

# The Agitator

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carleton.ca/socialists

*A strike is looming at Carleton and students must show...*

## SOLIDARITY WITH CAMPUS WORKERS

A strike is looming at Carleton University. Faculty and librarians, represented by CUASA, are in a legal strike position on November 15. Teaching Assistants represented by CUPE 4600 are in a legal strike position on November 11.

The issues at stake affect students directly. Faculty at Carleton are paid 6 percent less than the national average, and entry-level faculty are paid 16 percent less. Carleton also has one of the highest ratio of students to faculty in Ontario. The administration will not address these issues. They also want to take away rights won by faculty in previous collective agreements. This is why faculty voted 96% in favour of striking.

### **TAs fighting for lower tuition**

Teaching Assistants are fighting to protect tuition indexation. Tuition indexation is effectively a tuition freeze. TAs must pay tuition up front but then get a rebate which means tuition is frozen at a 2001 level. Indexation also covers international students who pay more than double the fees at Carleton.

Tuition indexation produces significant downward pressure on tuition fees in general because it is not economical for Carleton to raise tuition fees on grad students when about half of them are TAs and protected by indexation.

Carleton wants to remove indexation which means TAs would face wage cuts because wage increases do not keep up with the 4% to 8% tuition increases unleashed by the McGuinty.

Carleton faculty are fighting for better work conditions, fair and equal pay and

smaller class sizes. Students will benefit greatly if CUASA wins its demands and the concessions demanded by the University are resisted.

A victory for TAs will be a victory for all students. By keeping indexation, we can ensure that there is a solid starting point for students to take the fight to the administration and government for affordable and high quality post-secondary education.

### **The fight goes beyond Carleton**

The outcome of the fight at Carleton has significant ramifications across Ontario because CUPE 4600 is one of only a few TA unions in Ontario that has won tuition indexation.

CUPE 3906 at McMaster University in Hamilton are fighting to win tuition indexation in order to counter the McGuinty-approved tuition increases. They went on strike on October 27. Therefore, a victory for Carleton TAs will give leverage for McMaster TAs to win their fight. A defeat would have the opposite effect and encourage universities across Ontario to take an even more aggressive stance against unions and campus workers in general. This will also affect the larger fight for lower tuition and affordable education in Ontario.

Students at Carleton and across Ottawa need to take action in support of campus workers and fellow students in CUPE 4600. A victory for the unions will be a victory for all. And it can be a step forward in building the February 7 National Day of Action, led by the Canadian Federation of Students.

The battle at Carleton is clearly part of a larger conflict brewing across Ontario and Canada. McGuinty has declared war on students and Harper refuses to increase education funding. This is part of a larger neo-liberal project to rollback hard-won social programs, labour rights and reassert the profitability of corporations and the power of the capitalist class.

### **Resisting neo-liberalism**

These projects have been dealt huge blows in recent years. The resurgence of mass, popular resistance in Latin America is the most spectacular example. But victories have been won in places more similar to Ontario. In the spring of 2005, a 250,000-strong student strike rocked Quebec. Jean Charest's Liberal government was forced to pull back all their "reforms". This past spring, millions of French students and workers resisted new draconian labour laws. Repeated demonstrations of hundreds of thousands and the occupations of nearly all the universities, won a clear victory.

We obviously have a long way to go to reach this level of mass resistance. It can be done here but only if we lay the groundwork in the here and now. And it is only this level of struggle that can help win the battle against neo-liberalism, and ultimately, capitalism.

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