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October 30, 2023



UofT Student & Labour Unions, Librarians & Faculty Stand Together for Academic Freedom

United in our resolve to uphold the right of each and all of us to speak freely about world events, the undersigned member organizations of University of Toronto Employees' Associations and Unions call on the senior Administration of the University of Toronto to affirm this right and retract statements made by the Vice-President and Principal Gillespie of UTM and Arts and Science Dean Woodin that put this right in question. Their statements asserted, without any basis, that student unions can only legitimately express positions that are supported by their "full membership". These statements stand in direct contradiction to the individual and collective rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and academic freedom as clearly articulated in the University's [Statement of Institutional Purpose](#), [Statement on Freedom of Speech](#), [Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment](#), [Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations](#), and [Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto Faculty Association](#).

We further call on the senior Administration to demand that Minister Dunlop retract her statements in the

Ontario Legislature on October 17 castigating UofT students and scholars for exercising their rights and mischaracterizing the content of their statements, and that she issue a personal apology to each of the individuals she named.

As President Gertler emphasized in his [statement](#) from October 18, 2023, universities are first and foremost places where contending and competing views engage with one another. It is our collective duty to ensure that such perspectives, so long as they are lawful, continue to be heard, even if they are uncomfortable or even upsetting. This collective duty is meaningless if it does not apply in times of war and if it applies less than fully to those who express solidarity with Palestine.

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