

October 21, 2010

Cheryl Misak
Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

Dear Provost Misak,

Thank you for yesterday's letter to the members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, intended to "set to rest" our distress over the Academic Plan released in July and to pacify the Plan's opponents, as "there is little to be gained from ongoing reproaches." I regret to inform you that your letter did not accomplish these goals, because the causes of our distress and opposition have still not been addressed. At a time like this, I see no reason either you or I should obscure our meaning in eloquent Jamesian phrasing, so let me simply state: As long as there remains no public apology for and renunciation of the Academic Plan, and no commitment to a new, public, shared exercise to create an alternative Plan, there will remain widespread distress and public opposition. If you wish for our Faculty's members to "pull together" and eschew "divisiveness," then you will instruct the Dean to supply his apology and to abandon the current Academic Plan.

I'm certain you understand why we must take such a hard line. Among the chiefest problems with this Plan has been the lack of transparency throughout the planning and consultation periods, as you well know from the letters arriving at your office and the outstanding UTFA grievance. Given the Dean's previous failure to consult stakeholders, and his practice of proposing sudden, surprise re-structurings, we cannot reasonably accept as valid your assurance that the Dean is "working on" alternatives we will find actionable. We will experience relief and assurance *only* when we see, in writing, reversals or amendments of the SPC's proposals. Until that time, we have no choice but to assume that the Plan's proposals are going forward in their original form, and we will continue to oppose them as such. I remind you that we have not yet seen a single official reversal or amendment, and that the Academic Plan remains on our Faculty's web site with no changes from its July form.

Finally, Provost Misak, you insult the members of our Faculty by continuing to insist that the two contentious town-hall meetings constituted any kind of meaningful consultation. You were informed well in advance of the meetings, in an open letter signed by more than 40 teachers, program directors and librarians, that our members did *not* consider these meetings to be consultative or adequate. This letter laid out in detail the minimal requirements of any consultation process. To date, our Dean has not responded to the letter—frankly, an outrage—and none of its suggestions has been adopted. Again, if you wish for us to "pull together," then we must be treated as legitimate and respected partners in the planning process. We will not settle for token consultations and closed-door meetings between the Dean and individual departments. The stakes are simply too high, and there is insufficient trust between our members and the administration. Whatever changes and alternatives emerge must be clear and public if they are to be accepted by us.

Once again, I urge you to legitimately put to rest our concerns by instructing the Dean to issue a public apology and a statement detailing the current status of the Academic Plan, including specific information about which proposals have been reversed or amended, and which remain in their original forms. Until that statement emerges, it should be clear why we cannot, and will not, be put to rest.

Sincerely,

Ryan Culpepper
Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar
Centre for Comparative Literature

cc: David Naylor, President
Meric Gertler, Dean of Arts and Sciences
George Luste, UTFA President