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Petition Calling for a Safe University of Toronto Re-opening

September 24, 2021

We are asking for your help in addressing serious problems with the University of Toronto Administration's approach to campus reopening.

According to a recent expert panel titled Is it safe to return to campus? featuring Canada's leading public health scientists, U of T's reopening plan fails in important ways to keep students, staff, faculty, and librarians on campus safe enough.

Every day we hear from UTFA members, staff, colleagues, and students who are deeply troubled by serious flaws in the U of T plan, but these concerns remain unacknowledged and unaddressed by U of T's president and senior leadership. That must change.

Please read, sign, and share widely the following Petition Calling for a Safe University of Toronto Re-opening:

We the undersigned call on President Gertler, his advisors, and the University of Toronto senior Administration to:

1. Align the University's re-opening plans with expert public health science. This means that the University must:

a. Heed the call of the Ontario Science Table to reduce indoor density, maintain physical distancing, limit large gatherings, and significantly reduce contacts; and

b. Meet the minimum standards set out in the Health and Safety Checklist for University Re-opening.

2. Exercise principled leadership by upholding U of T's stated commitment to best practices, not minimum legal standards, in health and safety. This means that the University must:

a. At a minimum, adhere to Ontario's Step 3 regulations for indoor occupancy and physical distancing

limitations campus-wide;

b. Refuse to exercise the discretionary option to lower pandemic safety standards that were granted to post-secondary institutions by the Ford government; and,

c. Schedule all in-person classes, librarianship, and other work to comply with Peel and Toronto Public Health's strong recommendations in support of 2-meter physical distancing and reduced density indoors.

3. Share key health and safety data (e.g., COVID case numbers, how the university will handle outbreaks, documented results of ventilation testing in occupied areas, etc.) widely and in a transparent fashion, including clearly communicating the specific, measurable, and verified steps that the senior Administration is taking to keep students, staff, faculty, librarians, and the broader community safe.

4. Meet collectively and work collaboratively with the faculty association (UTFA), staff unions, and student groups.

5. Broaden the University's approach to medical and family status accommodation (e.g., to include those with children under 12 years old and those who live with or care for immunocompromised people at greater risk) and allow all who need to work from home and, where reasonable, study from home to do so until these conditions are met.

Please sign this petition here.

Source URL (modified on Sep 28 2021):https://www.utfa.org/content/petition-calling-safe-university-toronto-re-opening