RE: Statement on the recent transphobic attack at the University of Waterloo

CW: Transphobic and Queerphobic violence

July 10, 2023

The University of Toronto Graduate Students’ Union (UTGSU) is deeply concerned and devastated by the recent attack on the University of Waterloo campus. We condemn this hate-motivated attack and stand in solidarity with the University of Waterloo community, as well as Trans, Two-Spirited, Non-binary, Gender-diverse, and Queer students, faculty, and staff affected by transphobic and queerphobic violence worldwide.

On June 28, 2023, two students and one professor were stabbed during a philosophy class on gender issues at the University of Waterloo. This was a hate-motivated attack related to gender expression and gender identity. Across Turtle Island there is an extremely alarming rise in recent acts of hate-motivated violence on Queer, Trans, Two-Spirited, Non-binary, and Gender-diverse students, staff, and faculty within post-secondary institutions, speaking to the urgent need for comprehensive action, legislature, and policy to eradicate transphobic, queerphobic, and other forms of hate-motivated violence that remains rampant both on and off campuses. All students, staff and faculty deserve a learning and working environment that is devoid of violence and the constant threat of death.

This is not an isolated incident rather it is the result of a colonial systemic structure within higher education and our society that allows transphobic and queerphobic violence to continue. U of T’s own ongoing history of the lack of action around transphobic and queerphobic violence on campus and failure to create affirming learning spaces is appalling -- from creating speaking platforms for transphobic and racist faculty such as Jordan Peterson, to inadequate resources and services that fail to address the needs of Queer, Trans and Gender-expansive students, staff and faculty.

The UTGSU echoes the call by The Canadian Federation of Students for the University of Waterloo, the University of Toronto administration, and all levels of government to:
● Ensure our campuses are spaces that are safe for all students to participate freely in discussion and debate, without fear of violence or hate;
● Establish greater safety measures for marginalized students on campus, particularly those belonging to the 2SLGBTQ+ communities;
● Support 2SLGBTQ+ resource centres, counselling services, and community groups with trained professionals who understand the unique challenges faced by trans, queer, and gender diverse students; and
● Review and update institutional policies to explicitly protect and support trans, queer, and gender diverse students.

A list of mental health supports available for the U of T community is provided below, for our members who may be seeking support at this time.

In solidarity,
UTGSU Executive
Mental Health Services:

24/7 Emergency Counseling Services:

U of T My Student Support Program (My SSP) | **1-844-451-9700**. Outside of North America, call **001-416-380-6578**. Culturally-competent mental health and counseling services **in 146 languages** for all U of T students.

Good2Talk Student Helpline | **1-866-925-5454**
Professional counseling, information and referrals helpline for mental health, addictions and students well-being.

Student Life: Health and Wellness:

Support when you feel distressed-University of Toronto

2SLGBTQ+ Services

*Rainbow Health Ontario*

*The 519*

LGBT Youthline