



Wednesday, April 22nd, 2020

**The Executive Committee
University of Toronto Students' Union
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RE: Student Fees During COVID-19 Closure

The University of Toronto Students' Union has been closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and the circumstances it has created for students. We have been carefully evaluating information as it has become available from Toronto Public Health, the provincial and federal governments, and the University of Toronto administration, in order to stay true to our mission of serving our community. We are aware of concerns brought forward by our membership about Summer 2020 tuition and ancillary fees.

On April 29th, 2020, undergraduate students at the University of Toronto will be expected to pay their summer fees. The summer term is the first academic term that the University will administer entirely online. University facilities have been closed to students since March 13th, and will be closed indefinitely.

The UTSU urges the University of Toronto to do the following:

- Extend the minimum payment deadline to register for Summer 2020 classes;
- Allow all students to defer their summer fees, regardless of whether or not they meet the University of Toronto's traditional conditions for eligibility;
- Issue comprehensive and transparent breakdowns for each ancillary fee that will be charged during the Summer session;
- Review and publicly disclose changes to the operating costs of University facilities supported by ancillary fees as a result of campus closures;
- Reduce facilities-related ancillary fees by an amount that corresponds to these changes, and issue refunds to students who have already paid;
- Review and reassess academic ancillary fees, specifically those charged for labs and in-person instruction, and make reductions where appropriate;
- Cease collection of interest payments from unpaid Winter 2020 session fees;
- Reduce both domestic and international course fees due to online delivery.

This period of crisis has been devastating for students, and many have fallen through the cracks of government benefit plans. A [survey](#) conducted by the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) showed that students are concerned about paying for rent, utilities, and tuition. 83% of students reported not being eligible for the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).



While we appreciate the Canadian Government announcing the creation of the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), no timeline for the implementation of this program has been offered, and students require support now from our own university. The University of Toronto must do its part to reduce the financial impact of tuition and ancillary fees on students wherever possible during this crisis.

Summer fees currently include charges for facilities that have been closed and programming that has been cancelled. These are some of the largest incidental fees charged to students, despite the fact that students will not be able to access any of the services that these fees usually would usually contribute towards.

Full-time undergraduate students are being charged \$118.97 for Kinesiology and Physical Education (KPE) programming, services and facilities, all of which are based out of the Varsity Centre, the Athletic Centre, and the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport. This fee is in addition to the \$73.80 fee which is currently being charged for Hart House facilities and programming.

Students should not be made to pay the same fees that they would have been charged had facilities remained open. While we understand that parts of these fees support the employment of staff and other essential functions, any portions of fees which pay for the day-to-day operation of facilities and programming should not be charged for. Many colleges have refunded students who were required to move out of their residence halls, and this same principle should be applied here.

We are also concerned that students enrolling in courses with labs or other practical components are being charged fees for facilities and resources they won't use. These fees can cost students upwards of \$50.00 per course, and charging these fees while they go unused is unacceptable. If a lab's curriculum is being delivered online, these fees should be reassessed to reflect the new method of delivery.

Post-secondary institutions from around the country have become leaders in how they have responded to this crisis, and we encourage the University of Toronto to take this opportunity to lead, and learn from what these institutions have done.

- [McMaster University](#) has waived their Athletics and Recreation Activity fees for courses running May through August, and has refunded students who paid this fee for the May through August 2020 time period back in the Fall;
- The [University of Ottawa](#) has waived fees for their Sports Services and the University Centre, as well as their U-Pass fee;



- The [University of Waterloo](#) has waived fees related to Athletics and Recreation, as well as WUSA and GSA fees for the Grand River Transit UPass;
- [McGill University](#) has waived all interest and late payment fines on outstanding student accounts;
- The [University of Alberta](#) has reduced fees for Athletics, Recreation, and their Physical Activity and Wellness Centre from \$109 to \$0 for the summer term;
- The [University of British Columbia](#) has extended their first summer term tuition deadline from May 15th, 2020 to June 15, 2020, and is actively reviewing refunds and credits to anyone registered for classes, memberships, and rentals during this period;
- The [University of Calgary](#) will not be charging UPass and Campus Recreation fees for spring and summer classes, as these services will not be available;
- The [University of Manitoba](#) has waived the Sport & Recreation Fee for Summer Term 2020;
- The [University of Regina](#) is providing prorated refunds or extensions for their Fitness & Lifestyle Centre and Aquatic Centre memberships;
- The [University of Saskatchewan](#) has extended deadlines for the payment of tuition to June 2nd (spring term and multi-term classes) and August 3rd (summer term). They will continue to suspend late fees on unpaid tuition, and fees stemming from the months of May through August;
- The [University of Victoria](#) is not charging fees for bus passes or for services stemming from athletics and recreation.

We welcome our members to get in touch with us online at utsu.ca/#helpdesk or by email at executives@utsu.ca. We encourage all members of our community to continue staying home, maintain good personal hygiene, and practice effective social distancing. We ask that everyone continue following guidelines provided by Toronto Public Health, the Government of Ontario, and the Government of Canada.

We understand how difficult this time is for members of the University of Toronto community, and we appreciate everyone doing their part to keep our communities safe. As we approach the end of our academic term, we would like to recognize and commend the efforts of students for persevering through this time of uncertainty. We would also like to thank the members of our community who are currently working on the front line of the pandemic response.

Yours in service,

The UTSU Executive | executives@utsu.ca | 416-978-4911