



Canadian Union of Public Employees • Local 1281

25 Wood Street, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2P9

T: 416.551.0057 F: 647.350.4049 admin@cupe1281.ca

www.1281.cupe.ca

CUPE 1281 in Solidarity with Professor Aimé Avolonto

The Canadian Union of Public Employees local 1281 is furious and outraged at the York University administration for perpetuating anti-Black racism by continuing to harass and attempting to fire Professor Aimé Avolonto. Professor Avolonto is a Black professor and former Chair of the French Studies Department at York University.

Professor Avolonto has been maliciously targeted by the York University administration after he has spoken up about his horrifying experiences of anti-Black racism on the York University campus. Professor Avolonto has documented his experiences of anti-Black racism through filing a formal complaint with York University in 2017, being featured in CBC's Fifth Estate investigative documentary [Black On Campus](#), through his full-length online essay [Letter from a Black Colleague](#) and through a [virtual press conference](#).

York University loves to pride itself on diversity, equity, inclusion, and “anti-racism” initiatives. While York University continues this facade and its history of racist violence, the labour movement and community members must hold York University accountable and continue to show solidarity with Professor Avolonto. Professor Avolonto is a courageous, compassionate and admirable person that deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Systemic and institutionalized anti-Black racism has a long history on our university and college campuses. The student and faculty strikes for racial justice last fall brought to fore the ugly reality of ongoing racism experienced by Black, Indigenous and racialized faculty, staff and students on campus.

As the union representing many workers on campuses, CUPE 1281 is proud to be in solidarity with Professor Avolonto and joins the Justice for Aimé Avolonto campaign that has been organized by a network of students, labour activists and community members. Supporters include; the [York Federation of Students](#), which represents over 50,000 undergraduate students at York University, the [York University Graduate Students' Association](#), which represents graduate students on campus, and over 22,000 people that have signed the online [change.org petition](#) calling for Justice for Professor Aimé Avolonto.



Canadian Union of Public Employees • Local 1281

25 Wood Street, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2P9

T: 416.551.0057 F: 647.350.4049 admin@cupe1281.ca

www.1281.cupe.ca

Anti-Black racism is a workplace issue, and CUPE 1281 encourages the labour movement to join the call for justice by sharing the campaign and petition online, by passing a motion at their local union's next meeting in support of Aimé Avolonto and by issuing a public solidarity statement.



Canadian Union of Public Employees • Local 1281

25 Wood Street, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2P9

T: 416.551.0057 F: 647.350.4049 admin@cupe1281.ca

www.1281.cupe.ca

Justice for Aimé Avolonto Draft Motion

Whereas anti-Black racism is a workplace issue that the labour movement strongly opposes and continues to fight back against; and

Whereas institutional anti-Black racism on the York University campus is rampant, as demonstrated by the numerous complaints ly brought forward by Black students, faculty and staff; and

Whereas the York University administration is targeting, harassing and attempting to terminate Black French Studies Professor, Aimé Avolonto;

Be it resolved that [INSERT ORGANIZATION] express its full solidarity with Professor Avolonto's fight against systemic anti-Black racism at York university;

Be it resolved that [INSERT ORGANIZATION] condemn the failure of President Rhonda Lenton and the York University administration to respond appropriately to Professor Avolonto's complaints about anti-Black racism and condemn their attempts to cover up his complaints;

Be it further resolved that [INSERT ORGANIZATION] supports the Justice for Aimé Avolonto campaign and its demands which includes;

- York University immediately ceases its termination procedures against Prof. Avolonto.
- York University ends the arbitrary and punitive leave it has imposed on Prof. Avolonto since December 1, 2018, and facilitate his return to work, including the assignment of teaching responsibilities, with appropriate accommodations and interim measures for all parties.
- York University takes all necessary steps to end the racist harassment and retaliation facing Prof. Avolonto.
- The investigation by Roger Beaudry be suspended indefinitely, and all fees paid to Roger Beaudry by York University be disclosed publicly.
- York University President Rhonda Lenton, Provost and Vice-President Academic Lisa Philipps, Senior Policy Advisor Barry Miller, and their designates immediately recuse themselves from the handling of Prof. Avolonto's complaints and any other files related to Prof. Avolonto.
- In consultation with Black community members at York University and external experts, an independent and external investigator, with lived experience of anti-Black racism and formal training or expertise in investigating anti-Black

racism, be appointed to review the conduct of the investigator Roger Beaudry of Aptus Solutions and to develop, as above, the terms, conditions, and timeline of such a review.

- The Minister of Colleges and Universities, the Hon. Ross Romano, commit the necessary resources for the aforementioned review to be conducted in a fair and timely manner and with the community's confidence.

Be it further resolved that [INSERT ORGANIZATION] issues a solidarity statement in support of Professor Aimé Avolonto and publicly shares the online Justice for Aimé Avolonto campaign and petition with its members.