

10 June 2020

UTS Administration
University of Toronto Schools
30 Humbert Street
Toronto, ON M6J 1M5

Dear UTS Administration,

We hope that the UTS community has remained safe and well over the past several turbulent months. As alumni, we cannot overstate the impact that UTS has had upon us, and we are proud to have attended a school dedicated to preparing its students to become “socially responsible global citizens.” We are writing today to express concern, however, that UTS is underperforming in this goal. Becoming a socially responsible global citizen requires openness to understanding our existence in a racially inequitable system and working to correct our own biases and complicity, yet some of our peers have experienced years of hurtful and insensitive racist behaviour at UTS that have seemingly gone unchecked. We are now calling on the administration to reflect honestly and critically on its role in perpetuating systemic racism, as well as its responsibility as an institution to change the status quo at a higher level. We care deeply about UTS and its continued growth and success, which is why we are presenting the following concerns:

- Black students at the school are often on the receiving end of racist jokes, remarks, and social media posts, indicating that there exists a culture of anti-Black racism at UTS.
- There is a lack of transparency in the school’s approach to addressing and reprimanding racist behaviour. For example, the “Mutual Respect Policy” and the “Equity and Inclusive Education Policy” that have been designed for this purpose are only *referenced* on the UTS’ website; the policies themselves cannot be found online. It is disheartening that other policies are well-publicized and defined on this platform while the aforementioned ones are not.
- UTS has a responsibility to educate its students in a way that *prevents* racist thinking and behaviour, but we feel that it falls short of this expectation in both its direct, e.g. anti-racist trainings, and indirect programming, e.g. curriculum.
- There are very few Black students or faculty members at UTS, which is not reflective of the city’s demographic. We fear that UTS remains inaccessible to marginalized groups in the GTA and is therefore inadvertently perpetuating systemic inequities.

In response to the above concerns, we propose the following courses of action:

1. Develop a transparent strategy, such as an “Anti-Racism Policy,” that addresses and reprimands racist behaviour at UTS;
 - a. This policy should be easily accessible on UTS’ website as well as promoted to all members of the UTS community, including parents.
 - b. The policy should be focused on engaging rather than alienating all students involved. It should also be paired with an investigation into why the incident occurred.

- c. Furthermore, the policy must apply to both staff and students at the school, and should specifically address how staff will be held accountable for racist behaviour.
2. Develop a transparent strategy to prevent racist thinking and behaviour at UTS, which includes both (a.) direct and (b.) indirect programming:
 - a. Creating mandatory anti-racist trainings directed at all members of the UTS community that educate on systemic and internalized racism and ways to address it;
 - i. There should be specific trainings addressed to the UTS parent community;
 - b. Incorporating more non-white perspectives into our curriculum, including in the sciences, humanities, arts, and social sciences;
 - i. The curriculum should include selections from the wide array of artistic, scientific, and academic work by Black artists and professionals, as well as by other marginalized groups, such as Indigenous peoples.
 - ii. There should be a conscious effort to recognize and push back against curricula formed under a colonialist lens; voices and perspectives from a variety of marginalized peoples, including Indigenous peoples, should be incorporated instead of Eurocentric perspectives.
3. Critically reflect and work to address the underrepresentation of Black people as well as other marginalized groups within the UTS community, in both the student body as well as staff and faculty;
 - a. Dedicate more financial and administrative resources to outreach programs for underrepresented communities to help inform and educate prospective students about UTS and its application process;
 - i. Employ more staff members in the Outreach, Community Engagement, and Summer Programs office to assist in rapidly implementing and expanding current outreach initiatives, such as the partnership with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the GATE program, and building connections with underrepresented communities;
 - ii. Further promote the existence of these programs through the UTS Parents Association and UTS alumni network as well as to all UTS staff to encourage more widespread engagement in these projects;
 - i. Establish a Community of Support (CoS) that would connect students from underrepresented communities with staff, alumni, and current students to help them navigate the admissions process and other hurdles to joining the UTS community;
 - b. Adopt a more holistic approach to UTS' admission procedure that will help account for racial inequities preventing marginalized communities from accessing educational opportunities such as the ones UTS provides;
 - c. Provide financial resources for underrepresented students applying to UTS, such as scholarships;
 - i. Establish a fund for alumni donations for this specific purpose.
4. The school should release an annual report in response to the above calls to action, detailing the status of their implementation;

- a. This internal evaluation should accompany the annual publication of Equity and Inclusion Student Survey, which will help provide insight into the effectiveness of these changes.

We believe that implementing the above will: 1) enrich the UTS learning environment for all students by introducing more diverse opinions, beliefs, and backgrounds to the classroom; 2) allow UTS to set an example for other high-achieving schools in Toronto and beyond; and 3) make the UTS learning environment more welcoming to allow marginalized students to thrive in the school.

Additionally, although this letter focuses specifically on anti-Black racism in the UTS community, we expect that these changes will be just the start in eradicating any culture of oppression at UTS, including, but not limited to, the existence and practice of anti-Indigenous, anti-LGBTQIA, islamophobic, and anti-Semitic sentiments. We believe that a successful change in UTS' teaching and learning environment requires that *all* types of oppression are actively prevented and thoughtfully addressed.

We are sharing these concerns because we are committed to helping UTS become a place more reflective of its mission in educating socially responsible global citizens. We sincerely hope that you will similarly commit to this goal through our above proposals and we also ask that you continue to keep us in the conversation as you navigate these changes.

Sincerely,

Kyra Colbert '16

Cindy Gao '17

Taylor Shirliff-Hinds '17

Kimberly Ho '17

Alec Sampaleanu '17

Natasha Richmond '16

Soha Khorsand '17

Ruby Zhang '15

Amy Kim '17

Nicole Richmond '18

Erin Manogaran '18

Daria Zaitseva '17

Nicolette Dmytryshyn '18

Deanna Kim '17

Benjamin Levy '15

Jordan Torbay '18

Catherine Hu '15

Lydia '18

Jessica Chee '16

Owen Torrey '17

Elizabeth Shaw '17

Angela He '15

Charlie O'Connor-Clarke '15

Aashim Aggarwal '15

Brigit Brown '17

Alex Birkenshaw '16

Chloe Yeung '18

Shangari Vijenthira '18

Andrew Tavares-Pitts '18

Angela Wei '18

Max Mickelson '18

Sara Fong '17

Kristen Gracie '15

Vivien Illion '18

Jane Cooper '15

Izzy Kim '16

Ian Burns '16

Fiona Lee '17

Ashley Wong '17

Jiyoona Moon '17

Emily Sugianto '18

Alan Gao '15

Pema Khando '17

Cameron Linhares-Huang '19

Ashley Bate '16

Kevin Min '17

Oliver Grocott '17

Jill O'Craven '15

Samantha Ford '19

Bridget Peters '19

Eli Levine '19

Natalie Ngo '15
Divya Santhanam '15
Aran Winter '19
Sooyeon Lee '19
Kristen Chang '19
Sam Howard '17
Zoe Lazaris '19
Jody Mou '17
Gabriel Beiner '19
Caleb Pittman '19
Karina Vandenhoven '19
Alice Vlasov '19
Shannon O'Neill '19
Lynna Li '19
Kari Kuo '18
Chloe Macklin '19
Nicholas Yeung '17
Grant Oyston '09
Gina Jiang '16
Tya Vine '15
Christina Brinza '18
Selene Chen '17
Daphne Lin '19
Janet Peng '18
Minnie Menezes '18
Alisha Atri '16
Armin Safavi '17
Celeste Ulicki '19
Elijah Goldstein '19
Julia Pei '17
Andrew Chang '17
Silja Walenius '17
Hannah Feldman '17
Edward Tian '18
Emma Meinrenken '17
Safiya Rajwani '16
Clarke VandenHoven '16
Nuala Burnham '17
Bernie Jin '19
Madeline Elder '16
Amanda Morin '17
Alessandra Ametrano '17
George Radner '14

Julie Seeger '19
Anonymous '88
Noah Opolsky '09
Jai Aggarwal '16
Camilla Parpia '15
Bhavyaa Chandarana '16
Clare Fiala '18
Alex Radu '09
Lauren Friedman '09
Shannon Egan '15
Phoebe McElligott '19
Albert Cheng '19
Ariel Tozman '19
Serina Ahmad '17
Alison Wong '12
Kristine Uchendu '19
Cassandra Douglas '12
Phillip Christoffersen '17
Ilana Tavshunsky '12
Ethan Baron '19
Ruqayya Hirji '18
Neda Pirouzmand '16
Mio Yamanaka '18
Tristan Vena '19
Justine Law '16
Maria Murray '17
Kimia Mir-shokraei '18
Ryan Hong '17
Alyssa Parpia '09
Ryan Lau '12
Jia Jia Ho '15
Tamie Dolny '10
Chloe Mighton '10
Samantha Pramanick, '12
Daniel Lee '15
Jing Yi Wang '18
Rhea Jangra '17
Amy Freeman '15
Julia Wei '15
Roksana Piaskoski '17
Lisa Yu '17
Charlotte Teng '19
Fanny Cheng '15

Serena Ung '17
Jean Kim '17
Gregory Ho '17
Matthew Egan '19
Olivia Ly '15
Brian McPhaden '17
Catherine Vlasov '15
Minh-Tam Nguyen '16
Jessica Yu '15
Ioana Burtea '15
Linxi Chen '17
Claire Hunter '19
June Dong '13
Haedeun Kim '15
Justin Wang '13
Jeyanth Inkaran '13
Lucas Barboza '17
Natasha Tang '13
Elizabeth Mei '17
Sherwin Wong '12
Kimberly Wong '12
Ariana Youm '13
James Hogan '17
Angela Ma '13
Aylin Manduric '13
Alison Zhou '15
Lucinda Qu '13
Olivia Maier '13
Corinna Ha '15
Raluca Petrut '17
Umesh Haran '12
Andy Ma '13
Alexander Slamen '16
Mustafa (Vic) Uzumeri '74
Brynne Yarranton '13
Bridget Allen-O'Neil '13
Natasha Pardhan '09
Micah Bai '16
John Dee '16
Leo Gelfand '16
Joshua Feldman '13
Avi Fogel '19
Gasira Timir '15

Emma Clarke '17
Jades Swadron '13
Bill Jia '15
Audriana Li '09
Nicola Desana Rose '18
Emily Rea '14
Tiffany Yung '17
Olivia Anderson-Clarke '17
Claire Shaw '19
Ashley Yip '18
Ellie Grushcow '19
Malhaar Moharir '19
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Saskia Laufer '19
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Naomi Boyd '17
Julia Bugiel '13
Candice Chow '20
Martine Handelman Duffy '17
Yael Boyd '14

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Sara Hwang '14
Samaa Kazerouni '14
Rachel Lee '16
Jack Prokopec '14
Alexander Fung '12
Jasmine Lee '18
Ashna Thaya '16
Nathan Farrant-Diaz '14
Rebecca Steele '13
Grace Parish '20
Jerry Yang '17
Ryan Lee '12
Fariba Ishrar, '17
Nishita Saha, '16
Kim Jarvi '70
Isha Shah '18
Reena Zhan '14
Hayle Noh '18
Isabel Maier '16

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Arlene Jiang '17
Cassandra Extavour '91
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Khaleel Rajwani '15
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