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Message from UTFA President Terezia Zorić

September 2, 2020

September 2, 2020 – Joint Toronto Universities Faculty Associations' Statement

OCADFA, YUFA, and the Executives of UTFA and the RFA condemn racist policing and related forms of institutionalized violence. We stand in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities in Toronto and across North America on Turtle Island. We hear the demands for justice from the families of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Rodney Levi, Ejaz Choudry, Chantel Moore, Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi, and D'Andre Campbell. We also extend our heartfelt sympathies to all who are facing trauma and loss.

We acknowledge that our own Black, Indigenous, and racialized faculty, librarians, staff, and students are bearing the burden of the current moment. Many of the conditions that allow institutionalized violence to disproportionately affect racialized communities have now been exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We join with those organizing #Scholarstrike and #ScholarstrikeCanada who "believe that it's of crucial importance for those of us in higher education to take a stand in solidarity with our students and the communities we serve [and] ...affirm protestors, workers for social justice, and activists who are crucial parts of making our communities safer places." Scholar Strike is a labour action/teach-in/social justice advocacy happening on September 9-10, 2020.

We are asking University Administrators to support faculty, librarians, and other staff, and not penalize those who choose to participate in this action. Recognizing the precarious labour status of many of our colleagues in academia, this labour action will invite people to participate in ways that mirror their capacity to engage.

We therefore strongly encourage our members to pause on September 9-10, and to listen, reflect, and join in a broader public dialogue and educational events related to police violence from historical and contemporary perspectives. We ourselves further acknowledge the need to have sustained conversations with our colleagues, families, students, and other community members about how our faculty associations can support and effect systemic change.

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