

Policy Resolution Amendment Package

Winter 2024 Semi-Annual General Meeting

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Decolonization

Decolonial Student Union on Turtle Island:

Colonialism is a historical and ongoing global undertaking where settlers continue to occupy land, dictate social, political, and economic systems, and exploit Indigenous peoples and their resources. Historically, across Turtle Island, colonialism has manifested itself through the Crown upholding and enforcing Canadian authority on Indigenous nations through colonial policies, land theft, and assimilation of Indigenous peoples through Residential Schools and the Indian Act. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (FNMI) still experience the lasting impacts of colonialism through the criminal justice system, education, health care, the government, and many public and private institutions. Indigenous communities still face numerous disadvantages within social, political, and economic spheres that directly result from colonialism and intergenerational trauma.

Some examples of ongoing settler colonialism as it is manifested in Canada today include, but are not limited to:

- i. The ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-spirit, and Trans peoples (MMIWG2ST).
- ii. Academic curricula that exclude and diminish the histories and contributions of First Nations communities.
- iii. Discrimination in health care, which includes the forced sterilization of Indigenous peoples by health care professionals.
- iv. Mass incarceration of Indigenous peoples within Canada's legal system in which Indigenous people are overrepresented.
- v. Illegal occupation of sovereign land by the Canadian Government to enforce colonialism and land theft.
- vi. Environmental atrocities that impact Indigenous land, food and water sources.
- Vii. The loss of traditional language, practices and ceremonies.
- Vii. Lateral Violence & Settler ableism; prejudice by settlers and Indigenous people to uphold the creation of systems to push assimilation tactics on Indigenous peoples in order to maintain White supremacy and pursue cultural elimination. Settler ableism is a form of oppression that impacts Indigenous communities and individuals through systems such as the carceral and medical systems. Settler ableism refers to assimilation and assimilative tactics against Indigenous peoples and knowledge.

The Trent Central Student Association (TCSA) recognizes that colonialism is rooted in historical, social, cultural, political, economic and systemic discrimination against Indigenous

peoples. The TCSA acknowledges that Indigenous students are disproportionately impacted by colonialism and intergenerational trauma. The TCSA is committed to paying special attention to dismantling harmful colonial practices within post-secondary institutions across Turtle Island.

The Association supports:

- First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students have safe and culturally sensitive environments to pursue traditional and academic teachings;
- The Land Back Movement which promotes the return to communal land ownership of traditional and unceded Indigenous lands, and rejects the colonial concept of private land ownership.
- First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students having access to land-based teachings
- Access to traditional mental health resources and culturally sensitive counselling;
- The creation of appropriate spaces for students to participate in traditional practices;
- The right of Indigenous students to have access to institutions that are free from discrimination, settler colonialism, absconded culturally significant items and commemorative displays that glorify colonization and its perpetrators’;
- The decolonization of post-secondary education, including the prioritization of decolonial methodologies and Indigenization;
- The renaming of Champlain, Lady Eaton, and Catherine Parr Traill colleges;
- The inclusion and importance of Indigenous teachings and text to be included in all aspects of academia;
- The Creation and support of faculty by the University in integrating inclusive pedagogy and diverse content into existing course entitlement of occupied people to resist occupying forces by any and all lawful means

The Association opposes:

- The glorification of colonial figures through commemorative naming, art and celebrations
- Epistemic ignorance upheld by the neoliberal colonial university;
- The illegal occupation of sovereign Indigenous land
- The illegal extraction of resources from Indigenous peoples and communities
- The unjust recommendations made by the Champlain Committee, prioritizing settler methodology and ways of knowing and Western sources as a means to evade the responsibility of how the naming of Champlain College maintains colonial supremacy by maintaining a legacy of exploitation, violence, and subjugation.
- Military occupation of unceded land and territory.

Colonization on a Global Scale:

The TCSA recognizes the impacts of colonialism beyond Turtle Island on a global scale. Furthermore, it acknowledges that colonial foreign rule is a violation of human rights. Colonization has historically and continues to manifest itself globally through racial discrimination, enslavement of marginalized populations, xenophobia, land exploitation, apartheid, wars, violence against women and children, genocide, religious conflicts and cultural assimilation. Colonialism can operate within the political, sociological, and cultural systems of a place even after the occupation by colonizers has ended.

Settler colonialism is a tool of imperialism in which outsiders come to land inhabited by Indigenous peoples and claim it as their own. Settler colonialism normalizes the continuous settler occupation, exploiting lands and resources with which Indigenous peoples have a genealogical relationship with. Further displacement of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands occurs through settler colonial tactics of genocide, war, systematic displacement, and the erasure of native cultures and identities. The Association recognizes the global impacts of colonialism on its Indigenous membership and is committed to dismantling harmful ideologies, stereotypes, and practices within post-secondary institutions.

The Association supports:

- Indigenous liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle.

The Association opposes:

- Apartheid regimes that use policy to enforce segregation and political, social, and economic discrimination against marginalized groups.
- The extraction of resources from Indigenous communities and lands.
- Genocide against Indigenous peoples, culture, land, and communities.
- Militant occupation of land by colonial forces.

Policing & Militarization

Preamble:

The police are an institution empowered by the state to enforce the law, protect property, and limit civil disorder. However, as an institution, the police force often acts to perpetuate violence, misconduct, discrimination, and oppression against already marginalized people. Racial profiling, excessive use of force, targeted surveillance, victim-blaming, immigration raids and criminalization of political dissent are a few of the many ways in which the police uphold systems that perpetuate sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, colonialism and other

forms of marginalization. Similarly, military forces act as government agents who work to protect the state's best interests and carry out policies rooted in colonization. In many cases, police and military forces are used interchangeably and often train and work together on policing initiatives in communities in Canada and around the world, often under the guise of peacekeeping.

The creation of Canada's police force (The RCMP) was not to maintain peace but to uphold and enforce Canadian authority on Indigenous nations through colonial policies, land theft, and assimilation of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, they aid in the suppression of immigration and minority groups. Within Peterborough, we have seen an increase in policing from local forces of BIPOC, Racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and houseless communities.

The excessive use of force by police can also be seen in low-income, marginalized communities, where groups of people who are Racialized, impoverished, status and non-status Indigenous peoples or dealing with mental health and addiction are targeted, placed under surveillance, harassed and profiled on an ongoing basis.

As a response to this, communities are developing alternative and community-based policing models, ensuring community-wide accountability, and curbing high rates of brutality, criminalization, and incarceration. All people should be free from endangerment and unfair treatment, both in Canada and globally. Governments have the responsibility to support people living within their borders and act on their behalf at home and internationally. The police and the military both share a history of targeting marginalized communities and a history of recruiting members from those very groups they target. Students are among those groups the police and military have worked to repress dissent, target student activists and vulnerable low-income students when recruiting new members.

The TCSA Supports:

- i. Alternative, community-based policing and accountability that focuses on trauma-informed crime prevention and rehabilitation.
- ii. Trauma-informed, community-based outreach/recruitment initiatives that are respectful of the experiences that Trent's diverse student population has with policing / military institutions.
- iii. Domestic and foreign policy that aims at peace-building, disarmament, and demilitarization and promotes the safety and human dignity of all people.
- iv. Pacifism as state and societal policy which calls for the abolition of the institutions of the military and war.
- v. The idea of multilateral disarmament.
- vi. The elimination of all nuclear weapons as a step towards global peace.

- vii. The reallocation of police and military funding to equitable community programs.
- viii. The collaboration between Forensic Studies, other academic departments and community organisations for the purposes of program requirements

The TCSA Opposes:

- I. Insensitive recruitment initiatives or presence on campus that are not for educational or safety-related purposes.
- II. Plainclothes or uniformed police on campus as a form of general surveillance or intimidation.
- III. The use of police force to perpetuate racism, colonialism and systemic discrimination.
- IV. War and occupation as state policies.
- V. The use of police to further the Prison-Industrial Complex.
- VI. Cuts to social and educational programs that increase military spending.
- VII. Forced military conscription.
- VIII. Brutality in domestic policing and foreign military actions, including but not limited to actions classified as “peacekeeping” and “security.”
- IX. The aggressive use of force by police or military against protestors or any civilians to repress dissent.
- X. University funding being allocated towards nonacademic pro-policing initiatives.
- XI. Negligent university programming or communications by departments that coerce students to seek unsafe police intervention.
- XII. Genocide, Apartheid, attrition, and war crimes against any people or sociopolitical group.
- XIII. Militant occupation of unceded land and territory.

Policy

No TCSA resources, space, recognition, or funding will be allocated to enhance groups/individuals' support toward nonacademic police and military activities. Such activities are defined as any campaigns (demonstrations, distribution, solicitation, or lobbying efforts) that seek to recruit or promote recruitment and are not for program or education requirements. This policy extends to all funding allocated to TCSA-registered clubs.

The following are up for renewal:

Board of Governors Composition

Many universities appoint student leaders to the Board of Governors/Regents which ensures that elected and engaged student leaders are involved in the highest level of decision-making at these institutions. This is not the case at Trent. These seats are elected from student body at large, irrespective of Trent's three student unions.

Currently, Durham students and Graduate students must compete against Peterborough Undergraduates for two available seats on the Board of Governors. The Association supports increasing the current number of student Board of Governor seats to 3 to ensure that Durham Students, Peterborough undergraduates, and graduate students each get to elect a representative to the Board of Governors. Including appointments for student representatives from each student demographic at Trent enhances representation within the Board of Governors.

The Association also calls upon Trent University's Board of Governors to create a seat for representation from the Curve Lake First Nation community to ensure that all decisions are made with respect to the contexts of colonialism and reconciliation.

Class Size and Faculty Support

The Association calls upon the Board of Governors and administration of Trent University to protect small group learning by increasing the number of teaching- only faculty at Trent via tenure-track or multi-year contract work. Faculty should have mandatory training concerning student disability accommodation, international student support, sexual violence prevention, mental health crisis response, systemic racism and microaggressions, Indigenous competency, anti-oppression and pedagogy included in their collective agreements to ensure they have the support to maintain a positive classroom environment.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Oppression

In the conduct of its business and the development of its policies, the Association shall endeavor to create and maintain an environment of mutual respect which recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and permits the fullest possible participation of all students in the life of the university and their communities.

The Association prohibits and will work to counter discrimination on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, ~~colour~~, ethnic origin, citizenship, language, creed, clerical or lay status, sex or gender, pregnancy or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age (except as required by statute), marital status, family status (parent/ child relationship), number of dependents, disability, political or religious affiliation or belief, membership in legal associations, place of residence, or any other related grounds to ameliorate the status of a specific group and all harassment.

The Association actively encourages and will endeavour to assist all clubs, groups and levied organizations to develop anti-oppression policies and undergo anti-oppression training.

Divestment from Fossil Fuel companies

Preamble

The Association recognizes that climate change is a serious threat to current and future generations here at Trent University and around the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report found that human-caused climate change is already causing widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages on human systems and terrestrial, freshwater and ocean ecosystems worldwide. These impacts will continue to intensify with every increment of global warming, but can be limited by deep, rapid, and sustained global greenhouse gas emissions reduction. ~~The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report found that global warming is already causing costly disruption of human and natural systems throughout the world, including the melting of Arctic ice, the ocean's rise in acidity, flooding, and drought.~~ World governments agreed with the 2016 Paris Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2°C and ideally below 1.5°C, a threshold that risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts. In 2021, the International Energy Agency warned that there could be no new fossil fuel development to meet the goal of net-zero by 2050. ~~Almost every government in the world has agreed through the 2009 Copenhagen Accord that any warming above a 2°C (3.6°F) rise would be unsafe, and that humans can only burn about 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide without exceeding this limit.~~

The Unburnable Carbon: Ten Years On report, published in 2022 by the Carbon Tracker Initiative, found fossil fuel companies possess proven fossil fuel reserves with embodied carbon ten times the amount that can be released without exceeding 1.5°C of warming. (For the purposes of this policy, a “fossil fuel company” shall be defined as any of the Carbon Underground 200, two hundred publicly traded companies with the largest coal, oil, and gas reserves, as measured by the carbon emissions embedded within, or companies involved in the extraction, processing, or transport of fossil fuels.) If governments take action to limit warming to 1.5°C then 90% of fossil fuel reserves must remain unburned, causing massive stranded asset risk for investors. This puts Trent University’s pension and endowment funds at risk from an enormous carbon bubble. The Association asserts that the financially prudent move is to manage that risk proactively by removing funds from fossil fuel company assets. Not only are fossil fuels a financially and environmentally irresponsible investment, fossil fuel companies have a poor track with respect to human rights. These companies are often found guilty of violating treaties Indigenous rights and sovereignty, causing oil spills and environmental disasters, misleading the public about climate science, and causing serious health problems among people living in close proximity of their extractive operations.

One of the objectives in Trent University’s Mission Statement is to “foster sustainability, in its environmental, social, and economic dimensions, on our campuses and in all aspects of our work.” Given the fact that the fossil fuel industry is currently on a path that is environmentally, socially and economically unsustainable, the Association asserts that investments in fossil fuel companies are therefore, incompatible with this Mission Statement. **As an institution with a reputation for environmental responsibility, Trent University must join many other Canadian post-secondary institutions by committing to fossil fuel divestment.** Students of Trent University believe that investments should support a **world future** where all citizens can live healthy, dignified lives without the negative impacts of a warming climate and human rights violations.

Policy

The Association urges the Trent University President and Board of Governors to:

- 1) Immediately cease any new investments in fossil fuel companies or in commingled assets that include holdings in fossil fuel companies
- 2) Contact the fund managers and request that the fossil fuel companies be removed from the funds.
- 3) Ensure that none of their ~~directly held or commingled~~ investments or assets (directly held or comingled) include holdings in fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years **as determined by the Carbon Tracker list**. Understand that the incorporation of environmental, social, and governance factors (ESG), as well as the simple reduction of the “carbon intensity” of Trent’s investment portfolio while continuing to invest in fossil fuels are illegitimate alternatives to full divestment.
- 4) Ensure transparency regarding the process of full divestment, including providing progress updates.
- 5) Prepare a report and options for investing the endowment in a way that further maximizes the positive impact of the fund by seeking out investments in opportunities to limit the effects of burning fossil fuels or help to mitigate its effects including, but not limited to, clean technology, renewable energy, sustainable companies or projects, and sustainable communities.

Exam periods

The Association actively encourages ~~the Undergraduate Studies Committee and~~ the University Senate to implement the following additions regarding examination scheduling to Trent’s academic regulations.

- i. Trent University must ensure a minimum 48-hour break between the end of classes and the opening of both fall and winter examination period;

- ii. Trent University must not schedule more than 3 exam periods per day;
- iii. No student shall have more than two exams in a 24-hour period;
- iv. No exams in the Fall Session shall be scheduled later than December 22 and no exams in the Winter Session shall be scheduled later than April 28. This means that four exams can be scheduled for one day as an emergency measure.
- v. Exam schedule must be posted by reading break of each semester to support domestic and international students travelling home.

Freedom of Speech

The Association would like to reaffirm its commitment to freedom of speech as a method to protect all voices, especially those who choose to dissent, be it to government, industry, society, or otherwise.

However, the Association strives to operate in an anti-oppressive framework. Any speech, action or expression that is racist, xenophobic, sexist, queerphobic, transphobic, or contributes to the further marginalization or oppression of any students in any way is unacceptable and will be opposed by the Association.

Occupational Health & Safety

The Association is vitally interested in the health and safety of its staff. As an employer, the Board of Directors is ultimately accountable for the health and safety policy observed by all staff of the Association. To meet the requirements of the Ontario Health & Safety (OH&S) Act and ensure that the Board of Directors is able to address health & safety in the workplace, the Association shall entrust the specifics of these matters to Operating Policy. To ensure that its obligations are met, the Board of Directors shall endorse effective mechanisms for dealing with all health and safety concerns of the Association. Each individual who performs work on behalf of the Association is obligated to participate in all training specified by this program and be aware of its other stipulations. It is expected that, at a minimum, the Health & Safety Program meet all requirements laid out in OH&S Act and promote a workplace that observes the well-being of its employees.

Key Aspects to be Observed:

- 1) A Staff Health & Safety Policy & Program shall be maintained under the Association's Operating Policy and reviewed each year.
- 2) The appointment of a Staff Health & Safety Officer.
- 3) Established lines of responsibility for dealing with health and safety concerns, including awareness, adherence & reporting.

- 4) Working within Trent University's procedures regarding health & safety where it is considered possible and advantageous to do so.
- 5) The production of an annual health & safety report to be reviewed by the Board of Directors.

University Autonomy

Trent University stands unique amongst Ontario universities in its aim of providing high-quality liberal arts and sciences education in an interdisciplinary context with attention to the holistic education of the individual student.

Universities and colleges of applied arts and technology have distinct objectives and mandates that are best accomplished independently and reciprocally.

The mandate of Trent University could be compromised through amalgamation of the university or its faculty or administration with another university or college institution. The Association supports and will work to ensure the full autonomy of Trent University as a necessary condition for the attainment of the goals, purposes and mission of the university.

Additionally, the mandate of Trent University would necessarily be compromised through intervention of the provincial or federal government's directives for policy changes. However, the Association will support policy directives that enhance student safety and wellbeing.

Online Course Tools policy and *Public Education and Public Universities* policy have been replaced with the *Digital Infrastructure and Learning Resources at Trent University* policy and the *Privatization of Post-Secondary Institutions* policy. *Online Course Tools* policy and *Public Education and Public Universities* policy will expire this Spring.