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Appeal to support the Palestinian Students and Scholars at Risk Program at UofT

The Palestinian Students and Scholars at Risk (PSSAR) was formally registered as a not-for-profit corporation in March 2024 and is run by a group of concerned academics in Canada who wish to make a difference in the lives of Palestinian students and scholars who are at grave risk, with an initial emphasis on Gaza.

As PSSAR describes it:

“Our vision is to foster meaningful connections between students and scholars in Gaza and universities and colleges in Canada. We strive to identify and facilitate graduate study opportunities for Palestinians to come to Canada (and worldwide), to promote collaboration between Palestinian and Canadian academics, and to address the academic needs of Gazans in light of the complete destruction of all universities in Gaza. We have created a matching system using an online platform to link students from Gaza to potential supervisors in Canada. We assist students with the application process to Canadian universities. In collaboration with charitable organizations, we help with basic travel expenses. We have also created a peer support network of volunteer students in Canada. Please visit https://pssar.ca to find out more and volunteers to admit, fund and supervise students from Gaza.”

Importantly, PSSAR is made possible in part by the tireless work of UTFA members: Prof. Baher Abdulhai (Civil & Mineral Engineering), Prof. Amer Shalaby (Civil & Mineral Engineering), who serve on the PSSAR Board, and Prof. Morgan O’Neill (Physics), who serves as a PSSAR collaborator. UTFA thanks these colleagues for their important work and asks members to visit https://pssar.ca to see how you might be able to support their work.

In addition to helping raise awareness about PSSAR’s work, the UTFA Executive is supporting PSSAR by advocating to the University Administration that they:

1. establish a scholarship to support Palestinian students similar to the $1 million in matching funds

the University provided to support Ukrainian students through the Scholars at Risk Program;

2. set tuition and ancillary fees for PSSAR-supported students to domestic rates; and

3. expedite the admissions process.

The Administration has stated they will respond to UTFA with more information on these three points in mid-July. When we receive their response, we will provide an update to UTFA members. In the meantime, please visit https://pssar.ca to learn more.

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