



Friday, March 19, 2021

Request: Extension of Timeline for the review of the University-Mandated Leave of Absence Policy (UMLAP)

Dear Professor Ainslie,

On behalf of over 90,000 students at the University of Toronto (UofT), we are writing to request an extension of the timeline for the review of the University-Mandated Leave of Absence Policy (UMLAP).

The current review process for the UMLAP places consultations during one of the busiest times of the academic year. Based on various surveys and feedback from members, we are acutely aware that the ongoing pandemic has negatively impacted students' physical, emotional and mental well-being. Students are just trying to survive. As global citizens, we are collectively experiencing and trying to navigate ongoing trauma brought on by the pandemic but also the rise of inequities, social injustice, hate crimes and deteriorating mental health. Issues such as time zone differences, access to internet and technology, as well as simply coping and managing during the pandemic make engaging with the review process even more complex.

Students across all three campuses, regardless of their year of study, program or degree have voiced concerns about the punitive nature of the UMLAP. Since policy reviews occur only every three years, we believe that more time should be devoted to meaningful consultations in order to effectively incorporate student feedback.

As such, we would like to request that the review for the UMLAP be extended until Fall 2021 to allow for more thorough consultations and focus groups. This timeline extension will also allow for in-person conversations considering UofT's plans to return to campus in September. Lastly, this extension will allow for a report to be submitted to the Governing Council in December 2021 or February 2022. We believe that having important votes during the academic year will increase student participation and oversight of the meetings themselves.

As organizations who are committed to supporting students and their well-being, we hope this extension will be welcomed in light of the ongoing difficulties students are experiencing from around the world. We look forward to your response.

In Student Solidarity,

The Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students at UofT (APUS)
The Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU)
The University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU)
The University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
The University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU)



CC

Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President and Provost

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