November 29, 2021

RE: Annual General Meeting Directives

Dear Members,

In accordance with our mandate, the Scarborough Campus Students’ Union (SCSU) is opposed to all acts of discrimination and harassment. Hate speech rooted in, but not limited to, anti-Muslim, antisemitic, sexist, racist, classist, ableist, homophobic, or transphobic sentiments and/or remarks are also not tolerated.

During the 2020 Annual General Meeting, the membership — as the highest decision making body within the SCSU, passed a motion directing the Union to recommit to the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement through the development of an official BDS Policy.

Following our membership’s directives, the SCSU spent the last year researching, developing and consulting with stakeholders on- and off- campus to develop a policy that would satisfy the will of the membership. The BDS Policy was framed as a commitment to Palestinian liberation and a conversation starter to support in spreading awareness, and educating our members in how they can manifest their support. The language used in the policy was aimed to be exhaustive, while also ensuring students on campus receive relevant accommodations as needed.

As part of the consultation with student stakeholders, provisions regarding Kosher food were included in response to a request for specific language on this necessity. We recognize the impact of the language regarding access to religious dietary necessities was not communicated correctly in line with our intentions and the feedback of students.

We apologize for the distress that our miscommunication has caused the Jewish community on campus, and we understand their concerns. At the upcoming December Board of Directors Meeting, the SCSU Executives will be presenting a suggested amendment to introduce exemptions to access for all dietary necessities within the BDS Policy.

Access to Kosher food has been a long-fought battle and, for years, the SCSU has joined Jewish students in calling for Kosher availability at UTSC. We are glad that the University is finally committing to Kosher options across campuses and we are committed to advocating with our members for an inclusive campus.

We thank our members for their ongoing efforts to advance equity-based work. The SCSU is committed to supporting the diverse needs of our membership and will continue to advocate on behalf of our members for a more equitable and accessible campus and education for all. As always, our doors are open to our members to further discuss any concerns they may have, and how we can make efforts to further unite us in this work.

In solidarity,

Scarborough Campus Students’ Union