

Scarborough Campus Students' Union Policy Manual

ISSUES POLICY – Equity Statement & Land Acknowledgement

Adopted: August 25, 2016 – BOD

Amended: March 30, 2022 – BOD

Equity Statement

Preamble

Creating an environment that is built from an anti-oppressive framework, that is equitable and inclusive is a priority of the Scarborough Campus Students' Union. The Union will ensure that all programming hosted by the Union is free of harassment and discrimination. This will be done by acknowledging that inherent power and privilege exists in society and by declaring the collective responsibilities we have in ensuring that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated.

Statement

As members of the Scarborough Campus Students' Union, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding are our goals. We shall neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Any form of discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated. Hate speech rooted in, but not limited to, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, sexist, racist, classist, ableist, homophobic, or transphobic sentiments and/or remarks will also not be tolerated. We all have an obligation to ensure that an open and inclusive space, free of hate, is established. Any behaviour that does not demonstrate an understanding of these principles and/or creates an unsafe atmosphere will not be tolerated.

Land Acknowledgement

Preamble

Before we go any further, I'd like to do a land acknowledgment as a means of recognizing and centering the Indigenous land that the University of Toronto and, by association, SCSU occupies and operates on. For settlers like myself, the act of performing a Land Acknowledgment is now a very familiar but still fundamental step towards highlighting the colonial context of the Indigenous ancestral lands where a gathering like this is taking place while also allowing space for our own individual reflections on our relationships between land and its peoples, realizing that we all may be on different ancestral lands in this virtual context.

Acknowledgment

I'd like to acknowledge that we as a collective union operate from the traditional ancestral land of the treaty of the dish with one spoon, the Anishinaabe of which the Mississauga of Credit peoples are a part

of, and the Haudenaasaanee, the people of this traditional ancestral land. Indigenous peoples have been here since time immemorial and this is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to coexist on this land. Settlers in Canada have directly benefited from the genocide and colonization of Indigenous peoples, including the robbing of their land and spiritual identification. In order to engage in resistance and solidarity against injustices inflicted on Indigenous peoples, it is imperative we constantly engage in acts of decolonization. In recognising the colonial violence still at work the SCSU commits towards the fight against systemic and institutional violence; with an end goal of complete liberation. This can only be achieved by including Indigenous people in our collective decision making for social justice and equity and working from an anti-colonial framework. I would also like to pay my respect to their elders past and present, and to any who may be here with us today, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Next Steps

I'd like to end by reiterating that Land Acknowledgements are just that, acknowledgements. Liberation has yet to come out of the hands of sole acknowledgements. So I'd like to highlight some resources and initiatives currently active that folks can support in order to take their next steps in solidarity. I encourage you all to reflect on what resources (monetary or not), space and capacity you have to offer in order to more support Indigenous communities.