

University of Toronto Students' Union

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STATEMENT

For immediate release

October 16, 2016

RE: Response to Violence and Hate Speech

Last week, we saw our community at its worst. Tuesday's rally was marred by bigotry and violence, and the Campus Police refused to intervene when they knew of and saw trans folks being assaulted. This is intolerable. Even now, the University has done nothing to ensure that all students are safe on campus. In the face of violence, hate speech, and threats, trans students are not safe on campus and similarly, in the face of hateful and racist remarks, black students are not safe on campus either. It is unacceptable for the Campus Police to fail in their responsibility to keep students safe from violence on campus, and specifically against trans students. We are, therefore, calling for a full, public inquiry into the University of Toronto Campus Community Police. An investigation by the administration—to which students have no access—will not be sufficient, an investigation must be public and done by an unbiased party.

If free speech is to mean anything at all, students must be free to express themselves and their identities without fear of reprisal. The University has a responsibility to secure this freedom from fear, and it is failing--through deliberate inaction. We condemn this failure. We affirm the value of freedom of expression, but there can be no freedom of expression without dignity for all, and trans students cannot truly enjoy freedom expression, let alone participate in debate, when they are not treated with dignity, especially by those in positions of power.

While many of our interactions with some individual people in the University Administration have been positive and encouraging, it is the institution that must be moved and it currently is unwilling. Only a public inquiry will begin to restore confidence in the ability of the University, and of the Campus Police in particular, to guarantee the safety of students on campus. It will not solve the problem, but will help. The UTSU condemns all forms of violence and hateful speech. The UTSU stands in solidarity with trans students, with Black students, and with everyone else who has been forced to endure violence, threats, and hateful speech.

Yours in service,
The UTSU Executive

Should for any reason you have concerns about your personal safety or if you are receiving any form of harassment please consider connecting with the following resources:

Community Safety Office

Laura Bradbury

416-978-1485

<http://www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/about-us.htm>

Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office

Sandra Carnegie-Douglas

416-978-1259

antiracism@utoronto.ca

<http://www.antiracism.utoronto.ca/contact.html>

Sexual & Gender Diversity Office

Allison Burgess

416.946.5624

sgdo@utoronto.ca

<http://sgdo.utoronto.ca/>