



# CESAR

Continuing Education Students'  
Association of Ryerson  
Local 105 of the Canadian Federation of Students

Friday, February 7, 2020

## **Re-Building Progressive Coalitions: CESAR's refusal to undermine student democracy**

Dear Ryerson Community,

It has been more than two weeks since Ryerson University Vice-Provost Students Jen McMillen decided to unilaterally terminate the 1986 Operating Agreement with the Ryerson Students' Union. Today, the University released a statement indicating that the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson (CESAR) has declined the University's offer to extend our services to RSU members. CESAR would like to clarify this proposal and present a fair analysis of our response.

First, it is of utmost importance to recognize that the University chose to remove the RSU student advocate from representing students without first creating a contingency plan. The University did not reach out to CESAR ahead of their decision to terminate the 1986 Operating Agreement and neither did they make arrangements to ensure that students had access to a fair appeals process. The University only reached out to CESAR after the decision was made, and only responded concretely to CESAR's request to meet after being questioned at the University's Senate Meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2020. CESAR finally met with the Vice-Provost Students and Provost on Thursday, January 30, 2020.

At our meeting, the University presented CESAR with the option to run some of the RSU services citing that CESAR and RSU regularly assist each other in service provision. This has been the practice due to mutual agreement between CESAR and the RSU, not through the University's decision. The University's proposal was inappropriate for a number of reasons, which were relayed after careful consideration:

- The University has essentially asked CESAR to scab. This means the University has offered money to CESAR to undermine employees at another unionized workplace. This is inherently wrong and counter to the history of progressive student unionism.
- The University has both failed to acknowledge and respond to our counter-proposal which includes recommendations for mediation, trusteeship and other avenues to resolutions that benefit students. The University has not negotiated with CESAR in good faith.
- The University already has a student advocate for full-time undergraduate and graduate students via the RSU. The University should return to the bargaining table and seek out possible mediation rather than bulldozing student democracy.

It is concerning that the University has chosen not to address tangible and plausible next steps. Instead, they continue to demonstrate a lack of concern for negotiating with CESAR in good faith, and instead to proceed to share information solely and indirectly through their website.

*CESAR represents more than 16,000 continuing education and part-time education students at Ryerson University. CESAR also represents any full-time students (ie. RSU members) who are taking Chang School courses. CESAR full-time staff are unionised with the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1281.*

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