of refugees to Canada; and

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WHEREAS our own university has been committed to sponsor refugees

through supporting their access to post-secondary education through the WUSC Student Refugee Program; and

WHEREAS this support is highly dependant on fundraising, donations, and a \$0.03 levy per credit;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the York Federation of Students makes a donation of \$2,000.00 to further support the WUSC Keele Refugee Students.

Moved: Ravalico **Seconded:** Bye **Result:** Carries (As Amended)

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: N03

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the York Federation of Students makes a donation of \$4,000.00 to further support the WUSC Keele Refugee Students.

Moved: Sharabiani **Seconded:** Bye **Result:** Carries

D. MOTION TO DRAFT A BY-LAW OUTLINING PROCEDURES FOR SEEKING A DEMOCRATIC MANDATE FOR STUDENT STRIKES

MOTION 2019-11-28: N04

WHEREAS the York Federation of Students has a lengthy history of advocacy and lobbying in an effort to promote accessible education; and

WHEREAS tuition fees have steadily risen in Ontario despite years of lobbying, showing that new strategies are required to win lower tuition and accessible education; and

WHEREAS the YFS membership previously voted to endorse a student strike as a critical component of building a strong and vibrant student movement; and

WHEREAS the York Federation of Students held a One-Day Student Strike on November 6, 2019; and

WHEREAS the November 6, 2019 strike had low participation relative to

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the size of the undergraduate student body, and was initiated without a strike vote; and

WHEREAS a democratic mandate from the membership through strike votes is a required process of strike organizing in labour unions and our on-campus union allies, such as CUPE 3903; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the YFS reaffirm a commitment to organizing student strikes at both Keele and Glendon campuses in order to advance the student movement for accessible education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS draft a by-law outlining the procedures by which a democratic mandate is to be sought from the YFS membership in order to initiate a student strike;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this draft by-law be brought to the next General Meeting of members for discussion and adoption; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS commit to enacting these procedures to seek a democratic mandate from the membership to initiate a One-Day Student Strike annually.

Moved: Stacey **Seconded:** Zeimeddine **Result:** Carries (As Amended)

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: N04 to remove the word “annually” from the last be it resolved clause.

Moved: Sanchez **Seconded:** Joseph **Result:** Carries

E. RESOLUTION TO ESCALATE THE FIGHT AGAINST THE OSAP CUTS AND FOR FREE EDUCATION

MOTION 2019-11-28: N05

WHEREAS the Ford government cut over 600 million dollars from funding for post-secondary education resulting in thousands of students losing access to higher education; and

WHEREAS these cuts disproportionately impact working-class students and limit our ability to pursue higher education, forced to choose between

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tuition, food, and rent; and

WHEREAS there is more than enough money to fund higher education when Doug Ford can give 2.3 billion dollars in tax cuts to his wealthy friends; and

WHEREAS the YFS has already conducted a one-day student strike on Nov 6 against the OSAP cuts and for free tuition, which was not enough to force Doug Ford to cancel the OSAP cuts and grant free tuition; and

WHEREAS it was shown through the strike movement at OCAD and Ryerson that the best way to get students involved in strike organizing is to empower them through General Assemblies;

BE IT RESOLVED that the YFS Executive continue and escalate the struggle against the OSAP cuts and for free education by committing to a three-day student strike in March 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS Executive commit to organizing two General Assemblies in January and February in order to democratically organize this strikethrough strike votes and democratic discussions on the demands of the strike; and.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS continue organizing escalating actions after the three-day strike until we defeat the OSAP cuts and win free education

Moved: Sharabiani **Seconded:** Sheika **Result:** Carries (As Amended)

Chair Ruling: Second Be It Resolved clause is out of order according to By-Laws and Not-For-Profit Act. Ruling past precedent constitutions and general assemblies have to go by by-laws, following good precedent in how the organization is run.

Motion to overrule the Chair's ruling.

Moved: Zeimeddine **Seconded:** Bolochri **Result:** Fails

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: N05

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS Executive continue and escalate the struggle against the OSAP cuts and for free education by

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committing to a three-day student strike 2020.

Moved: Defreitas **Seconded:** Sanchez **Result:** Carries

Call the Question

Moved: Momoh **Seconded:** Gideon **Result:** Carries

Amend: MOTION 2019-11-28: N05

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that YFS commits to hosting open strategy meetings to fight for free and accessible education.

Moved: Hawamdeh **Seconded:** Garcia **Result:** Carries

Call the Question

Moved: Pryce **Seconded:** Gideon **Result:** Carries

E. MOTION ON FIGHTING IMPERIALIST PROPAGANDA ON OUR CAMPUS

MOTION 2019-11-28: N06

WHEREAS an event was organized on campus for Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers to come and speak to students on November 20, 2019; and

WHEREAS the IDF directly carries out the unjust arrest and unjustified killings of Palestinian people and is responsible for the forcible displacement of millions of Palestinians since 1948; and

WHEREAS the Israeli state continues to sow division between the Israeli and Palestinian working class while driving both further into poverty within Israel for the sake of continued profit; and

WHEREAS at the November 20 rally, where both Jewish and non-Jewish students were protesting the actions of the Israeli state; members of the Jewish Defense League (JDL), a far-right organization, were present resulting in the assault of a number of students who were peacefully demonstrating; and

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WHEREAS student unions have historically played a decisive role in leading anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in Canada and have a duty to oppose Imperialism here at home

BE IT RESOLVED THAT if representatives of the Israeli state or any other imperialist power are invited to gather support for war and occupation in Palestine and elsewhere, the York Federation of Students must organize mass mobilizations of students, workers, marginalized communities in opposition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS provides material support for student activist groups fighting against imperialist propaganda by providing resources and using their multi-million dollar apparatus to lead the organizing effort; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS defend the right of students to speak freely and organize against the far-right, war, and imperialism on campus by defending students from repression by the administration or state forces.

Moved: Zeineddine

Seconded: Nasser

Result: Carries

F. MOTION TO REQUEST DONATION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

MOTION 2019-11-28: N07

WHEREAS YFS and has a demonstrated history of supporting social justice, equity and environmental causes. This project highly aligns with the values of YFS and its membership, and once completed, will provide affordable housing for members of the community, including any interested YFS members and their families; and

WHEREAS it is very important to support the creation of a new affordable co-op housing in Toronto; and

WHEREAS there are over 150 general housing co-ops throughout Toronto, many of which have been built through union support. However, very few new affordable housing buildings have been built since the 1990s because of neoliberal budget cuts to affordable housing programs; and

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WHEREAS to achieve the objective of creating affordable housing, we have set up the Affordable Housing Committee at York University involving union locals and community groups. The mission of the committee is to create new affordable housing on York University's surplus lands. We already have the support of YUGSA, CUPE3903, York University Faculty Association, York University Staff Association, OPIRG York, and Regenesys York; and

WHEREAS funding is needed in order to take this initiative to the next stage, answering a Request for Proposal Call from the City of Toronto's Housing Office; and

WHEREAS this project highly aligns with the values of YFS and its membership, and once completed, will provide affordable housing to members of the York community, including YFS members; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the York Federation of Students support the mission of the Affordable Housing Committee at York University by providing \$2000 for the 2019-2020 YFS fiscal year; and

Moved: Hamilton

Seconded: Whyte

Result: Carries

G. MOTION TO REQUEST DONATION FOR BLACK IN POST-SEC

MOTION 2019-11-28: N08

WHEREAS there has been a continuous divide between black students in the province; and

WHEREAS black students still do not feel safe on post-secondary institutions in the province, including York University; and

WHEREAS black students on this campus do not feel represented by administrative staff and faculty on this campus; and

WHEREAS due to the cuts to OSAP and public funding for post-secondary, black students on this campus are under attack; and

WHEREAS in 2018-2019 black students took the initiative to make a documentary (Black in Post-Sec) highlighting the challenges, barriers and limitations black students have in accessing education safely;

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BE IT RESOLVED THAT the YFS supports Black students on this campus in pursuing this initiative further; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the YFS provides a donation of \$2,000 towards the creation and documentation of black stories and black experiences on this campus; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the donation be given by January of 2020.

Moved: Tomlinson

Seconded: Price

Result: Carries

H. MOTION TO REJECT AND STRONGLY CONDEMN THE RECENT TUITION FEES INCREASES ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

MOTION 2019-11-28: N09

WHEREAS International Students are an integral part of our university campuses; and

WHEREAS they make our institutions more diverse, rich in culture and add valuable contributions to the academic community and having a large economic impact through paying tuition fees, basic living expenses and consumer spending resulting in annual tax contributions; and

WHEREAS Ontario has one of the highest tuition fees in the country with plenty of data showing disproportionate tuition increases further limiting and reducing access to education; and

WHEREAS York University's Board of Governors (BoG) in 2019 approved changes to the tuitional levels as per the provincial Tuition Fee Framework; and

WHEREAS under the new Tuition Fee Framework set by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), universities were required to reduce tuition levels by 10% in 2019-20 and the subsequent freeze in 2020-21; and

WHEREAS this "tuition decrease" only applied to *domestic* students, the Board of Governors looked to offset the loss on revenue due to these changes by increasing the hefty tuition fees international students

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already pay largely going uncapped; and

WHEREAS the Board of Governors increased fees of **10%** in both **2019-20** and **2020-21** for international students and has placed a greater importance on attracting international students (evident in the recent high enrollments); and

WHEREAS the rationale the Board of Governors made was that “significant budget pressures will be encountered in the area of salary and benefits, which account for nearly 80% of the University’s budget. The fee increases for international students are required to (partly) mitigate these cost pressures”; and

WHEREAS such seismic changes allow the university to capitalize on international students by exponentially increasing their tuition fees (on average being 4X that of domestic tuition fees) in the form of “cash cows”; and

WHEREAS the York Federation of Students (YFS) is committed to the Fairness for International Students campaign;

BE IT RESOLVED that the YFS doubles its efforts on the Fairness for International Students campaign; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS and this democratic body – AGM - fundamentally condemn in the strongest terms the tuition increases on international students approved by the Board of Governors as unfair and wrong; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS immediately lobbies the Board of Governors and relevant York Administration to freeze and reverse these tuition increases with the aim of reducing tuition costs eventually; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS work towards creating awareness, educating international students on the impacts of such changes, and recognize the unique challenges, financial burdens and experiences of international students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS develops a plan with insight and consultation from the International Students constituents including the International Students’ Association at York (IS@Y), who are disproportionately affected by these tuition changes; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the YFS in partnership with relevant York Faculties and Departments work on placing contingency funds to help International Students in emergency situations.

Moved: Jamaa

Seconded: Sheikh

Result: Carries

8. REPORTS

A. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

MOTION 2019-11-28: R01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the reports of the Executive be accepted as presented in **Appendix C**

Moved: Babiker

Seconded: Khan

Result: Carries

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

MOTION 2019-11-28: M02

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 20:25.

Moved: Elhawash

Seconded: Joseph

Result: Carries