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UTEAU statement on "User Guide"

November 13, 2024

We, the undersigned members of the University of Toronto Employees' Associations and Unions (UTEAU) coalition, which collectively represents over 100,000 students, staff, faculty, librarians, and workers across University of Toronto, are united in opposing the "User Guide to U of T Policies on Protests" issued in August 2024 and updated in late October. The User Guide directly undermines the University's commitments to freedom of speech and academic freedom as articulated in the Statement of Institutional Purpose, the Statement on Freedom of Speech, and other related policies.

Despite its preface on the role of protest in effecting progressive change and of the rights of all UofT community members to freedom of expression, the User Guide in fact introduces a number of new limits on such expression that do not exist in current University policy. These include time restrictions, undefined limits on excessive noise, prohibitions of temporary forms of expression such as chalk and projections, and new requirements for authorization to be present on UofT premises. Of particular concern are the consequences named for being in violation of these new restrictions, including requests for campus security and municipal police service to be called on workers, students, faculty, librarians, and community members.

In meetings between senior Administration and several of the undersigned organizations, Administrators have falsely claimed that the User Guide in fact introduces nothing new and is merely an assembly of rules from existing policies. If that is the case, the Administration can refer UofT community members directly to those existing policies if it feels such clarification is necessary. However, in creating this User Guide, the Administration has also introduced significant ambiguity in the meaning of the restrictions it names. This ambiguity only underscores our profound concerns over how the User Guide will be interpreted, especially the disciplinary measures it describes. The User Guide thus appears to be a new effort for the University to implement a system of surveillance, policing, and silencing so as to limit organizing efforts on campus.

We therefore call on the Administration to fully rescind the User Guide, to refrain from introducing any additional policies that infringe on rights to expression and assembly, and to reaffirm its commitments to freedom of association, freedom of expression, and academic freedom for University of Toronto

community members at large.

In solidarity,

Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
CUPE 1230
CUPE 3902
CUPE 3261
Scarborough Campus Students Union (SCSU)
USW Local 1998 Executive Committee
University of Toronto Faculty Association Executive Committee
University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union
University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU)
University of Toronto Students' Union

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