



Minutes – Board of Directors

**3rd Meeting of 2021-2022
25 July 2021 | 11:00AM-3:00PM EST**

Video Conference held via Zoom

IN ATTENDANCE

Present

Executive Committee

Alexa Ballis, President
Fiona Reuter, VP Operations
Catherine Lai, VP Public & University Affairs
Maria Lin, VP Student Life
Reva Aggarwal, VP Equity
Ruoheng Wang, VP Professional Faculties

Division I Directors (Colleges, Academic Divisions,
and Transitional Year Programme)

Easha Khan, University College Director
Muskan Nagra, University College Director
Rayan Alim, St. Michael's College Director
David D'Aversa, St. Michael's College Director
Stuti Roy, Victoria College Director
Halit Erdogan, Victoria College Director
Jenny Shen, Woodsworth College Director
Elad Dekel, Innis College Director

Division II Directors (Professional Faculties)

Neo Lou, Engineering Director
Sheral Kumar, Engineering Director
Vicdan Okman, Architecture & Visual
Studies Director
Maria Ebeid, Professional Faculties-at-Large
Director
Sterling Mancuso, Law Director
Hailey Goldberg, Nursing Director
Oluwadamilola (Dami) Sogbesan, Pharmacy
Director

Visitors and Other Non-Voting

Guests¹

Alexander Moss
Alisa [nln]
Aminah Attar
Anusha Madhusudanan
Avigail Rucker
Bakiza A
Barbara [nln]
Basmah Ramadan
Branden Cave
Dalia Atie
Danah [nln]
Dermot O'Halloran
Emily Albert
Evan Kanter
Fatemah Nami
Gill Kazevman
Hala Kayed
Halimah Kasmani
[HN]
Ikram Handulle
Joshua Bienstock
Lauren Alexander, News Editor, Varsity
Lina Lashin
Mariam Mahboob
Max Fine
Michael Levinson
Mohamed Dasu
Nadia G
Naena Drazman
Nahil Al-Zuhaika
Rachel G
Saarthak Singh
Sarah Hashish
Sarah R
Sidrah R
Soban Atique

¹ The 3rd annual meeting of the UTSU Board of Directors was attended by over 100 individuals. For logistical reasons, only guests who spoke were included in the attendance.



Executive Assistants, UTSU

Emmanuel Sackeyfio, Chief Operations Assistant
Tran Thai, Chief Executive Assistant
Rebecca Wan, EA Operations
Leila Tjiang, EA R & A (President)
Foti Vito, EA R & A (PUA)
Nicole Giebler, EA R & A (PUA)
Maddie Kalda, EA R & A (Pro Fac)
Yasmine Nasereddin, EA Student Life

Staff Team

Nicole Johnson, Executive Coordinator, UTSU
Yara Kodershah, People & Culture Manager, UTSU
Arlene Williams, Learning & Development, UTSU

Absent

Nelson Lee, Engineering Director
Katherine Jung, Life Sciences Director
Ramtin Taramsari, New College Director
Cianna Choo, St. Michael's College Director

Regrets

Jessie Wu, Humanities Director
Sydney Munro, KPE Director
Dariya Darvin, Medicine Director
Victoria Liu, Social Sciences Director
Caroline Tolton, Trinity College Director
Catherine Tan, Music Director
Roshawn Jamasi, Rotman Commerce Director



MINUTES

Open Session

1. Call to Order

This meeting is called to order at 11:21 AM.

2. Approval of Agenda

RESOLUTION

MOVED: BALLIS

SECONDED: SHEN

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

2.1 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: LAI

SECONDED: ERDOGAN

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the July 2021 Report of the Vice-President, Public & University Affairs be amended to the consent agenda.

DISCUSSION

Lai states that if the motion passes she will provide a link in the Zoom chat to the report.

CARRIED

CARRIED

3. Appointment of Speaker

RESOLUTION

MOVED: AGGARWAL

SECONDED: ALIM

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ be appointed as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

3.1 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: BALLIS

SECONDED: NAGRA

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Branden Cave be appointed as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

CARRIED

CARRIED



4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Meetings of the Board of Directors and Committees

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: DEKEL

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following be approved as presented in the appendices:

- 1. Meeting of the Board of Directors**
2nd Meeting of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors, 28 June 2021
Emergency Meeting of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors, 4 July 2021
- 2. Meetings of Committees**
Services Committee, 9 July 2021 (1st Meeting)
Clubs Committee, 11 July 2021 (1st Meeting)
Campaigns & Outreach Committee, 12 July 2021 (1st Meeting)
Student Aid Committee, 12 July 2021 (3rd Meeting)
Equity & Accessibility Committee, 13 July 2021 (1st Meeting)
Equity & Accessibility Committee, 14 July 2021 (2nd Meeting)
Finance Committee, 18 July 2021 (3rd Meeting)
Governance Committee, 19 July 2021 (2nd Meeting)

CARRIED

5. Executive Reports

DISCUSSION ITEM

1. Executive Reports

- July 2021 Report of the President
- July 2021 Report of the Vice-President, Operations
- July 2021 Report of the Vice-President, Equity
- July 2021 Report of the Vice-President, Student Life
- July 2021 Report of the Vice-President, Professional Faculties

Ballis highlighted the U of T Directory, the survey with regards to the return in the fall semester, Sustainability 101 meetings with sustainability groups across campus, and partnerships with PEARS and SMART to work on a Stella's Place peer mentorship program. She stated that they are working on the job description for the Peer Support Coordinator position and are very excited to bring the project to fruition. She stated that there are guides related to COVID, vaccines, domestic travel, and quarantines coming out soon.

Reuter stated that her month has been largely committed to finance and governance work. She highlighted the budget breakdown and thanked the Finance Committee for their aid. She also highlighted the changes in the Committee funding system, which will make funding more accessible for specific projects and initiatives. She highlighted policy review on the People and Culture policies and the EDI report completed last year. She asked for feedback on the format of the Executive reports and the accessibility of the Board meetings. She noted that she is also conducting ethical investment research along with Wan and Tjiang, updating the website for accessibility, and contributing to services evaluation alongside Wan.



Aggarwal stated that the first round of equity training for staff and directors has occurred, and that there will be another round of training in the fall. She noted that club leader equity trainings start on August 10th, and students should get in touch with Lin to sign up for this. She noted that there is a feedback form for equity training that is linked in her report. She also held the first equity and accessibility committee meeting this month, where they decided to add 3 more director seats to the committee. The Equity & Accessibility Committee will be discussing Expression Against Oppression at future meetings. Aggarwal also noted that the Advancing Equity in Education document has been published on the website, and marketing will take place shortly. Additionally, she noted that a discussion about equity and accessibility took place at the orientation round table and will be turned into a set of guidelines that will be distributed to different orientation leaders.

Lin stated that her month had been focused on Orientation. She highlighted the Instagram story takeovers in August, videographer hiring, securing guest speakers, and the Orientation round table. She stated that they are planning to have an in-person Clubs Fair, alongside an online version to ensure that the students who are unable to return to campus have the chance to get involved on campus. She added that club recognition and funding are both open on the UTSU website and highlights the Finance training on Sundays, as well as the Equity training launching in August.

Wang highlighted the UTSU's open letter with regards to sexual violence in the Faculty of Music and in the wider University community, and stated that students and organizations can sign it via the link posted. She highlighted the Arts & Science Course Enrolment Report for students in the Faculty of Music, and stated that she will present it at the next Campaigns & Outreach Committee. She detailed the first and second-entry professional faculty meeting and stated that she will send the minutes to those who could not attend once they are complete. She stated that the Student-Faculty Relationships report should be completed by November. She noted that she is planning two events for professional faculty students: Free Headshots in November and the ProFac Barbeque.

Lai noted that she took some time off during the month due to her full-time schooling. She highlighted that she prepared a deputation to the City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee speaking in favour of the Multi-Tenant Housing Framework, which was delivered on her behalf by Ballis. She noted that the current policy is fragmented and this puts students at risk. Additionally, Lai noted that they met with the OVPS and received updates on the mental health program redesign and the university's reopening, specifically information about the quarantine program and vaccinations. Lai stated that she is working with the President's team to ask for increased accommodations and a hybrid model for the fall. She added that the topic of housing was also raised at the most recent Canadian Federation of Students Ontario Executive Committee meeting, and it was noted that there would be updates on the Student Choice Initiative in the coming weeks. Lai stated that the first Campaigns & Outreach committee meeting; she noted that she missed the meeting due to conflicts but that meeting minutes are included in the Board package. Lai noted that she is working with Giebler on UMLAP, including a secondary survey to develop recommendations for the University administration, as well as potential town-hall-style consultations. She noted that there was not much time for directors to read her report.



5.1 Motion to Recess

RESOLUTION

MOVED: LAI

SECONDED: REUTER

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the meeting enter recess for 5 minutes.

CARRIED

The meeting entered recess at 11:48 AM and resumed at 11:54 AM.

6. Question Period

DISCUSSION ITEM

7. Acceptance of Resignation of St. Michael's College Director Cianna Choo

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: DEKEL

WHEREAS the St. Michael's College Director, Cianna Choo, delivered their resignation from the Board of Directors on 6 July 2021; and,

WHEREAS Bylaw X(3)(c) outlines criteria for Directors holding office until they submit a written resignation; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors accept the resignation of Cianna Choo.

DISCUSSION

Reuter noted that this is the standard procedure for the resignation of a director. She stated that there will be committee elections to fill the vacant seats left by this resignation.

CARRIED



8. Board of Directors Committee Vacancies

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: AGGARWAL

WHEREAS a spot has opened on the Elections & Referenda Committee that needs to be filled; and,

WHEREAS the changes to the Board of Directors Committees Terms of Reference add an additional three seats to the Equity & Accessibility Committee; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT _____ be appointed to the Elections & Referenda Committee; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT _____, _____, and _____ be appointed to the Equity & Accessibility Committee.

DISCUSSION

8.1 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: AGGARWAL

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT _____ be appointed to the Executive Review Committee.

CARRIED

Dekel was nominated for the Equity and Accessibility Committee and accepted.

Alim nominated themselves for the Equity and Accessibility Committee.

D'Aversa was nominated for the Executive Review Committee and accepted.

Mancuso was nominated for the Equity and Accessibility Committee and declined.

Khan was nominated for the Elections & Referenda Committee and accepted.

Goldberg was nominated for the Equity and Accessibility Committee and accepted.



8.2 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: DEKEL

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Easha Khan be appointed to the Election & Referenda Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Elad Dekel, Rayan Alim, and Hailey Goldberg be appointed to the Equity & Accessibility Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT David D'Aversa be appointed to the Executive Review Committee.

CARRIED

CARRIED

9. Motion for the UTSU Board of Directors to sign onto the Muslim Student Association's Open Letter to the University of Toronto Administration

RESOLUTION

MOVED: NAGRA

SECONDED: KHAN

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University of Toronto Students' Union sign onto the letter presented in Appendix A.

DISCUSSION

9.1 Consideration of the Question

RESOLUTION

MOVED: DEKEL

Dekel objected to the consideration of the question. He stated that it was similar in substance to the resolution to rescind the signature of the Executive Committee on the same letter, which had already been discussed at previous Board meetings.

CARRIED

Nagra noted that the letter written by the UTSU Executive Committee did not have a comprehensive understanding of the situation. She noted that the Executive Committee then signed the MSA's open letter only to have it later removed, and asked what weight the UTSU's signature carries considering it has undermined the suffering of Palestinian students. She expressed empathy with Palestinian students' pain, and noted that that previous Board meeting lacked Palestinian voices due to lack of promotion. She expressed hope that this Board meeting would allow for an informed decision, as a greater variety of student voices were present. She stated that a large portion of the previous meetings were spent debating the terms "genocide", "ethnic cleansing", and "apartheid", as well as their legal standing, but noted that the law is political and not without bias. She asked how the Board can speak on providing



mental health support to Palestinian students while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge the severity of the issue. She stated that while the UTSU has no control over the situation in Palestine, they can control whether or not students feel supported. She noted that the issue of a double-standard was discussed at the last Board meeting and that there is no excuse for the UTSU failing to release a statement in support of the Uyghur Muslims. She stated that she does not want to be part of a student government which is complacent. She acknowledged the rise in hate crimes and stated that Jewish students who feel uncomfortable returning to campus should receive support, and that Palestinian voices must be heard.

Ballis stated that the UTSU stands against discrimination and speaks out against Islamophobia and antisemitism. She asked that no hateful messages be sent to any students or Board members who speak at this meeting. She thanked everyone for their time and emotional labour. She noted the lack of Palestinian voices at the previous meetings. She stated that the number of abstentions at the previous meetings is an example of how pro-Palestinian advocacy is silenced. She stated that the UTSU Executive believes that human rights violations are happening in Palestine and will vote to sign the letter. She urged everyone to have the MSA open letter in front of them as they discuss this meeting.

9.2 Motion to Allow Speaking Rights

RESOLUTION

MOVED: DEKEL

SECONDED: KHAN

BE IT RESOLVED THAT non-Board-member UTSU members in attendance be granted speaking rights for one three-minute speaking turn.

DISCUSSION

Dekel motioned to allow speaking rights with one speaking term for non-board-members. He noted that it is a bad idea to state that everyone will have speaking rights on the UTSU social media before the motion is in place.

9.2.1 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: ALIM

BE IT RESOLVED TO strike “non-Board member UTSU members” and insert “University of Toronto students”.

DISCUSSION

Dekel stated that it is unnecessary for UTM and UTSC students to speak, as the UTSU represents only UTSG students.

Shen spoke in support of Reuter’s amendment and stated that every U of T student should be given speaking rights.



Kanter stated that he is not opposed to opening the floor to others, but noted that this is an unusual practice for the union. He asked the mover how they plan to check membership in the University for those who wish to speak.

Reuter noted that there is a membership list for all University of Toronto students.

Dekel stated that to his knowledge opening the floor to all students has never been done and asked the Board to consider the large number of students in attendance. He stated that some UTSG students may not have the opportunity to speak.

In response to Dekel, Shen noted that the UTSU is here to listen to all student voices and that only choosing to listen to student voices from a specific campus violates the spirit of the organization.

Nagra noted that the Board is here to listen to Palestinian and Israeli voices, and students from satellite campuses represent both of those groups and should both be included.

Ballis stated that she believes it is important to hear all U of T students' perspectives in order to make the most informed vote.

Alim stated that it is important that all U of T students be able to speak, as the MSA open letter includes recommendations for U of T overall, not only one campus.

Kanter stated that while he believes that student representation is important, he believes it is important for the UTSU to stay consistent on their principles. He stated that the UTSU should not be rediscussing the meeting a third time, especially considering the sensitive nature of the subject matter. He expressed concern that the board meeting was not properly advertised to students from UTM and UTSC, which may lead to students feeling that their voices were not properly heard.

Erdogan noted that this letter does not solely concern UTSG students but it is directed to the U of T President and administration, which represents all three campuses. He believes that it's important to hear the voices from all campuses as well.

CARRIED



9.2.2 Motion to Amend

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: SHEN

BE IT RESOLVED TO strike “one three-minute speaking turn” and default to three speaking turns of three minutes each with two minutes to respond to questions.

CARRIED

CARRIED

The meeting entered recess at 1:00 PM and resumed at 1:10 PM.

Albert noted that she is a Jewish Law student and that she is in support of signing onto the statement. Rather than argue on definitions, she wanted to speak on self-censorship and the need for Jewish-Palestinian solidarity. She noted self-censorship leads to silent majorities which permit institutions to act with impunity, and stated the moral obligation to not self-censor when it comes to human rights. As a Jewish student she implored all members to vote. She stated that Palestinian students on-campus deserve protection from discrimination on campus, including support and solidarity from their student government. She stated that the actions of the Faculty of Law negatively impacted Palestinian students and forced others into silence. She stated that signing the MSA’s letter does not inherently detract from safety from other groups on campus and is not at the expense of Jewish safety. She stated that it is not antisemitic to stand with Palestinians or criticize the state of Israel, and that the Jewish community includes multiple groups with diverse political opinions. She noted that political differences are uncomfortable to discuss, but that discomfort is not equivalent to discrimination. She stated that fighting anti-semitism requires relationship building and solidarity, and hoped all board members would vote in favour of the motion.

[CONTENT WARNING: First-hand experience of violent conflict] Kazevman noted that he is a fourth-year medical student who is Jewish and Israeli, and came to Canada in 2006 as a result of rocket attacks on his home in Israel. He stated that Canada was accepting and peaceful, but during the past three years at U of T he’s heard many students attacking him due to his identity – in particular, he noted that he has been asked how many Palestinians he’s killed. He described experiencing anti-semitism and anti-Zionism, and his shock at discovering a student union voted against offering Kosher options. He stated that support was scarce, and that he has been referred to as a colonialist and white supremacist, received threats, and lost career exploration opportunities. He stated that his own student society had the option to sign a letter similar to the MSA’s and declined. He stated that the issue is far more complex than what is presented in this session and letter, and that while the writers and signatories are trying to support students, they further exclude and harm Jewish students. He stated that the signing of this letter will leave students feeling unsafe and urged the Board to reject this letter and promote inclusivity.



Bienstock stated that as a Jewish student, he was not surprised that signing the MSA's open letter has been called antisemitic, but that he intends to argue in favour of the signature. He stated that the MSA's "inflammatory" title is factual considering reports from B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch, and spoke against the notion that the MSA's letter perpetuates antisemitism. He referenced the #CancelCanadaDay campaign and asked why we can recognize the fundamentally colonial nature of Canada, but not Israel. He stated that citing other global issues in order to avoid criticism of Israel serves to dehumanize Palestinian voices seeking justice, and mentioned that centring the IHRA's definition of antisemitism serves to deny Palestinians the right to fight for justice. He noted that we must be able to decouple individual experiences from systems of oppression in order to stand in solidarity with fellow students.

Mahboob noted that they are an undergraduate student society at the UTSG. The MSA letter was directed towards the Israeli government in accordance with reports from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations. She stated that it did not mention Jewish or Israeli people, nor was it debating the indigeneity of any group. She noted that by failing to sign the MSA's letter, more harm is being done at the expense of silencing Palestinians and limiting academic discourse. She shared her own experience as a child of immigrants and recognized that it is uncomfortable to come to terms with atrocities committed by our governments, but implored students to sit in that discomfort and avoid using it as an excuse to silence marginalized voices. She stated that antisemitism must be condemned and that all Jewish students should feel safe and welcomed on campus, but that these conversations should happen separately from critiques of the Israeli state.

Drazman stated that the letter is anti-semitic. She stated that while some may believe the letter merely calls for an end to violence, it weaponizes political trigger words in an attempt to demonize the world's only Jewish state. In particular, she stated that the word "genocide" was not applicable as the Palestinian population has increased. She noted that the letter also claims that Israel is committing apartheid in accordance with Human Rights Watch, whose executive director has previously been antisemitic on Twitter, and stated that this positions Jews as the oppressor. She stated that while in previous centuries Jews were hated for their race or religion, today they are hated for their nation-state Israel, which has become another way of saying "the Jews have no right to exist". She noted that anti-Zionism is the latest mutation of the world's longest hate, and that to sign the MSA's letter will make the UTSU complicit in rising antisemitism at U of T.

Al-Zuhaikla stated that they are a Palestinian student at UTM and that they are here to convince the Board to sign the letter. She stated that the main point of difference is that the University releases statements against anti-semitism, but is often the perpetrator in cases of anti-Palestinian discrimination, such as the decision to rescind Dr. Azarova's offer of employment. She condemned anti-semitism and stands for Palestine, and asked why Palestinian students don't get the same support. She spoke against the idea that you are either antisemitic or anti-Palestinian. She stated that the letter is asking for the university to support Palestinian students in the same way that they support Jewish students, and that the UTSU should be in favour of such support.



Hashish noted that it would be a mistake for the Board not to sign the letter, considering how the administration has showcased their disregard for Palestinian students. She expressed concern that this meeting needed to occur, as well as about the lack of Palestinian representation on the Board of Directors and the Equity & Accessibility Committee. She noted that Palestinian voices are often discounted and unrepresented, citing the hour-long discussion on speaking rights, and asked why it is controversial to say that she should be allowed to speak on the oppression of her people. She stated that signing the letter is a step forward to mitigate debate on the issue of Palestinian identity, which she experiences everyday as a Palestinian student on campus.

Atie questioned the letter's use of the term "genocide", and noted that the Palestinian population in Israel is increasing. She asked how there can be a genocide if there is no decrease in the population. She noted that millions died during the Rwandan genocide, Armenian genocide, and the Holocaust. She stated that by signing the MSA's open letter, the Board is allowing themselves to sign something that is not true.

Barbara stated that they appreciated the statements of Kazezman, Al-Zuhaika, and Drazman. She noted that she is Jewish and condemns anti-Palestinian actions, as well as Islamophobia, and has experienced antisemitisms during her time at U of T. She stated that the Israeli-Palestine conflict is complex and morally challenging, and that using terms such as "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide" fails to acknowledge the wrong on all sides.

Kodershah interjected with an equity statement, asking the Board to recognize that terms like "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" hold intergenerational weight. She encouraged members of the Board to avoid bringing their own interpretations of the language used, and instead to use the definitions provided in the letter or by institutions cited by the letter. She asked that they focus on whether using the term "genocide" is due cause to abstain from signing the letter, and not its definition.

Atique extended his grief for Jewish students who have experienced antisemitism and stated that acts of antisemitism are not reflective of a true ally of Palestine. He called the attention of the individuals against the signature and asked what the perceived harm of the letter is. He stated that he has read the letter and is not sure what is so divisive, as it only discussed students as a whole. He stated that the letter shines light on the devastation in Palestine and does not target any groups on campus. He spoke to the genocides mentioned by previous speakers, stating that they were successful and that the Palestinian genocide won't be. He stated that condemning a state is not the same as condemning the people, and stated that he can critique Canada's government without critiquing Canadians. He stated that he does not see falsities in the letter, and asked what is anti-semitic and causing this divide.

HN stated that the UN included the destruction of ethnic/racial groups in whole or in part in its definition of "genocide," and refuted the idea that an increasing population indicates that there is no killing. They noted that the definition did not require the deterioration of a population, and



cited statistics showing increasing Palestinian deaths and injuries over the years. They stated that these killings fulfill the definition of genocide, regardless of the population of the region.

Levinson stated that over the past month, he has seen illegitimate claims of Israel on social media that fall well beyond the scope of legitimate criticism. Specifically, he cited posts which claim that Zionism is inherently anti-semitic or that the Israelis are doing to Palestinians what the Nazis did to Jews. He stated that calls for the University to sever its research partnerships with other universities assume that academics share the opinions of their governments, and that this sentiment was included in the MSA's petition on the Munk One program and their open letter. He argued that this is an anti-semitic double-standard, as no calls have been made about partnerships with Chinese universities. He noted that antisemitism is unique compared to other forms of oppression and discrimination, as it conceals itself by appearing to punch upwards (eg. "Jews control the media"). He stated that many who wish to combat injustice fall into the trap of spreading antisemitism, which is difficult to combat/expose.

Dekel noted that this is the third time that the Board has spoken on this issue. He stated that at the emergency board meeting, Palestinian students were the only ones able to remain anonymous and were the vast majority of speakers. He claimed that Executives have been pressured by the MSA, including a closed-door meeting from which the VP Equity was barred, and asked why the decision to allow UTM and UTSC students to speak was so last-minute. He stated that both satellite campuses have a notoriously low number of Jewish students due to antisemitism on campus and within the student governments, and noted that the open letter makes Jewish and Israeli students feel unsafe. He stated that the UTSU can write their own letter including the action points of the MSA's and excluding the cherry-picked definitions from the UN and HRW. He noted that the discussion has been guilty-by-association-based, and that he has received many threats and been labelled as a Zionist by other students.

Koderdash interjected, reminding speakers to refrain from assuming the intention of other Board members and of the MSA.

Dekel stated that he was not assuming intentions, only stating the sequence of events. He continued to say that he has received many threats and been labelled as a Zionist and a Nazi on several students' social medias, despite never agreeing with the actions of the Israeli government. He noted that he did not oppose the UTSU supporting the rally against the censure, as it was solely about academic freedom and not about the Israeli people. He stated that the letter is not about the Israeli government, and attempts to paint all Israeli adults as cold-blooded killers, and fails to consider non-Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in Israel with full rights. He stated that the title of the letter is "The Palestinian Genocide" and urged the Board to vote in opposition of signing the MSA's open letter.

Fine noted that they're from UTSC, and that they are Jewish, atheist, Zionist, a member of Hillel, against Israel apartheid, and a believer in using harsh language. They stated that the letter had some parts in the listed demands that could be interpreted badly, and that the best thing would be to form an independent committee with members from Hillel and a Palestinian student organization to discuss how to best write a new letter.



Sarah R stated that the letter does not mention Israel or Jews, and that it is quite telling that this has been ignored. She stated that if discomfort was an indication of truth society would not have progressed. She stated that Muslims are not hurt when others criticize Saudi Arabia, as they understand the difference between a state and a people. She noted that Palestinian Jews exist, which she believes invalidates many Zionist arguments. She expressed her sadness that the Board must debate genocide, and stated that claims against Palestinian genocide are racist, citing the Nakba, which is legally recognized.

Mancuso thanked everyone who has spoken today. He stated that although it is the third time speaking on the motion, he voted in favour of speaking again to ensure that everyone who has an opinion will be able to share it. He stated that while he sees convincing arguments on both sides, he believes the vote is going to pass. He stated that he is not speaking to change anyone's mind, but that he will be voting against signing onto the letter. He noted that while he agrees and supports the individual elements of the letter on a whole, students who say this letter makes them feel unsafe should not be asked to justify their oppression. He stated that the UTSU should come up with an alternative statement that addresses the legitimate violence against Palestinians while preserving Jewish students' safety.

O'Halloran noted that he was the VP Operations last year. They stated that the UTSU is very clear about their stance when it comes to genocide of the Indigenous people in Canada, citing the land acknowledgements, and noted that the MSA's letter is not as divisive as it has been presented during this meeting. He stated that the UTSU's history of fighting against oppression should be upheld, and that supporting the letter is the bare minimum, which he would have been happy to do if he were still an Executive. He stated that he is not unhappy with the work that has been done, but is shocked that the MSA's letter has inspired such strong opposition. He urged the Board to sign.

Bakiza noted that regarding the double standard argument, the MSA has given statements on China; however, they believe this distracts from the main issue at hand. They identify as Palestinian. They noted that the letter first addresses the attack on Masjid Al-Aqsa during Ramadan, which was felt by Muslims everywhere, and coincided with the revelation of serious errors made in Dr. Azarova's firing. They stated that as a Palestinian, they felt attacked and that their identity would always be a barrier, and seeing the MSA's letter with the signatures of several student unions helped them be proud of their identity. They understood that there may be some discomfort, but that feeling discomfort is different than feeling attacked and as if you have to suppress your identity. They stated that while some didn't agree with signing the letter because it will cause others to feel unsafe, the letter makes them feel safer.

Nagra noted that there is still a lot of debate on the definition of "genocide" and asked if a representative from the MSA would be willing to provide more information.

Ramadan stated that the relevant information was provided in the letter, and that the MSA should not be expected to defend why the UTSU Executive chose to sign on.



Sidrah R noted that while she whole-heartedly supports the MSA letter, she would like to clarify as a co-founder of the Munk One petition that it was not affiliated with the MSA. She noted that it is not acceptable to make that assumption based on the religion of the founders as Muslims are not a homogenous group. She stated that there are student groups on campus which advocate for Uyghur Muslims in China, but that this topic is irrelevant to this meeting. She stated that the petition founders are not against trips to occupied areas, but the Munk One trip erases human rights violations and fails to recognize the illegal occupation of Palestine while using language such as “co-existence.” She stated that students only engage with Israeli people and meet with IDF soldiers on Palestinian territory. She noted that Palestinian identity is erased by the associated blog and website posts, such as landmarks and religious sites (in particular the Al-Asqa mosque) being labelled as “Israeli” and called only their Israeli names. She stated that more information is available on the petition itself, and shared an account from a student who attended the trip which describes the imbalance in perspectives. She stated that U of T is built on open dialogue and academic discourse, but that it is hypocritical that the University is cherry-picking voices from one side.

Kasmani stated that it took the University about seven years to acknowledge the importance of divesting from South African companies as it was considered too political, and that in hindsight we wonder how this was up for discussion. They noted that it is possible to criticize a state and its leaders without criticizing its people, and that this conflict is political. They stated that the act of condemning antisemitism and Palestinian apartheid are not exclusive, and asked that the Board consider how Palestinian students must be feeling.

Meeting entered recess at 2:14 PM and resumed at 2:25 PM.

Kodershah acknowledged the complexity of the issue being discussed and thanked the speakers for taking the time to listen to each other. She reminded the speakers to refrain from making assumptions about others' lived experiences and from assuming the intent of other speakers. She noted that very few individuals on the call are experts on the issue, and that there can be harm associated with presenting oneself as an expert, as it can delegitimize others' experiences. She asked that the speakers keep in mind their shared values of equality and justice.

Danah stated that they are a Palestinian student who was born as a stateless third-generation refugee, and their grandparents were exiled during the Nakba. They noted that though Israel is the only Jewish state, it shouldn't be able to act with impunity. They noted that the Uyghur genocide is irrelevant and that Palestinians are a diverse group, and stated that unsigned the letter will make Palestinian students feel unsafe. They described the emotional toll on Palestinian students caused by events in the past few months, and stated that it is exacerbated by genocide denial. They stated that a population increase means nothing, and that the median age of the Palestinian population is 28 years (Danah's own age). They stated that the UTSU has previously supported many causes, as it should, and that not signing the letter comes from erasure of Palestinian and Muslim voices.



Attar thanked the students who have come here, been vulnerable, and listened to the different perspectives, and stated that she is here to show solidarity and condemn oppression. They stated that they were taken aback and disappointed in the UTSU's possible rescinding of the signature. They stated that the Board should sign onto this letter to recognize the deeply uncomfortable truths. She stated that she was uncomfortable reading the systemic oppression detailed in the Human Rights Watch report, and that there are uncomfortable truths in the petition as well. They hoped the Board was willing to take the minimal step and stated that it is the least they can do.

Moss stated that they are outraged that people can call the motion non-divisive, as it dismisses Jews' lived experience. They read the Merriam-Webster definition of "genocide", and stated that they have lived in Israel and know that nearly all Israeli officials and citizens are opposed to such a thing. They read the definition of "ethnic cleansing" and stated that this is not the policy of the state of Israel, and that references to an ethnic majority shift the topic to Jews instead of the state. They noted that for many Jews, being Jewish entails identifying with the movement for Jewish sovereignty, and that the letter in the language is associated with an opposition to a Jewish state's existence. They read the definition for "blood libel" and stated that claims of Israel committing genocide amount to accusations of murder, and stated that they see this as a blood libel. They acknowledged the intergenerational trauma of blood libel and the natural fear of retaliation, and stated that the Jewish community fears for their safety as hate crimes against Jews make up the majority of hate crimes in Canada, with a recent increase. They stated that as a visible Jew, this letter may embolden acts of violence against them, and asked why support for the Palestinian student body must come at the expense of the mental health and wellbeing of the Jewish community.

Kodershah interjected with equity statement and stressed that comments debating the existence of a genocide are neither neutral nor apolitical. She encouraged speakers to acknowledge the complexity of the issue.

Rucker acknowledged that both sides of the discussion feel unheard and unsupported. They stated that the condemnation of Israel does fall on Jews, and stated that no distinction can be made between Israel and the Canadian Jewish community when they have been conflated over the past few weeks in the eyes of many activists. They noted that Jews are the primary target of religiously motivated hate crimes in Toronto, and gave examples from their own experience, including a professor accusing a student of being an Israeli spy. They stated that these experiences are an unavoidable outcome of being targeted in discussion, and that they see the letter as a barrier to support and inclusivity. They stated that the conversation has devolved into a debate on who the University supports more, and away from the original intent. They stated that these conversations will be a long-term problem if the letter is signed, and stated that while there is a false narrative that Jewish students do not support Palestinian students, but that they are also at risk.

Dasu thanked the Board for giving the opportunity for those affected by the events in internationally-recognized Palestine and occupied Palestine to speak. They stated that despite Israeli government propaganda, the truth is coming out. They stated that equating



anti-Zionism with antisemitism endangers nobody except Jews, and likened it to the boy who cried wolf. They stated that this is done to block criticism of Israel and censor Israeli crimes, and trivializes real and serious antisemitism.

Kanter interjected with a point of order.

Kodershah interjected with a reminder to speak only to the experiences one has access to, and to resist the urge to speak to how the letter affects communities one does not identify with.

Kanter noted that the comments they just heard are antisemitic and in violation of the Board's policies and Robert's Rules of Order, specifically citing the language of "Zionist propaganda" and the comparison of Zionists and Jews to the boy who cried wolf. He stated that these comments propagate antisemitic tropes and should not be allowed.

Cave recognized Kanter's comments and noted that the comments made by Dasu have been called out of order, but that he will be allowed to continue speaking in accordance with Robert's Rules.

Dasu clarified that he is speaking about the Israeli government, which is able to be criticized like any other political entity. He stated that claiming otherwise alienates Jews who do not stand with Israel. He stated that the MSA's letter is not divisive, but it is an uncomfortable step towards tri-campus unity. He stated that the signature on the letter is not antisemitic, but is an acknowledgement of antisemitism as well as the actions of Israel. They stated that their heart goes out to students targeted by hate, and to those affected by ethnic cleansing in Palestine. They stated that the signature is a weighty yet necessary one.

Lashin stated that while some remarks they have heard may not come from a place of ill intent, they may still be patronizing to Muslim and Arab students. Specifically, they clarified that they are referring to remarks that remind them that Muslims are being obliterated elsewhere in the world, including China, Kashmir, France, and the UK. They spoke about the Muslim ban in the United States, their own experiences in airports, mosque shootings, and the recent murder of a Muslim family in Ontario. They stated that Muslims have spent the last two Eids in mourning instead of celebration, and that they should not be told they are biased because they are picking a convenient obliteration to advocate for. They stated that they shouldn't have to spread themselves thin in order to warrant consideration from others.

Atie stated that the role of a student union is to protect and represent students, and that one should not come at the cost of the other. She stated that there has been a 438% rise in antisemitism in recent months, and described instances of antisemitic hate crimes in Toronto, New York, and London. She stated that there have been a large number of terrorist attacks in Israel by Palestinians. She stated that she, along with other Jews, are living in fear. She acknowledged that this does not represent all those who support Palestinians, and stated that by signing the MSA's letter the Board will add to that fear, because it is one-sided and does not mention any terrorist attacks or discrimination against Jews. She stated that she supports Palestinians' and Muslims' rights to equality and justice, just as she supports those rights for



Israelis and Jews. She stated that it is not black and white, and that the letter does not support both sides. She stated that she is scared for her safety if the letter is signed due to the oppression inherent in the one-sided argument. She stated that she would support a letter that supports Jews, Muslims, Palestinians, and Israelis. She stated that the antisemitic hard terms such as “apartheid” are supporting the Hamas Government and the Palestinian Authority, whose goal is to wipe Israel from existence.

Madhusudanan interjected with a point of order, and stated that the MSA’s letter does not mention Hamas or the Palestinian Authority.

Kodershah interjected with an equity statement, reminding speakers to address the Speaker and speak broadly to the terms of the letter.

HN interjected with a point of order, and stated that they are concerned with conflating Palestinians as a nationality with terrorists.

Kodershah asked that the conversation be on the contents of the letter, and not draw generalizations about groups of people.

Atie apologized for their wording, and stated that they weren’t speaking about all Palestinians. They stated that they are not asking the Board to silence Palestinian voices, but to not sign the letter at the cost of Jewish ones.

Nami stated that she is speaking as an individual U of T student and not on behalf of any student group. She expressed sympathy for those affected by antisemitism, anti-Palestinianism, and anyone affected by tension in Israel-Palestine. She acknowledged safety concerns from Jewish and Israeli students, and stated that protecting the right of self-expression for one group stops when that infringes on the right of another. She stated that Palestinian students are free to express their Palestinian discourse without being called antisemitic when criticizing the Israeli government, and that this is not mutually exclusive with Jewish students’ right to self-expression. She stated that not signing the MSA’s letter tells Palestinian students that they are not welcome, as it makes direct reference to Palestinian discourse. She stated that the letter has nothing to do with the legality of certain terms, and that if the word “genocide” was not included, debate would have centred around other words. She stated that the letter supports Palestinians and that the Board would be mistaken not to sign it.

Nadia noted that they are not Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim, or Jewish, and thanked everyone for their perspectives. She stated that she is in favour of signing the letter, and that antisemitism should be condemned. She noted that it is important to avoid generalizations about what it means to denounce the Israeli government, and stated that while not all Jewish people’s beliefs align with the Israeli government, they are harmed by implicit association. They stated that the solution is not to silence Palestinian voices, but to uplift Jewish ones as well, and that it would be hypocritical not to do both. She stated that there are commonalities in both groups’ oppression in that both are rooted in white supremacy, colonialism, and Eurocentrism, and that nobody’s voices should be excluded. She stated that the Board should support this letter and



that the language is accurate to the situation, noting that foreign influence puts Palestine at a disadvantage.

Kayed stated that while political differences may stop individuals from agreeing on terms, both sides are living in fear with disproportionate suffering on the Palestinian side. They stated that while the letter contains charged terms, its overall goal is to support a group which has been unheard for over 70 years. They stated that they felt unheard considering recent events at the Faculty of Law and the lack of ULife recognized clubs for Palestinian students until they created one. They stated that Israel's status as the only Jewish state does not erase that it is stopping their family & other Palestinian families from visiting their home, leaving them feeling disconnected from their roots. They stated that while they want their Jewish brothers & sisters to have a home, they have the privilege to visit Israel while she doesn't. They stated that Jewish and Christian Palestinians face the same issues, and that the letter reassured her that the university stands with her.

Alisa stated that there has been a recurring rhetoric that advocating for Palestinian rights infringes on the rights of Jewish people. They stated that the letter is speaking about providing support to Palestinians who have been experiencing erasure and hostile treatment on campus, including their own experiences having been attacked for their Palestinian politics. They stated that the letter neither infringes on the rights of other students nor advocates for the mistreatment of Jewish people, but condemns the University for its inaction. They stated that signing the letter shows support for students who feel unheard and unsafe.

9.3 Motion to Limit Speaking Turns to One Speaking Turn

RESOLUTION

MOVED: MANCUSO

WHEREAS time is a concern; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT speaking turns be limited to one speaking turn.

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Madhusudanan asked that the Board centre the conversation on Palestinian students, especially considering the fact that the UTSU gave and then rescinded its signature. She stated that Palestinian suffering is not political, and that the letter does not mention Jewish people. She stated that the first demand of the letter is that the University create an inclusive environment for everyone, and noted that comfort and safety are not the same thing. She stated that discomfort is having discussions with those holding different political and moral beliefs, and safety is when mosques and churches are attacked during religious events and your university ignores the violence. She stated that as a U of T student, she is hurt that her peers deny Palestinian suffering and disheartened that others are more concerned with defining genocide than with the deaths of thousands of Palestinians since 1948. She urged directors to exercise their right to vote, and stated that it is embarrassing to see only four directors voted and the rest abstained when it was last discussed. She stated that as the previous President of



the First-Year Council, she was shocked to see student leaders she worked alongside with stay complacent, and stated that if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

Kodershah interjected with a reminder to ensure all comments are addressed to the Speaker.

Handulle noted that they are a law student, and that they understand that the Board is in a difficult position, with students from different lived experiences sharing that they feel unsafe. They stated that either way there will be some students who claim to feel unsafe, and urged the Board to employ a critical perspective. They asked what it means for the legacy of our institution if we allow internationally-recognized criticism of a state to be censored, and stated that they see no other option than looking at the letter and asking “would a rational and reasonable U of T student interpret this as an affront to the Jewish people or a promotion of antisemitism?” They stated that if the answer is no, then there is no other option than to sign the letter. They urged those who have already made a decision to withhold the signature to reconsider.

Singh stated that they do not believe that anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitism, and that one could be critical of the Israeli state and not antisemitic or vice-versa. They stated that there is a problem if, out of all the countries in the world, one only criticizes the Jewish state. They stated that there are many countries committing human rights violations against women, LGBT people, and religious minorities. They stated that while some of Israel's actions are condemnable, the UTSU choosing to sign a letter targeting one specific Jewish state is antisemitic. They mentioned that the letter asks the University to end the Munk One trip in Israel, and asked if the UTSU is going to ask the University to avoid conducting research trips in any countries that commit human rights violations, specifically citing China and Saudi Arabia. They stated that if the UTSU was willing to criticize all 198 countries, then signing the letter would be fine, but to only criticize one state is antisemitic.

Rachel G stated that she is a Jewish medical student and that she supports the letter to the extent that it stands up for Palestinians, but takes issue with its singular focus on Israel. She stated that the letter doesn't mention atrocities committed by Hamas, including using human shields in violation of international human rights by launching missiles from schools and hospitals. She stated that when a letter in support of Palestinians condemns only the Jewish state, it is hard not to feel subjected to a double standard. She stated that she would support a letter which offers support to Palestinian people, but that this can be done without demonizing the Jewish people. She stated that as the granddaughter of Auschwitz survivors, she knows better than to ignore antisemitism because it's disguised as something else, and stated that it is extremely invalidating when the language of the letter is dismissed as immaterial. She stated that she opposes the signing of this letter, but supports the creation of a more unifying letter which supports all.

Reuter thanked everyone for attending and clarified that the UTSU Executive Committee plans to vote in favour of signing the letter, and any directors who vote to sign will not be alone in doing so. She acknowledged that this is the bare minimum that the UTSU can do, and



expressed hope that they can work with various student groups to support Palestinian and Jewish students throughout the return to campus.

9.4 Motion to Call the Question

RESOLUTION

MOVED: REUTER

SECONDED: NAGRA

CARRIED

9.5 Motion to Allow David D'Aversa & Rayan Alim to Speak

RESOLUTION

MOVED: ALIM

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

D'Aversa thanked everyone who spoke, and stated that while he tries to empathize, he knows that he cannot fully understand the pain and experiences on both sides, and that no person or letter can do justice to that. He stated that the biggest positive of the letter is letting the Palestinian members of the community know that we recognize them, and the major drawback is that this might come at the expense of the safety of the Israeli and Jewish community members. He stated that he doesn't believe the UTSU should sign the letter. He stated that this is the third meeting centred on the topic, revealing the division in the U of T community and paralyzing the Board. He stated that they've heard about closed-door meetings, which undermine the transparency of the UTSU, and noted that the signature that was voted to rescind remains on the letter. He stated that they see the Executives under heavy external pressure, and asked what precedent signing the letter sets, as the UTSU is supposed to be an apolitical body that advocates for the rights and wellbeing of students.

Alim thanked everyone for their opinions, and noted that the high attendance of the meeting is a result of the Board's previous decision not to sign the letter. She stated that Palestinian students have said that the reason they chose to speak is because the Board chose not to sign the letter, and stated that it is important to remember that they started this meeting with a Jewish student speaking in support of the letter. She stated that in a way she is glad the motion was rejected previously, as it caused many more voices to come out and share their perspectives. She spoke to the importance of the meeting and urged the rest of the Board to sign onto the letter in support of the voices that came forward today.

CARRIED

10. Adjournment

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED



The meeting adjourns at 3:44 PM.

Appendices Listed on Following Page



APPENDICES

- **Consent Agenda**

Link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IU3lBVll1z107V61qmt0eNV730GQF54h?usp=sharing>

A Muslim Student Association's Open letter to the University of Toronto Administration

Link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lri_cMU8fjl89MTB6ZDkxt5oGZJh9WR7ryCU-SsAD6w/edit?usp=sharing