



GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

September 17, 2009

Dr. David Naylor, President
Office of the President
University of Toronto
27 King's College Circle, Room 206
Toronto ON Canada
M5S 1A1

Re: Grave concerns about impending library user fees

Dear President Naylor:

The Graduate Students' Union would like to express its strong objection to the University of Toronto's impending imposition of a user fee on graduate students, staff and faculty members from other universities who use the vast collection of books and archival materials in our library system. It is a step backward from the notion and practice of accessible public education for this university to erect barriers around educational resources that are the product of collective effort.

The users of the university's educational resources are not the cause of the budgetary challenges facing it. The challenge that we face at this institution is due to the underfunding of the postsecondary education sector by the federal and provincial governments. This funding shortfall cannot be solved through unconscionable user fees, which are contrary to the principles of universal access to public services and affordable public education. Students at this institution, along with student organisations, community groups and trade unions, have long demanded the adequate reinvestment in post-secondary education in this province.

The University of Toronto is a space that facilitates innovation and creativity, but it is blazing an unenviable and undesirable trail on user fees for the public's access to its library and archival collections. This type of innovation does not have public merit and will extract resources from graduate students, staff and faculty from other universities and likely inspire similar action from universities in the province of Ontario and across Canada. The net result of widespread library user fees will be increased financial burden for members of the public who need to use our library and archival materials.

The Graduate Students' Union asks that the university immediately rescind this user fees policy and not impose such a fee on students who use our library and archival collections.

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This fee is not reflective of the humanist and beneficent tradition of the University of Toronto, and is a grave threat to the practice of accessible and affordable public education. Instead, the university should join with students, student organisations, trade unions, community groups, university partners and other stakeholders in our push for a universal, accessible and affordable post-secondary educational system. The University of Toronto is a strategic partner in the post-secondary education sector and we at this university should be undertaking initiatives to strengthen the access to public educational resources.

Sincerely,

The Graduate Students' Union

Cc: David Peterson
Cheryl Misak
Faculty Association, University of Toronto