



University of Toronto

Office of the Governing Council  
27 King's College Circle, Room 106  
Simcoe Hall

Toronto ON, M5S 1A1

June 25, 2018

**RE: Governing Council Vote on Mandated Leave Policy**

Dear Members of Governing Council,

On behalf of 350,000 post-secondary students across Ontario, I urge you to vote against the proposed Mandated Leave Policy being brought forward to the University of Toronto's Governing Council this Wednesday, June 27, 2018.

Students have long advocated for improvements to mental health services and policies that promote a culture of care. At a time when students across the country are suffering from a mental health crisis, it is crucial for institutions to be mindful of the implications of their policies on students' mental health and practice careful due diligence.

The policy as presented will disproportionately impact international students who are here on study permits and cannot afford to have their degrees extended without risking their ability to complete their studies in Canada. Students are also concerned about how the Mandated Leave Policy may impact students' access to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and whether or not any time on leave would count towards the six months grace period afforded to students before needing to repay their loans.

Though the leadership of this policy has claimed that it is for extreme cases, it is not unique for these types of policies to be used against the most marginalized students on campus. Students are concerned that the University of Toronto is more interested in developing a worst-case-scenario policy rather than increase funding and resources for the support services offered on campus. Rather than anticipate the failures of support services and campus accommodations, the University should strive to ensure that better supports are available to students.

The message communicated within this policy is that the University of Toronto is no place for students struggling with mental health issues. This policy effectively removes the most vulnerable students from whatever supports they may have found for themselves on campus and puts the onus of healing and wellness on the individual student rather than the larger campus community.

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If the University of Toronto is committed to creating consent culture on campus, this commitment must expand to policies created by the institution. Moving forward with a policy where students from all three campuses have spoken in opposition is not consensual. Students are experts in their own experiences and know the supports they need to succeed in post-secondary education. The University of Toronto has an opportunity to be a world-class leader in student mental health.

The most successful policies are those that center the voices of those who will be impacted. I encourage you to reconsider this policy and take this opportunity to join your campus community in finding sustainable solutions to students' mental health crises.

In Student Solidarity,

Nour Alideeb  
Chairperson

CC:

Ms N. Jane Pepino, Vice-Chair  
The Honourable Michael H. Wilson, Chancellor  
Professor Meric S. Gertler, President  
Mr. Preet Banerjee  
Mr. Harvey T. Botting  
Mr. David N. Bowden  
Dr. Catherine Bragg  
Mr. P.C. Choo  
Mr. Jeff P. Collins  
Ms Janet L. Ecker  
Mr. Aidan H. Fishman  
Ms Susan Froom  
Mr. Gary D. Goldberg  
Dr. Avrum I. Gotlieb  
Ms Amanda Harvey-Sanchez  
Ms Zabeen Hirji  
Ms Mala Kashyap  
Professor Bruce Kidd  
Professor Paul Kingston  
Mr. R. Mark Krembil  
Mr. Nykolaj F. Kuryluk  
Professor Normand Labrie  
Professor Ernest W.N. Lam  
Professor Mark Lautens  
Mr. Brian D. Lawson  
Professor Jan K. Mahrt-Smith  
Professor Mohan Matthen  
Mr. John Paul Morgan  
Ms Mama Adobea Nii Owoo  
Professor Cheryl Regehr  
Ms Catherine Riddell  
Mr. Mark Henry Rowswell

Professor Andrea M. Sass-Kortsak  
Professor Salvatore M. Spadafora  
Professor Janice Gross Stein  
Mr. Andrew Szende  
Professor Nicholas Terpstra  
Mr. W. Keith Thomas  
Professor Steven J. Thorpe  
Mr. Twesh Upadhyaya  
Mr. Bruce Winter  
Mr. Robert Zhi Cheng Xu  
Ms Samra Zafar  
Ms Emeli (Li) Zhang  
Ms Sheree Drummond