



**Thursday, May 21, 2020**

The Executive Committee  
University of Toronto Students' Union  
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**RE: Fall 2020 Semester at the University of Toronto**

On Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2020, President Meric Gertler issued a statement to the University of Toronto community regarding the University's plans for the Fall 2020 semester. While the UTSU appreciates President Gertler's commitments to promoting health and safety, advancing academic excellence, and meeting the needs of our U of T community, we still remain concerned about several issues that have been left unaddressed.

Over the past two months, the UTSU has been in consultation with our membership about the impacts of COVID-19, the University's response, and the challenges students are facing.

**With this in mind, the UTSU urges the University of Toronto to carefully consider and respond to the following issues as they finalize plans for the upcoming academic year:**

- Taking an understanding approach towards academic forgiveness and fairness, ensuring that students are able to meet their degree requirements and achieve academic success despite the current circumstances.
- Providing more information regarding the proposed mixed-learning model and clarifying whether or not students will have the opportunity to choose their preferred format of learning (i.e. online or in-person).
- Clarifying what the availability of online classes in lieu of in-person classes will look like for students residing outside of Toronto, including international students.
- Ensuring that the delivery of online learning is made as accessible as possible, including resources such as closed captioning, interpretation, and lecture recordings to ensure adequate participation for all students.
- Considering the reduction of tuition fees for classes operating remotely, and continuing to reduce or eliminate ancillary fees for facilities that will be going unused or operating under reduced capacity in September.
- Expanding need-based financial aid and working towards making financial aid accessible to all students, regardless of whether they are domestic or international students.
- Continuing to make the University's COVID-19 Emergency Undergraduate Grant available to students throughout the Fall 2020 semester.
- Developing clear plans from the University and its divisions regarding on-campus employment opportunities for students.



- Providing concrete answers regarding residence for the Fall 2020 semester as soon as possible, taking into account residence accommodations for students with exceptional circumstances.
- Taking steps to clarify what course delivery will look like for the rest of the Fall-Winter term, so that students are able to plan their housing accommodations accordingly, both on and off-campus, for the entirety of the year.

As the University of Toronto looks ahead to the Fall 2020 semester, the UTSU would also like to emphasise the integral role that students and student societies play in developing the best possible solutions to these concerns. Students are in a unique position to provide valuable insight into their respective faculties and, with this in mind, the UTSU asks all academic units to integrate student voices within their decision making processes. Consultation with the student body is imperative to ensuring the wellbeing and success of every student.

The UTSU is committed to monitoring the ongoing global health situation as it progresses, and representing the interests and concerns of our membership going forward. We welcome our members to get in touch with us online, either through the UTSU Help Desk at [utsu.ca/#helpdesk](https://utsu.ca/#helpdesk), or by email at [executives@utsu.ca](mailto:executives@utsu.ca). We also encourage our members to continue following the guidelines provided by Toronto Public Health, the Government of Ontario, and the Government of Canada, and continue practicing effective social distancing.

We understand that this is a challenging time for all members of the University of Toronto community. The resilience shown by students during these uncertain times has been nothing short of inspiring, and we appreciate everyone's continued efforts to keep our communities safe. We would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to members of the University of Toronto community who have been on the frontlines of pandemic response.

Yours in service,

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